

Scene 18

LAIDA: I've been outwitted by half wits,
with not a right thought between them.
God help me, I love a madman,
who prefers a madwoman to me.
There's no dignity, no joy, in that.
Yet their madness fits hand in glove
and I cannot understand their world
or break their circle of delusion.
But if I could, he would love me,
he would love me and cast aside
his Guinevere of ice and snow
for the fire of my eyes and heart.

Scene 19

Enter FEDRA.

FEDRA: Laida, what brings you back down here?
As if I didn't know.

LAIDA: Laida?

FEDRA: The most terrible thing's happened.

LAIDA: (*Singing.*) Volare, cantare, oh oh oh oh.

FEDRA: My whole world's gone, at one fell swoop.
My uncle's sending me away.
My father's written from Madrid
ordering me home at once.
There's someone wants to marry me.

LAIDA: An old man with an old man's lance,
not a knight with burning lips.

FEDRA: Laida, it's not your place to spec...

LAIDA: I am the whore of Camelot.
I know Arthur's deepest secrets.
I've lain with Galahad and Merlin.

FEDRA: What's got into you. Stop screeching!

LAIDA: What's got into me? Anyone
and everyone. I know who I am.
I am the whore of Camelot!

FEDRA: Laida, you're not yourself today.

LAIDA: Where's the drink you were to bring me?
I told you to bring some sweet wine.
Wench, I'll teach you to obey.

FEDRA: If you think you can talk to me...

LAIDA: I'll have you flogged till you drop,
my ugly little serving maid.

FEDRA: You're mad. She's gone mad, she must have.
She's lost her wits.

LAIDA: I've found my wits!
I looked into his eyes and drank.

FEDRA: Pull yourself together.

LAIDA: Drop dead.
Volare, cantare, oh oh oh oh.

FEDRA: (*Aside.*) Her madness holds the key to him.
My Mistress, your wish is my command.

LAIDA: I've been kept waiting overlong.

FEDRA: The kitchen lad broke the bottle.

LAIDA: Then have him whipped very soundly.
Unless you want him for yourself.
(*Aside.*) What does she think she's playing at?

FEDRA: You'll not harm a hair on his head!
He's Lancelot's favourite squire.

LAIDA: You dare mention my lover's name?
Your filthy lips frame his fine name?
With your snake's tongue, your pig's snout, you...

FEDRA: Fool, whore, don't you know we're married?

LAIDA: (*Aside.*) She's seen through me. (*Aloud.*) Who
married you?

FEDRA: The Pope. (*Aside.*) I envy her madness,
but by following her frenzy
they'll let me stay in the madhouse too.
(*Aloud.*) The Pope of Rome in his white suit.

LAIDA: (*Aside.*) She's playing the same game as me.
(*Aloud.*) I'll buy a rope to hang your pope
and I'll have Lancelot instead.

FEDRA: Lancelot wouldn't spit on you
even though you were dying of thirst.
You're just another ugly servant.
(*Aside.*) In madness veritas. Why not?

LAIDA: You'd be too frightened to lie with him.
You're frigid, you're like death warmed up,
you're as cold as a piece of fish,
too stuck up to have it stuck up.
(*Aside.*) Now we're really telling it straight.

FEDRA: Bring me an axe and I'll kill her!

LAIDA: I'll rearrange your face for you!

FEDRA: Lying whore!

LAIDA: Frigid bitch!

They fight.

Scene 20

Enter SANCHO, the Administrator of the asylum, and VALERIO.

SANCHO: You must excuse me, Valerio.
I think that's the matter settled,
but this fracas's driving me insane.