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(Truchy's Juvenile Theatre.)



# THE KNAPSACK,

A DRAMA IN TWO ACTS,

FOR YOUTH.

BY MISS EDGEWORTH.



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—  
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## NOTE.

In the Travels of M. Beaujolin into Sweden, he mentions having, in the year 1790, met carriages laden with the knapsacks of swedish soldiers, who had fallen in battle in Finland. These carriages were escorted by peasants, who were relieved at every stage, and thus the property of the deceased was conveyed from one extremity of the kingdom to the other, and faithfully restored to their relations. The swedish peasants are so remarkably honest, that scarcely any thing is ever lost in these convoys of numerous and ill secured packages.

## DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

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**COUNT HELMAAR**, a swedish Nobleman.

**CHRISTIERN**, a swedish soldier.

**ALEFTSON**, count Helmaar's fool.

**THOMAS**, a footman.

**ELEONORA**, a swedish lady, beloved by  
count Helmaar.

**CHRISTINA**, sister to Helmaar.

**ULRICA**, an old housekeeper.

**CATHERINE**, wife to Christiern.

**KATE** and **ULRIC**, the son and daughter of  
Catherine—they are six and seven years old.

**SERJEANT**, and a **TROOP OF SOLDIERS**, A  
**TRAIN OF DANCERS**, A **PAGE**, etc.



# THE KNAPSACK.

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## ACT I.



SCENE — A cottage in Sweden. — CATHERINE, a young and handsome woman, is sitting at her spinning wheel. — A little Boy and Girl, of six and seven years of age, are seated on the ground eating their dinner.

CATHERINE *sings, while she is spinning.*

Haste from the wars, oh haste to me,  
The wife that fondly waits for thee;

**THE KNAPSACK.**

Long are the years, and long each day,  
While my loved soldier's far away.

Haste from the wars, etc.

Lone ev'ry field, and lone the bow'r ;  
Pleasant to me nor sun nor show'r :  
The snow are gone, the flow'rs are gay—  
Why is my life of life away?

Haste from the wars , etc.

**KATE.**

When will father come home?

**ULRIC.**

When will he come, mother? when,  
to-day? to-morrow?

**CATHERINE.**

No, not to-day, nor to-morrow, but  
soon, I hope, very soon, for they say  
the wars are over.

**KATE.**

I am glad of that, and when father

comes home, I will give him some of my flowers.

ULRIC, *who is still eating.*

And I will give him some of my bread and cheese, which he will like better than flowers, if he is as hungry as I am, and that to be sure he will be, after coming such a long, long journey.

KATE.

Long, long journey! how long? — how far is father off, mother? — where is he?

ULRIC.

I know, he is in—in—in—in—  
Finland? how far off, mother?

CATHERINE.

A great many miles, my dear ; I don't know how many.

ULRIC.

Is it not two miles to the great house, mother, where we go to sell our faggots?

CATHERINE.

Yes, about two miles — and now you had best set out towards the great house, and ask Mrs. Ulrica, the house-keeper, to pay you the little bill she owes you for faggots — there's good children ; and when you have been paid for your faggots, you can call at the baker's, in the village, and bring home some bread for to - morrow

(*patting the little boy's head*)—you that love bread and cheese so much must work hard to get it.

## ULRIC.

Yes, so I will work hard, then I shall have enough for myself and father too, when he comes. Come along — come (*to his sister*) — and, as we come home through the forest, I will show you where we can get plenty of sticks for to-morrow, and we 'll help one another.

KATE, *sings*.

That's the best way,  
At work and at play,  
To help one another—I heard mother say—  
To help one another—I heard mother say—  
(*The children go off, singing these words.*)

CATHERINE, *alone.*

Dear, good children, how happy their father will be to see them, when he comes back ! —

(She begins to eat the remains of the dinner, which the children have left.)

The little rogue was so hungry, he has not left me much ; but he would have left me all , if he had thought that I wanted it : he shall have a *good large bowl* of milk for supper. It was but last night he skimmed the cream off his milk for me, because he thought I liked it. Heigho ! God knows how long they may have milk to skim — as long as I can work they shall never want ; but I 'm not so strong as I used to be ; but then I shall get strong, and

all will be well, when my husband comes back. (*A drum beats at a distance.*) Hark! a drum! — some news from abroad, perhaps — nearer and nearer (*she sinks upon a chair*) — why cannot I run to see — to ask (*the drum beats louder and louder*) — fool that I am! they will be gone! they will be all gone!

(*She starts up. — Exit hastily.*)



SCENE changes to a high road, leading to a village. — A party of ragged, tired soldiers, marching slowly. Serjeant ranges them.

SERJEANT.

Keep on, my brave fellows, keep on, we have not a great way farther

to go : — keep on, my brave fellows ,  
keep on, through yonder village.

(The drum beats. — Soldiers exeunt.)

SERJEANT, *alone.*

Poor fellows, my heart bleeds to see them ! the sad remains, these, of as fine a regiment as ever handled a musket. Ah ! I have seen them march quite another guess sort of way, when they marched, and I amongst them, to face the enemy — heads up — step firm — thus it was — quick time — march ! — (*he marches proudly.*) — My poor fellows, how they lag now (*looking after them*) — ay, ay, there they go, slower and slower ; they don't like going through the village ; nor I neither ; for, at every village we pass through, out come the women and

children, runing after us, and crying, “Where’s my father?” — What’s become of my husband? — Stout fellow as I am, and a serjeant too, that ought to know better, and set the others an example, I can’t stand these questions.

ENTER CATHERINE, *breathless*.

CATHERINE.

I—I—I have overtaken him at last.  
— Sir — Mr. Serjeant, one word!  
What news from Finland?

SERJEANT.

The best—the war is over.—Peace  
is proclaimed.

CATHERINE, *clasping her hands joyfully*.

Peace! happy sound!—Peace! The

war is over! — Peace! — And the regiment of Helmaar. — (*The serjeant appears impatient to get away.*) — Only one word, good serjeant : when will the regiment of Helmaar be back?

