

(SIMON and LIZETTE dance, then exit. LT. GOV. and FLORENZE enter. FLORENZE is carrying his lawbook.)

LT. GOV.: *Mon Dieu!* Why does everything fall on my shoulders! I write a speech -

FLORENZE: The speech I wrote for you, Your Excellency?

LT. GOV.: I had to make corrections.

FLORENZE: Indeed, Your Excellency.

LT. GOV.: I changed the spelling of "casquette".

FLORENZE: I'm sure I spelled it correctly.

LT. GOV.: Well, yes. When I discovered that, I had to change the spelling back. Did you have to use that word so many times?

FLORENZE: My apologies, Your Excellency.

LT. GOV.: And now the casquette maids are nowhere to be found -

SECY: They are in the convent.

LT. GOV.: I'll have to hunt them myself.

SECY: They are in the convent.

LT. GOV.: And one of them has gone missing! What could have happened to her?

SECY: Your concern does you credit, Excellency.

LT. GOV.: She has the casquette with the King's gold. I am responsible.

SECY: Of course. I will order a search.

LT. GOV.: (*sits, mops his forehead*) All this work is exhausting. You have no idea what a governor does.

SECY: I'm sure I don't, Your Excellency.

(NANETTE, FELICE, and FANCHON enter.)

FELICE: Your Excellency! Whatever is wrong?

NANETTE: You look worn out.

LT. GOV.: Oh I am, I am.

NANETTE: How can we help?

LT. GOV.: Florenze?

FLORENZE: Yes, Excellency.

LT. GOV.: Perhaps the casquette maids are in the convent.

FLORENZE: *Quel genie!*

LT. GOV.: Go and see.

FLORENZE: But, Excellency - -

LT. GOV.: Ah, it's to your credit that you are worried to leave me. But these fine girls will look after me until your return. Won't you?

(NANETTE, FELICE, and FANCHON agree *ad lib.*)

FLORENZE: But -

LT. GOV.: And take your time. No need to get heatstroke.

(FLORENZE exits.)

FANCHON: (*to LT. GOV.*) Maybe a gypsy has cast a spell on you - -

LT. GOV.: I believe you three have cast a spell on me.

(enter ETIENNE)

missing. And now that girl is the daughter of the Comte D' Altena - the richest and most powerful man in Italy - and we don't know where she is! This is *terrible, terrible*. I'm doomed. *(to FLORENZE)*
Florenze, consult that law book of yours and find some precedent to protect me.

ETIENNE: A marriage to a Contessa would legitimize my plans for a Louisiana republic under my control.
(FLORENZE moves slightly away, leafing through law book.)

LT. GOV.: *(to ETIENNE)* Have you lost your head? I'm in enough trouble without being implicated with Bras Pique and his kidnapping of Governor La Farge.

ETIENNE: Kidnapping is the least of it.

LT. GOV.: I don't want to know!

FLORENZE: Here, Excellency! I think this is what you are looking for. It's a very old law - not used in modern times - but it's valid. You could find a "whipping boy".

LT. GOV.: A whipping boy?

FLORENZE: *Oui*. A whipping boy takes the punishments for royalty and government officials.

LT. GOV.: Why would anyone want to do that?

ETIENNE: If you pay a man enough, he will do anything.

FLORENZE: Someone greedy and not too bright.

LT. GOV.: Where do we find such a one?

(Simon enters.)

ETIENNE: *La Providence (beat)* Come here, my good man.

SIMON: Me?

ETIENNE: *Oui*. The Governor has an opportunity for you.

SIMON: The governor is not here.

LT. GOV.: The *acting* Governor.

SIMON: Oh.

FLORENZE: How would you like a new set of clothes?

ETIENNE: A purse of gold?

FLORENZE: All the food and wine you can eat and drink?

LT. GOV.: *(sniffs his handkerchief)* A bath.

SIMON: Are these trick questions?

ETIENNE: We have a job that requires someone smart, strong, and brave. Someone who wants to better himself.

SIMON: Would it pay enough so that a man could buy the tobacco and liquor required to bid for a casquette maid?

ETIENNE: Of course!

SIMON: What do I do?

ETIENNE: Nothing for now. Just be ready if needed.

SIMON: If needed?

FLORENZE: And you might never be needed.

ETIENNE: But if you are.

SIMON: What will I do?

ETIENNE: Nothing. Almost nothing.

FLORENZE: You will be the Acting Governor's whipping boy. A great honor.

SIMON: Whipping boy? I don't like the sound of that.