

## Scene 2

*Enter FEDRA. She doesn't see FLORIANO.*

FEDRA: I can't settle to anything;  
I've been wandering round this madhouse  
like a ghost without a castle,  
and my steps bring me here each time,  
to the place that I first saw him.  
Love has cut me down like a scythe,  
my senses now control my sense,  
and my whole being is possessed.  
They say that love is a madness,  
a fire that blazes within,  
but I am covered in fire  
and I would give myself to him,  
do anything with him, for him,  
to douse this fire in my brain,  
in my heart and in my body.

FLORIANO: (*Aside.*) Then we'll fight madness with madness.

FEDRA: (*Aside.*) Madness rises up to madness.  
It changes colour, changes form,  
like the artful chameleon,  
matching itself to its desire.

FLORIANO: I've lost something! It's quite, quite gone.  
I don't suppose that you've seen it?

FEDRA: I don't suppose that you've seen me,  
the torture and torment of my heart?

FLORIANO: You are beyond doubt a lady  
of noble sensibility  
that you should grieve so much for my loss.  
You'll get your reward in heaven,  
my daughter.

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FEDRA: In heaven or hell,  
what difference does it make to me.  
My appetite is here and now.

FLORIANO: What you need is fresh goat's cheese.  
Help me find my favourite pebble  
and I'll give you some aubergines.  
Ho, everyone that thirsteth  
come ye to the waters and drink!

FEDRA: (*Aside.*) There's a fury in him I can't touch.

FLORIANO: And those who hath no money,  
let them come by too and eat.  
Bring me the brains of the Baptist!

FEDRA: If I could find your brains for you,  
I'd return them on a salver.

FLORIANO: Herodias! Jezabel! Whore!  
You've sent Salome to seduce me,  
to parade her cruel beauty  
in front of me and steal my mind.

FEDRA: And do you think me beautiful?  
I'd dance for you, undress for you.

FLORIANO: My love has teeth as white as pearls,  
and her lips as red as peppers;  
her kiss is like a burning jewel.  
I loved her once, I love her still.  
Get thee behind me, Salome.  
You can't tempt me. Your mouth is pus.

FEDRA: And for pearl-white teeth and red lips,  
you lost your mind?

FLORIANO: I lost my mind  
and in its place I found wisdom  
and then the devil appeared to me.  
And with the pact we made I lost...

FEDRA: What, my poor love?

FLORIANO: I don't remember.

FEDRA: Do you remember the ribbon,  
the green ribbon that I gave you?  
I said that it would bring you hope.

FLORIANO: I threw that hope back into the game,  
into the mad game we play here,  
and the ribbon just... disappeared.  
Fortune dealt me a better hand.

FEDRA: What better hand?

FLORIANO: We gamble here  
with stakes much higher than you think.  
A lifetime's hope and happiness  
on the single turn of a card.  
And I was dealt the Queen of Hearts...  
but now I see a Knave of Spades  
and he may win my Queen away.  
It's time to turn the card and see.

FEDRA: You'd gamble the hope I gave you?

FLORIANO: I'd gamble all the hope in the world,  
the hope of the future and the past.

FEDRA: Shall I give you another ribbon,  
in case you should just lose your Queen?

FLORIANO: I'll accept your ribbon gladly,  
but I may give it to my love.  
Where is it?

FEDRA: Here. Come and get it.  
Can't you see it?

FLORIANO: You take it off.

FEDRA: My hands are trembling. Untie it.

*FLORIANO begins to remove the ribbon from her throat.*

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