SERJEANT.

All that remain of it will be home next week.

CATHERINE.

Next week! — But, all that *remain*, did you say? — Then many have been killed?

SERJEANT.

Many, many—too many. Some honest peasants are bringing home knapsacks of those who have fallen in battle. 'Tis fair that what little they had

should come home to their families.  
Now, I pray you, let me pass on.

CATHERINE.

One word more : tell me, do you know, in the regiment of Helmaar, one Christiern Aleftson?

SERJEANT, *with eagerness.*

Christiern Aleftson ! as brave a fellow, and as good as ever lived, if it be the same that I knew.

CATHERINE.

As a brave a fellow, and as good as ever lived ! Oh, that's he ! he is my husband — where is he ? where is he ?

SERJEANT, *aside.*

She wrings my heart ! (*Aloud.*) He was—

CATHERINE.

*Was!*

SERJEANT.

He is, I hope, safe.

CATHERINE.

You *hope!* — don't look away —  
I must see your face : tell me all you  
know.

SERJEANT.

I know nothing for certain.—When  
the peasants come with the knapsacks,  
you will hear all from them. Pray  
you, let me follow my men ; they are  
already at a great distance.

(Exit Serjeant followed by Catherine.)

CATHERINE.

I will not detain you an instant —  
only one word more—

(Exeunt.)



SCENE — An apartment in count Helmaar's  
Castle. — A train of dancers. — After they  
have danced for some time,

ENTER A PAGE.

PAGE.

Ladies! I have waited, according  
to your commands, till count Helmaar  
appeared in the antechamber — he is  
there now, along with the ladies Chris-  
tina and Eleonora.

**1<sup>st</sup> DANCER.**

Now is our time — Count Helmaar  
shall hear our song to welcome him  
home.

**2<sup>d</sup> DANCER.**

None was ever more welcome.

**3<sup>d</sup> DANCER.**

But stay till I have breath to sing.

**SONG.****I.**

Welcome, Helmaar, welcome home ;  
In crowds your happy neighbours come,  
To hail with joy the cheerful morn  
That sees their Helmaar's safe return.

## II.

No hollow heart, no borrow'd face,  
Shall ever Helmaar's hall disgrace :  
Slaves alone on tyrants wait ;  
Friends surround the good and great.

Welcome, Helmaar, etc.

ENTER ELEONORA , CHRISTINA , AND  
COUNT HELMAAR.

HELMAAR.

Thanks , my friends , for this kind  
welcome.

1<sup>st</sup> DANCER , *looking at a black fillet on  
Helmaar's head.*

He has been wounded.

CHRISTINA.

Yes—severely wounded.

HELMAAR.

And had it not been for the fidelity of the soldier, who carried me from the field of battle, I should never have seen you more, my friends, nor you, my charming Eleonora. (*A noise of one singing behind the scenes.*)—What disturbance is that without?

CHRISTINA.

'Tis only Aleftson, the fool : — in your absence, brother, he has been the cause of great diversion in the castle : — I love to play upon him, it keeps him in tune ; — you can't think how much good it does him.

HELMAAR.

And how much good it does you, sister : from your childhood you had

always a lively wit, and loved to exercise it; but do you waste it upon fools?

## CHRISTINA.

I am sometimes inclined to think this Aleftson is more knave than fool.

## ELEONORA.

By your leave, lady Christina, he is no knave, or I am much mistaken. — To my knowledge, he has carried his whole salary, and all the little presents he has received from us, to his brother's wife and children — I have seen him chuck his money, thus, at those poor children, when they have been at their plays, and then run away, lest their mother should make them give it back.

ENTER ALEFTSON, *the fool, in a fool's coat, fool's cap and bells, singing.*

## I.

There's the courtier, who watches the nod of the  
great;  
Who thinks much of his pension, and nought of the  
state :  
When for ribands and titles his honour he sells,  
What is he, my friends, but a fool without bells ?

## II.

There's the gamester, who stakes on the turn of a die  
His house and his acres; the devil knows why :  
His acres he loses, his forest he sells—  
What is he, my friends, but a fool without bells ?

## III.

There's the student so crabbed and wonderful wise,  
With his *plus* and his *minus*, his *xs* and *ys* ;  
Pale at midnight he pores o'er his magical spells —  
What is he, my friends, but a fool without bells ?

## IV. .

The lover, who's ogling, and rhyming, and sighing,  
Who's musing, and pining, and whining, and dying  
When a thousand of lies ev'ry minute he tells,  
What is he, my friends, but a fool without bells?

## V.

There's the lady so fine, with her airs and her graces,  
With a face like an angel's — if angels have faces :  
She marries, and Hymen the vision dispels —  
What's her husband, my friends, but a fool without  
bells?

CHRISTINA, ELEONORA, HELMAAR, etc.

Bravo! bravissimo! excellent fool!  
— Encore.

(The fool folds his arms, and begins to cry  
bitterly.)

CHRISTINA.

What now, Aleftson? I never saw

you sad before — What's the matter?  
— Speak.

(Fool sobs, but gives no answer.)

HELMAAR.

Why do you weep so bitterly?

ALEFTSON.

Because I am a fool.

HELMAAR.

Many should weep, if that were  
cause sufficient.

ELEONORA.

But, Aleftson, you have all your  
life, till now, been a merry fool.

FOOL.

Because always, till now, I was a

fool—but now I am grown wise ; and it is difficult, to all but you, lady, to be merry and wise.

CHRISTINA.

A pretty compliment ; it is a pity it was paid by a fool.

FOOL.

Who else should pay compliments, lady, or who else believe them?

CHRISTINA.

Nay, I thought it was the privilege of a fool to speak truth without offence.

FOOL.

Fool as you take me to be, I am not fool enough yet to speak truth to a

lady, and think to do it without offence.

ELEONORA.

Why, you have said a hundred severe things to *me* within this week, and have I ever been angry with you?

FOOL.

Never; for, out of the whole hundred, not one was true. But have a care, lady—fool as I am, you would be glad to stop a fool's mouth with your white hand this instant, rather than let him tell the truth of you.

CHRISTINA, *laughing, and all the other ladies, except Eleonora, exclaim*

—Speak on, good fool; speak on—

## ACT I.

HELMAAR.

I am much mistaken, or the lady Eleonora fears not to hear the truth from either wise men or fools—Speak on.

••

FOOL.

One day, not long ago, when there came news that our count there was killed in Finland—I, being a fool, was lying laughing, and thinking of nothing at all, on the floor, in the west drawing-room, looking at the count's picture.—In comes the lady Eleonora, all in tears.

ELEONORA, *stopping his mouth.*

O! tell any thing but *that*, good fool.

## THE KNAPSACK.

HELMAAH, *kneels and kisses her hand.*

Speak on, excellent fool.

CHRISTINA, *and ladies*

— Speak on, excellent fool — In came the lady Eleonora, all in tears.

FOOL.

In comes the lady Eleonora, all in tears—(*pauses and looks round*). — Why now, what makes you all so curious about these tears? — Tears are but salt water, let them come from what eyes they will—my tears are as good as hers—in came John Aleftson, all in tears, just now, and nobody kneels to me—nobody kisses my hand—nobody cares half a straw for my tears—(*folds his arms, and looks melancholy.*) I am not one of those — I know the cause of my tears too well.

## HELMAAR.

Perhaps they were caused by my unexpected return—hey?

FOOL, *scornfully*.

No — I am not such a fool as that comes to. Don't I know that, when you are at home, the poor may hold up their heads, and no journeyman-gentleman of an agent dares then to go about plaguing those who live in cottages? No, no — I am not such a fool as to cry because Count Helmaar is come back; but the truth is, I cried because I am tired, and ashamed of wearing this thing — (*putting down his fool's cap upon the floor, changes his tone entirely.*) — I! — who am brother to the man who saved Count

Helmaar's life — I to wear a fool's cap and bells. — O shame! shame!

(The ladies look at one another with signs of astonishment.)

CHRISTINA, *aside*.

A lucid interval — poor fool! — I will torment him no more — he has feeling — it were better he had none.

ELEONORA.

Hush! hear him!

ALEFTSON, *throwing himself at the count's feet*.

Noble count, I have submitted to be thought a fool, I have worn this fool's cap in your absence, that I might indulge my humour, and enjoy the liberty of speaking my mind freely to

the people of all conditions. Now that you are returned, I have no need of such a disguise.—I may now speak the truth without fear, and without a cap and bells. — I resign my salary, and give back the ensign of my office—

(Presents the fool's cap. — Exit.)

CHRISTINA.

He might well say, that none but fools should pay compliments—this is the best compliment that has been paid you, brother.

ELEONORA.

And observe, he has resigned his salary.

HELMAAR.

From this moment let it be dou-

bled — he made an excellent use of money when he was a fool—may he make half as good a use of it now he is a wise man.

CHRISTINA.

Amen—and now, I hope, we are to have some dancing.

(*Exeunt.*)



## ACT II.



**SCENE —** By moonlight — a forest — a castle illuminated at a distance. — A group of peasants seated on the ground, each with a knapsack beside him. — One peasant lies stretched on the ground.

**1<sup>st</sup> PEASANT.**

Why, what I say is, that the wheel of the cart being broken, and the horse dead lame, and Charles there in that plight — *(points to the sleeping*

*peasant*) — it is a folly to think of getting on farther this evening.

2<sup>d</sup> PEASANT.

And what I say is, it is folly to sleep here, seeing I know the country, and am certain sure have not above one mile at farthest to go, before we get to the end of our journey.

1<sup>st</sup> PEASANT, *pointing to the sleeper.*

He can't walk a mile—he is done for—dogtired—

3<sup>d</sup> PEASANT.

Are you *certain* sure we have only one mile farther to go?

2<sup>d</sup> PEASANT.

Certain sure—

ALL, except THE SLEEPER AND THE  
1<sup>st</sup> PEASANT.

O, let us go on, then, and we can carry the knapsacks on our backs for this one mile.

1<sup>st</sup> PEASANT.

You must carry him, then, knapsack and all.

ALL TOGETHER.

So we will.

2<sup>d</sup> PEASANT.

But first, do you see, let us waken him; for a sleeping man's twice as heavy as one that is awake — Holla, friend! waken! waken! — (*He shakes the sleeper, who snores loudly.*)

Good Lord, he snores loud enough to  
waken all the birds in the wood.

(All the peasants shout in the sleeper's ear.  
and he starts up, shaking himself.)

CHARLES.

Am I awake? —

(Stretching.)

2<sup>d</sup> PEASANT.

No, not yet, man—Why don't you  
know where you are? Ah; here's the  
moon—and these be trees; and — I  
be a man, and what do you call this?

(Holding up a knapsack.)

CHARLES.

A knapsack, I say, to be sure : —  
I am as broad awake as the best of  
you.

2<sup>d</sup> PEASANT.

Come on, then; we have a great way farther to go before you sleep again.

CHARLES.

A great way farther! farther to-night! — No, no.

2<sup>d</sup> PEASANT.

Yes, yes; we settled it all while you were fast asleep—You are to be carried you and your knapsack.

(They prepare to carry him.)

CHARLES; *starting up, and struggling with them.*

I have legs to walk — I won't be carried!—I, a Swede, and be carried! —No! No! —

ALL TOGETHER.

Yes ! Yes !

CHARLES.

No ! No !

(He struggles for his knapsack, which comes untied in the struggle, and all the things fall out.)

There, this comes of playing the fool.

(They help him to pick up the things, and exclaim,

ALL TOGETHER.

There's no harm done. —

(Throwing the knapsack over his shoulder.)

CHARLES.

I am the first to march, after all.

PEASANTS.

Ay, in your sleep !

(Exeunt, laughing.)

ENTER Catherine's TWO LITTLE CHILDREN.

KATE.

I am sure I heard some voices this way—suppose it was the fairies !

ULRIC.

It was only the rustling of the leaves. There are no such things as fairies; but, if there were any such, we have no need to fear them.

I.

Nor elves, nor fays, nor magic charm,  
Have pow'r or will, to work us harm;

## THE KNAPSACK.

For those who dare the truth to tell,  
Fays, elves, and fairies, wish them well.

## II.

For us they spread their dainty fare,  
For us they scent the midnight air ;  
For us their glow-worm lamps they light,  
For us their music cheers the night.

KATE *sings*.

## I.

Ye fays and fairies, hasten here,  
Robed in glittering gossamere ;  
With tapers bright, and music sweet,  
And frolic dance, and twinkling feet.

## II.

And, little Mable, let us view  
Your acorn goblets, fill'd with dew ;  
Nor warn us hence till we have seen  
The nut-shell chariot of your queen :

## III.

In which on nights of yore she sat,  
Driven by her gray-coated gnat ;  
With spider spokes, and cobweb traces,  
And horses fit for fairy races.

## IV.

And bid us join your revel ring,  
And see you dance, and hear you sing :  
Your fairy dainties let us taste,  
And speed us home with fairy haste.

## ULRIC.

If there were really fairies, and if  
they would give me wish, I know  
what I should ask.

## KATE.

And so do I — I would ask them  
to send father home before I could  
count ten.

ULRIC.

And I would ask to hear his general say to him, in the face of the whole army : “ This is a brave man ! and father should hold up his head as I do now, and march thus by the side of his general.

(As Ulric marches he stumbles.)

KATE.

Oh ! take care !—come, let us march home : — but stay, I have not found my faggot.

ULRIC.

Never mind your faggot ; it was not here you left it.

KATE.

Yes, it was somewhere here, I am

sure, and I must find it, to carry it home to mother, to make a blaze for her before she goes to bed.

ULRIC.

But she will wonder what keeps us up so late.

KATE.

But we shall tell her what kept us. Look under those trees, will you, whilst I look here, for my faggot. — — When we get home, I shall say : “ Mother, do you know there is great news?—there is a great many, many candles in the windows of the great house, and dancing and music in the great house, because the master’s come home, and the housekeeper had not time to pay us, and we waited and

waited with our faggots; at last the butler—”.

ULRIC.

Heyday! — What have we here?  
— a purse, a purse, a heavy purse.

KATE.

Whose can it be? let us carry it  
home to mother.

ULRIC.

No, no; it can't be mother's : mother has no purse full of money. It must belong to somebody at the great house.

KATE.

Ay, very likely to dame Ulrica, the

housekeeper, for she has more purses and money than any body else in the world.

ULRIC.

Come, let us run back with it to her — mother would tell us to do so, I am sure, if she was here.

KATE.

But I am afraid the housekeeper won't see us to-night.

ULRIC.

O yes; but I will beg, and pray, and push, till I get into her room.

KATE.

Yes; but don't push me, or I shall

knock my head against the trees. Give me your hand, brother. — O my fag-got! I shall never find you.

(Exeunt.)



SCENE — CATHERINE'S Cottage.

CATHERINE *spinning, sings.*

I.

Turn swift my wheel, my busy wheel,  
And leave my heart no time to feel;  
Companion of my widow'd hour,  
My only friend, my only dow'r.

II.

Thy length'ning thread I love to see,  
Thy whirring sound is dear to me :  
O swiftly turn by night and day,  
And toil for him that's far away.

Hark! here come the children. No, 'twas only the wind. — What can keep these children so late? but it is a fine moonlight night — they'll have brave appetites for their supper when they come back—but I wonder they don't come home. — Heigho! since their father has been gone, I am grown a coward—(*A knock at the door heard*) —Come in! — Why does every knock at the door startle me in this way?

ENTER CHARLES, *with a knapsack on his back.*

CHARLES.

Mistress! mayhap you did not expect to see a stranger at this time o'night, as I guess by the looks of ye

— but I am only a poor fellow, that has been a-foot a great many hours.

CATHERINE.

Then, pray ye, rest yourself, and such fare as we have you're welcome to.

(She sets milk, etc. on a table. Charles throws himself into a chair, and flings his knapsack behind him.)

CHARLES.

It is a choice thing to rest oneself : — I say, mistress, you must know, I, and some more of us, peasants, have come a many, many leagues since break of day.

CATHERINE.

Indeed, you may well be tired —

and where do you come from? — Did you meet, on your road, any soldiers coming back from Finland?

CHARLES, *eats and speaks.*

Not the soldiers themselves, I cannot say as I did; but we are them that are bringing home the knapsacks of the poor fellows that have lost their lives in the wars in Finland.

CATHERINE, *during this speech of Charles, leans on the back of a chair. — Aside.*

Now I shall know my fate.

CHARLES, *eating and speaking.*

My comrades are gone on to the village beyond with their knapsacks, to get them owned by the families of them to whom they belonged, as it

stands to reason and right. Pray mistress, as you know the folks hereabouts, could you tell me whose knapsack this is, here, behind me?—(*Looking up at Catherine*). — Oons, but how pale she looks! (*Aside.*) Here, sit ye down, do. (*Aside.*) Why, I would not have said a word if I had thought on it—to be sure she has a friend now, that has been killed in the wars. (*Aloud.*) Take a sup of the cold milk, mistress.

CATHERINE, *goes fearfully towards the knapsack.*      \*

It is his ! it is my husband's !

(*She sinks down on a chair, and hides her face with her hands.*)

CHARLES.

Poor soul ! poor soul ! (*He pauses.*)

But now is not clear to me that you may not be mistaken, mistress: — these knapsacks be all so much alike, I am sure I could not, for the soul of me, tell one from the other — it is by what's in the inside only one can tell for certain. —

(Charles opens the knapsack, pulls out a waistcoat, carries it towards Catherine, and holds it before her face.)

Look ye here, now; don't give way to sorrow while there is hope left — mayhap, mistress — look at this now, can't ye, mistress?

(Catherine timidly moves her hands from before her face, sees the waistcoat, gives a faint scream, and falls back in a swoon. The peasant runs to support her. — At this instant the back door of the cottage opens, and ALEFTSON enters.)

ALEFTSON.

Catherine !

CHARLES.

Poor soul ! — there, raise her head — give her air — she fell into this swoon at the sight of yonder knapsack — her husband's — he is dead. Poor creature ! — it was my luck to bring the bad news — what shall we do for her ? — I am no better than a fool, when I see a body this way.

ALEFTSON, *sprinkling water on her face.*

She'll be as well as ever she was, you will see, presently — leave her to me !

CHARLES.

There! she gave a sigh — she is coming to her senses.

(Catherine raises herself.)

CATHERINE.

What has been the matter? — (*She starts at the sight of Aleftson.*) — My husband! — no — it is Aleftson — what makes you look so like him? you don't look like yourself.

ALEFTSON, *aside to the peasants.*

Take that waistcoat out of the way.

CATHERINE, *looking round, sees the knapsack.*

What's there! — O, I recollect it

all now. — (*To Aleftson.*) Look there! look there! your brother! your brother is dead! Poor fool, you have no feeling.

ALEFTSON.

I wish I had none.

CATHERINE.

O my husband! — shall I never, never see you more — never more hear your voice — never more see my children in their father's arms?

ALEFTSON, *takes up the waistcoat, on which her eyes are fixed.*

But we are not sure this is Christi-  
tiern's.

CHARLES, *snatching it from him.*

Don't show it to her again, man!  
— you 'll drive her mad.

ALEFTSON, *aside.*

Let me alone; I know what I am about. (*Aloud.*) 'Tis certainly like a waistcoat I once saw him wear; but perhaps——

CATHERINE.

It is his — it is his — too well I know it — my own work — I gave it to him the very day he went away to the wars — he told me he would wear it again, the day of his coming home — but he 'll never come home again.

ALEFTSON.

How can you be *sure* of that?

CATHERINE.

How! — why, am not I sure, too sure? — hey! what do you mean? — he smiles! — have you heard any thing? — do you know any thing? — but he can know nothing — he can tell me nothing — he has no sense. (*She turns to the peasant.*) — Where did you get this knapsack? — did you see——

ALEFTSON.

He saw nothing — he knows nothing — he can tell you nothing: — listen to me, Catherine—see, I have thrown aside the dress of a fool—you

know I had my senses once—I have them now, as clear as ever I had in my life — ay, you may well be surprised — but I will surprise you more ———Count Helmaar is come home.

CATHERINE.

Count Helmaar ! impossible !

CHARLES.

Count Helmaar ! — he was killed in the last battle, in Finland.

ALEFTSON.

I tell ye, he was not killed in any — he is safe at home — at home — I have just seen him.

CATHERINE.

Seen him ! — but why do I listen

to him, poor fool! he knows not what he says — and yet, if the count be really——

CHARLES.

Is the count really alive? I'd give my best cow to see him.

ALEFTSON.

Come with me, then, and in one quarter of an hour you *shall* see him.

CATHERINE, *clasping her hands*.

Then there is hope for me——Tell me, is there any news?

ALEFTSON.

There is.

CATHERINE.

Of my husband?

ALEFTSON.

Yes — ask me no more you must hear the rest from Count Helmaar himself—he has sent for you.

CATHERINE, *springs forward.*

This instant let me go, let me hear ———(*she stops short at the sight of the waistcoat, which lies in her passage.*) —But what shall I hear? — there can be no good news for me —this speaks too plainly.

(Aleftson pulls her arm between his, and leads her away.)

CHARLES.

Nay, master, take me, as you promised, along with you — I won't be left behind — I'm wide awake now — — I must have a sight of Count Helmaar in his own castle—why, they'll make much of me in every cottage on my road home, when I can swear to them I have seen Count Helmaar alive, in his own castle, face to face—God bless him, he is *the poor man's friend*.

(Exeunt.)



SCENE — The housekeeper's room in Count  
HELMMAAR's castle.

ULRICA AND CHRISTIERN.

CHRISTIERN is drawing on his boots. — Mrs.  
ULRICA is sitting at a tea-table, making  
coffee.

MRS. ULRICA.

Well, well ; I'll say no more : if you  
can not stay to-night, you can't — but  
I had laid it all out in my head so cleverly,  
that you should stay, and take  
a good night's rest here, in the castle ;  
then, in the morning, you'll find yourself  
as fresh as a lark.

CHRISTIERN.

O! I am not at all tired.

MRS. ULRICA.

Not tired ! don't tell me that, now, for I know that you *are* tired, and can't help being tired, say what you will — Drink this dish of coffee, at any rate—

(He drinks coffee.)

CHRISTIERN.

But the thoughts of seeing my Catherine and my little ones——

MRS. ULRICA.

Very true, very true ; but in one word, I want to see the happy meeting, for such things are a treat to me, don't come every day, you know ; and now in the morning, I could go along with you to the cottage, but you must

be sensible I could not be spared out this night, on no account or possibility.

ENTER FOOTMAN.

FOOTMAN.

Ma'am, the cook is hunting high and low for the brandy-cherries.

MRS. ULRICA.

Lord bless me! are not they there before those eyes of yours. — But I can't blame nobody for being out of their wits a little, with joy, on such a night as this.

(Exit Footman.)

CHRISTIERN.

Never man was better beloved in the regiment than Count Helmaar.

MRS. ULRIKA.

Ay ! ay ! so he is every where , and so he deserves to be. Is your coffee good ? sweeten to your taste, and don't spare sugar, nor don't spare any thing that this house affords ; for, to be sure, you deserve it all—nothing can be too good for him that saved my master's life. So now that we are comfortable and quiet over our dish of coffee , pray be so very good as to tell me the whole story of my master's escape , and of the horse being killed under him , and of your carrying him off on your shoulders ; for I have only heard it by bits and scraps , as one may say ; I have seen only the bill of fare, ha ! ha ! ha ! — so now pray set out all the good things for me, in due

order, garnished and all ; and , before you begin, taste these cakes — they are my own making.

CHRISTIERN, *aside*.

This the one-and-twentieth time I have told the story to-day ; but no matter, — (*Aloud.*) Why, then, madam, the long and the short of the story is——

MRS. ULRICA.

O, pray, let it be the *long* , not the *short* of the story, if you please : a story can never be too long for my taste, when it concerns my master—it is, as one may say, fine spun sugar, the longer the finer, and the more I relish it—but I interrupt you, and you

eat none of my cakes—pray go on.—  
(*A call behind the scenes of Mrs. Ulrica! Mrs. Ulrica!*) — Coming! coming!—patience.

CHRISTIERN.

Why, then, madam, we were, as it might be, here—just please to look;—I have drawn the field of battle for you here, with coffee, on the table—and you shall be the enemy.

MRS. ULRICA.

I! — no — I'll not be the enemy—  
my master's enemy!

CHRISTIERN.

Well, I'll be the enemy.

MRS. ULRICA.

You! — O no, you sha'n't be the enemy.

CHRISTIERN.

Well, then, let the cake be the enemy.

MRS. ULRICA.

The cake—my cake! — no, indeed.

CHRISTIERN.

Well, let the candle be the enemy.

MRS. ULRICA.

Well, let the candle be the enemy;  
— and where was my master, and

where are you—I don't understand—  
what is all this great slop?

CHRISTIERN.

Why, ma'am, the field of battle;  
and let the coffee-pot be my master :  
here comes the enemy——

ENTER FOOTMAN.

FOOTMAN.

Mrs. Ulrica , more refreshments  
wanting for the dancers above.

MRS. ULRICA.

More refreshments! — more! —  
bless my heart, it is an impossibility  
they can have swallowed down all I

laid out, not an hour ago, in the confectionary room.

FOOTMAN.

Confectionary room! — O, I never thought of looking there.

MRS. ULRICA.

Look ye there, now! — why, where did you think of looking, then? — in the stable, or the cockloft, hey? — (*Exit Footman.*) — But I can't scold on such a night as this: their poor heads are all turned with joy; and my own's scarce in a more properer condition——Well, I beg your pardon — pray go on — the coffee-pot is my master, and the candle's the enemy.

CHRISTIERN.

So, ma'am, here comes the enemy,  
full drive, upon Count Helmaar.

(A call without of Mrs. Ulrica ! Mrs. Ulrica !  
Mrs. Ulrica !)

MRS. ULRICA.

Mrs. Ulrica ! Mrs. Ulrica ! — can't  
you do without Mrs. Ulrica one ins-  
tant but you must call, call — (*Mrs.*  
*Ulrica! Mrs. Ulrica!*)—Mercy on us,  
what do you want? — I *must* go for  
one instant.

CHRISTIERN.

And I *must* bid ye a good night.

MRS. ULRICA.

Nay, nay, nay — (*eagerly*) you won't go — I'll be back.

ENTER FOOTMAN.

FOOTMAN.

Ma'am ! Mrs. Ulrica ! the key of the blue press.

MRS. ULRICA.

The key of the blue press—I had it in my hand just now — I gave it — I — (*looks amongst a bunch of keys, and then all round the room,*) — I know nothing at all about it, I tell you — I must drink my tea, and I will — (*Exit Footman.*) — It is a sin to scold

on such a night as this, if one could help it——Well, Mr. Christiern, so the coffe-pot's my master.

CHRISTIERN.

And the sugar-basin——Why, here's a key in the sugar-basin.

MRS. ULRICA.

Lord bless me! 'tis the very key, the key of the blue press — why dear me (*feels in her pocket*) — and here are the sugar-tongs in my pocket, I protest — where was my poor head? Here, Thomas! Thomas! here's the key; take it, and don't say a word for your life, if you can help it: — you need not come in, I say—

(She holds the door. — The Footman pushes in.)

FOOTMAN.

But, ma'am, I have something particular to say.

MRS. ULRICA.

Why, you've always something particular to say — is it any thing about my master?

FOOTMAN.

No, but about your purse, ma'am.

MRS. ULRICA.

What of my purse?

FOOTMAN.

Here's your little godson, ma'am, is here, who has found it.

MRS. ULRICA, *aside*.

Hold your foolish tongue, can't you?  
— don't mention my little godson,  
for your life.

(The little boy creeps in under the foot-  
man's arm ; his sister Kate follows  
him. Mrs. Ulrica lifts up her hands  
and eyes, with signs of impatience.)

MRS. ULRICA.

Now I had settled in my head that  
their father should not see them till  
to-morrow morning.

KATE.

Who is that stranger man?

ULRIC.

He has made me forget all I had to say.

CHRISTIERN, *aside*.

What charming children!

MRS. ULRICA, *aside*.

He does not know them to be his—they don't know him to be their father.—(*Aloud.*) Well, children, what brings you here at this time of night?

ULRIC.

What I was going to say was—

(The little boy looks at the stranger,  
between every two or three words,  
and Christiern looks at him.)

— What I was going to say was —

KATE.

Ha! ha! ha! — he forgets that we found this purse in the forest as we were going home.

ULRIC.

And we thought that it might be yours.

MRS. ULRICA.

Why should you think it was mine?

ULRIC.

Because nobody else could have so much money in one purse; so we brought it to you—here it is.

MRS. ULRICA.

'Tis none of my purse. — (*Aside.*)  
O! he'll certainly find out that they  
are his children. — (*She stands between  
the children and Christiern.*) — 'Tis  
none of my purse; but you are good,  
honest little dears, and I'll be hanged  
if I won't carry you both up to my  
master himself, this very minute, and  
tell the story of your honesty before  
all the company.

(*She pushes the children towards the  
door. Ulric looks back.*)

ULRIC.

He has a soldier's coat on — let me  
ask him if he is a soldier.

MRS. ULRICA.

No—what's that to you?

KATE.

Let me ask him if he knows any thing about father.

MRS. ULRICA, *puts her hand before the little girl's mouth.*

Hold your little foolish tongue, I say—what's that to you?

(*Exeunt, Mrs. Ulrica pushing forward the children.*)

**ENTER** *at the opposite door*, THOMAS,  
*the footman.*

**FOOTMAN.**

Sir, would you please to come into our servants'-hall, only for one instant : there's one wants to speak a word to you.

**CHRISTIERN.**

O, I cannot stay another moment ;  
I must go home : — who is it ?

**FOOTMAN.**

'Tis a poor man who has brought in two carts full of my master's baggage ; and my master begs you'll be so

very good as to see that the things are all right, as you know them, and no one else here does.

CHRISTIERN, *with impatience.*

How provoking! — a full hour's work : — I sha'n't get home this night, I see that : — I wish the man and the baggage were in the Gulf of Finland.

(Exeunt.)



**SCENE** — The apartment where the **COUNT**,  
**ELEONORA**, **CHRISTINA**, etc., were dancing.

**ENTER MRS. ULRICA**, *leading the TWO CHILDREN*.

**CHRISTINA.**

Ha! Mrs. Ulrica, and her little godson.

**MRS. ULRICA.**

My lady, I beg pardon for presuming to interrupt; but I was so proud of my little godson and his sister, though not my goddaughter, that I couldn't but bring them up, through the very midst of the company, to my master, to praise them according to their deserts; for nobody can praise those that deserve it so well as my master — to my fancy.

ELEONORA , *aside*.

Nor to mine.

MRS. ULRICA.

Here's a purse, sir, which this little boy and girl of mine found in the woods as they were going home ; and, like honest children, as they are, they came back with it directly to me, thinking that it was mine.

HELMAAR.

Shake hands , my honest little fellow—this is just what I should have expected from a godson of Mrs. Ulrica , and a son of——

MRS. ULRICA , *aside to the Count*.

O ! Lord bless you, sir, don't tell

him——My lady — (*to Christina.*) —  
would you take the children out of  
hearing?

ELEONORA, *to the children.*

Come with us, my dears.

(*Exeunt ladies and children.*)

MRS. ULRICA.

Don't, sir, pray, tell the children  
any thing about their father : they  
don't know that their father is here,  
though they have just seen him ; and  
I have been striving all I can to keep  
the secret, and to keep the father here  
all night, that I may have the pleasure  
of seeing the meeting of father and  
mother and children at their own cot-  
tage to-morrow. I would not miss the  
sight of their meeting for fifty pounds

— and yet I shall not see it, after all — for Christiern will go, all I can say or do. — Lord bless me ! I forgot to bolt him in when I came up with the children — the bird's flown, for certain —

(Going in a great hurry.)

HELMGAARD.

Good Mrs. Ulrica, you need not be alarmed ; your prisoner is very safe, I can assure you, though you forgot to bolt him in : I have given him an employment that will detain him a full hour, for I design to have the pleasure of restoring my deliverer, myself, to his family.

MRS. ULRICA.

O ! that will be delightful ! — Then

you'll keep him here all night! — but that will vex him terribly, and of all the day and nights of the year, one would not have any body vexed this day or night — more especially the man, who, as I may say, is the cause of all our illuminations, and rejoicings, and dancings—no, no, happen what will, we must not have him vexed.

HELMGAAR.

He shall not be vexed, I promise you; and, if it be necessary to keep your heart from breaking, my good Mrs. Ulrica, I'tell you a secret, which I had intended, I own, to have kept from you one half hour longer.

MRS. ULRICA.

A secret! dear sir, half an hour is

a great while to keep a secret from one when it's about one's friends : pray, if it be proper — but you are the best judge—I should be very glad to ear just a little hint of the matter, to prepare me.

HELMÅAR.

Then prepare in a few minutes to see the happy meeting between Christiern and his family : I have sent to his cottage for his wife, to desire that she will come hither immediately.

MRS. ULRICA.

O ! a thousand thanks to you , sir ; but I am afraid the messenger will let the cat out of the bag.

HELMAAR.

The man I have sent can keep a secret —— Which way did the lady Eleonora go?—Are those peasants in the hall?

(Exit. Count.)

MRS. ULRICA, *following.*

She went towards the west drawing-room, I think, sir. —— Yes, sir, the peasants are at supper in the hall. (*Aside.*) Bless me! I wonder what messenger he sent, for I don't know many—*men* I mean — fit to be trusted with a secret.

(Exit.)

**SCENE** — An apartment in Count **HELMAAR**'s castle — **ELEONORA**. — **CHRISTINA**. Little **KATE** and **ULRIC** asleep on the floor.

**ELEONORA**.

Poor little creatures! they were quite tired by sitting up so late : is their mother come yet?

**CHRISTINA**.

Not yet; but she will soon be here, for my brother told Aleftson to make all possible haste. — Do you know where my brother is? — he is not among the dancers. I expected to have found him near lady Eleonora.

## ELEONORA.

He is much better employed ; he is gone down into the great hall, to see and reward some poor peasants who have brought home the knapsacks of those unfortunate soldiers who fell in the last battle : — your good Ulrica found out that these peasants were in the village near us — she sent for them, got a plentiful supper ready, and the count is now speaking to them.

## CHRISTINA.

And can you forgive my ungallant brother for thinking of vulgar boors, when he ought to be intent on nothing but your ladyship ! — then all I can say is, you are both of you just fit for

one another : every *fool*, indeed, saw that long ago.

(A cry behind the scenes of “ Long live Count Helmaar ! long live the good Count ! long live the poor man’s friend ! ”

CHRISTINA , *joins the cry.*

Long live Count Helmaar ! — join me , Eleonora—long live the good Count ! long live the poor man’s friend !

(The little children waken , start up , and stretch themselves.)

ELEONORA.

There , you have wakened these poor children.

ULRIC.

What’s the matter ? I dreamed father was shaking hands with me.

ENTER MRS. ULRICA.

KATE.

Mrs. Ulrica! where am I? I thought I was in my little bed at home — I was dreaming about a purse, I believe.

MRS. ULRICA.

Was it about this purse you were dreaming? — (*shows the purse which the children found in the wood.*) — Come, take it into your little hands, and waken and rouse yourselves, for you must come and give this purse back to the rightful owner; I have found him out for you. — (*Aside to Christina and Eleonora.*) And now, ladies, if you please to go up into the

gallery, you'll see someting worth looking at.

(Exeunt.)



SCENE — A hall in Count HELMAAR's castle.  
— Peasants rising from supper in the back scene.

1<sup>st</sup> PEASANT.

Here's a health to the poor man's friend; and may every poor man, every poor honest man — and there are none other in Sweden — find as good a friend as Count Helmaar.

**ENTER CHARLES, *eagerly*.**

**CHARLES.**

**Count Helmaar ! is he here ?**

**OMNES.**

**Heyday ! Charles , the sleeper ,  
broad awake ! or is he walking in his  
sleep ?**

**CHARLES.**

**Where's Count Helmaar, I say ? —  
I'd walk in my sleep, or any way , to  
get a sight of him.**

**1<sup>st</sup> PEASANT.**

**Hush ! stand back ! — here's some**

of the quality coming, who are not thinking of you.

(The peasants all retire to the back scene. — Count HELMAAR, CATHERINE, and ELEONORA appear, looking from a gallery.)

ENTER ALEFTSON and CATHERINE *at one door*, MRS. ULRICA *at the opposite door*, with CHRISTIERN, *followed by the two children.*

CATHERINE, *spring forward.*

Christiern! my husband! alive! is it a dream?

CHRISTIERN, *embracing her.*

Your own Christiern, dearest Catherine.

(The children clap their hands, and run to their father.)

ULRIC.

Why, I thought he was my father,  
only he did not shake hand with me.

KATE.

And Mrs. Ulrica bid me hold my  
tongue.

CHRISTIERN.

My Ulric! my little Kate!

MRS. ULRICA.

Ay, my little Kate, you may speak  
now as much as you will. — (*Their  
father kisses them eagerly.*) — Ay, kiss  
them, kiss them, they are as good  
children as ever were born. — and as

honest : Kate, show him the purse ,  
and ask him if it be his.

KATE.

Is it yours, father?

(Holds up the purse.)

CHRISTIERN.

'Tis mine ; it was in my knapsack ;  
but how it came here, Heaven knows.

ULRIC.

We found it in the wood, father, as  
we were going home, just at the foot  
of a tree.

CHARLES , *comes forward.*

Why, mayhap, now I recollect , I  
might have dropped it there — more

shame for me, or rather more shame for *them* — (*looking back at his companions*) — that were playing the fool with me, and tumbled out all the things on the ground. — Master, I hope there's no harm done : we poor peasant fellows have brought home all the other knapsacks safe and sound to the relations of them that died ; and yours came by mistake, it seems.

## CHRISTIERN.

It's a very lucky mistake ; for I would'nt have lost a waistcoat which there is in Sweden. — My Catherine, it was that which you gave me the day before I went abroad — do you remember it ?

## CHARLES.

Ay, that she does ; it had like to

have been the death of her—for she thought you must be dead for certain, when she saw it brought home without you—but I knew he was not dead, mistress—did not I tell you, mistress, not to give way to sorrow while there was hope left?

CATHERINE.

O joy! joy — too much joy!

ALEFTSON.

Now are you sorry you came with me when I bade you? but I'm a fool! — I'm a fool!

ULRIC.

But where's the cap and coat you used to wear?

KATE.

You are quite another man, uncle.

ALEFTSON.

The same man, niece, only in another coat.

MRS. ULRICA, *laughing*.

How they stare!—Well, Christiern, you are not angry with my master and me for keeping you now?—but angry or not, I don't care, for I wouldn't have missed seeing this meeting for any thing in the whole world.

ENTER COUNT HELMAAR, ELEONORA,  
and CHRISTINA.

CHRISTINA.

Nor I.

ELEONORA.

Nor I.

HELMAAR.

Nor I.

THE PEASANTS.

Nor any of us.

HELMAAR, *to little Ulric.*

My honest little boy, is that the

purse which you found in the wood?

ULRIC.

Yes, and it's my own father's.

HELMAAR.

And how much money is there in it?

(The child opens the purse and spreads  
the money on the floor.)

ULRIC, *to Mrs. Ulrica.*

Count you, for I can't count so  
much.

MRS. ULRICA.

Eight ducats, five rixdollars, and —  
let me see how many — sixteen caro-

lines (\*) : — 'twould have been a pity, Catherine, to have lost all this treasure, which Christiern has saved for you.

#### HELMAAR.

Catherine, I beg that all the money in this purse may be given to these honest peasants. — (*To Kate.*) Here, take it to them, my little modest girl. — As for you and your children, Catherine, you may depend upon it that I will not neglect to make you easy in the world : your own good conduct, and the excellent manner in which you have brought up these children,

(\*) A rixdollar is 4 s. 6 d. sterling ; two rixdollars are equal in value to a ducat ; a caroline is 4 s. 2 d.

would incline me to serve you, even if your husband had not saved my life.

CATHERINE.

Christiern, my dear husband, and did *you* save count Helmaar's life?

MRS. ULRICA.

Ay, that he did.

CATHERINE, *embracing him.*

I am the happiest wife, and —  
(*turning to kiss her children*) — the  
happiest mother upon earth.

CHARLES, *staring up in Count Helmaar's  
face.*

God bless him! I've seen him face

to face at last, and now I wish in my heart I could see his wife.

CHRISTINA.

And so do I most sincerely : my dear brother, who has been all his life labouring for the happiness of others, should now surely think of making himself happy.

ELEONORA, *giving her hand to Helmaar.*

No, leave that to me, for I shall think of nothing else all my life.

THE END.