

Cambridge University Press

978-1-107-68118-7 - The Blue Monster (Il Mostro Turchino): A Fairy

Play in Five Acts

Carlo Gozzi Translated by Edward J. Dent

Excerpt

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THE BLUE MONSTER



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## CHARACTERS

ZELOÙ, *the Blue Monster*  
 DARDANÈ, *Princess of Georgia, in love with*  
 TAÈR, *Prince of Nanking*  
 FANFÙR, *King of Nanking, father of Taèr*  
 GULINDÌ, *a slave, second wife of Fanfùr*  
 SMERALDINA, *maidservant to Dardanè*  
 TRUFFALDINO, *servant to Taèr*  
 PANTALONE } *Ministers of State to Fanfùr*  
 TARTAGLIA }  
 BRIGHELLA, *Captain of the King's bodyguard*  
 A GIANT KNIGHT *in armour*  
 A HYDRA *with seven heads*  
 MAGNATES *of the Realm*  
 A SMALL BOY  
 SOLDIERS  
 SLAVES  
 AN EXECUTIONER

Scene—Nanking and the neighbourhood.

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## SYNOPSIS OF SCENERY

THE scenes of the play are numbered as in the original Italian according to the Continental system: the word *scene* denoting not a change of scenery but the entrance or exit of a character. The changes of scenery are indicated as they occur.

ACT I *A forest with a mountain at the back and the entrance to a cave.*

ACT II SCENES 1–3. *Throne room in the Royal Palace at Nanking.*

(It may be advisable to draw a curtain at the end of Scene 1 and act Scenes 2 and 3 in front of it, so as to enable Scene 4 to be prepared.)

SCENES 4–11. *A room in the Queen's apartments.*

ACT III SCENES 1 & 2. *A corridor in the Palace.*

SCENES 3–6. *The forest and cave as in Act I.*

SCENES 7–9. *A room in the Queen's apartments.*

ACT IV SCENES 1–3. *A corridor in the Palace.*

SCENES 4 & 5. *A dark dungeon.*

SCENES 6–8. *Outside the city walls.*

SCENES 9 & 10. *A room in the Queen's apartments.*

ACT V SCENE 1. *A corridor in the Palace.*

SCENES 2–6. *A dark dungeon.*

SCENES 6 & 7. *Transformation scene.*

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## ACT I



*A forest with a mountain at the back and a cave.*

## SCENE 1

ZELOÙ (*the Blue Monster*) comes out of the cave.

*Zelouì.* Ye heavenly powers, I thank you! Now at last  
 My thousand years of punishment are past.  
 The immortal Sages of the Sacred Hill,  
 For that I once rebelled against their will,  
 Decreed that I should wear this loathsome shape,  
 From which their sentence grants me no escape  
 Until amongst the race of human kind  
 One faithful pair of lovers I could find,  
 Whose constant ardour and devoted faith  
 Would stand unshaken in the face of death.  
 And I have found them: Dardanè the fair  
 Princess of Georgia and the Prince Taèr.  
 Oh cruel fate! Before I can obtain  
 My long awaited liberty again,  
 I am compelled to make them undergo  
 Trials undreamt of, suffering, grief and woe.  
 I fain would help them, but my lips are sealed;  
 What lies before them may not be revealed.  
 They travel to the Court of far Cathay,  
 And through this forest they must take their way.  
 Their servants ride ahead, the news to bring

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## ACT I, SCENE 1

To Taèr's father, China's aged king;  
 But this I must prevent, and they shall seem  
 To have forgot, as if it were a dream,  
 Who were their masters, whence it was they came,  
 Who they themselves were, or what was their name.

*(He fetches a bottle and a glass)*

Once let them drink of this enchanted brew,  
 They shall forget all that they ever knew.

*(He puts the bottle and glass on the ground and retires into the cave)*

## SCENE 2

*Enter TRUFFALDINO and SMERALDINA, singing a popular tune. They are both dressed in Chinese costume. TRUFFALDINO holds an umbrella over SMERALDINA'S head. This scene (improvised in the original) should be acted as much as possible in mime, and free use may be made of the song at odd moments.*

*Smeraldina.* Oh, I'm so tired, I'm so tired! Do you think we shall ever get to Nanking? Riding, riding, riding, all the way from Georgia, for days and days on end! I'm ready to drop, and the horses are too.

*Truffaldino.* We can let them graze a bit; there's plenty of time. The Prince and Princess are a long way behind. Let's sit down. Lucky horses! I wish *I* could graze a bit! Aren't you hungry?

*Smer.* Hungry? I should think I was, and thirsty too. Oh, it's so hot!

*Truff.* Well, sit down in the shade. We shall soon be at Nanking; look, you can see the towers over there. It can't be more than a mile or two.

*(They sit down and make love)*

*Smer.* I like this place; I wish we could stop here and not go to Nanking.

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*Truff.* But we *must* go there; and the sooner the better. I want something to eat.

*Smer.* I know what *you* want, Truffaldino; you want to find other girls to make love to, and as soon as you get to Nanking, you'll forget all about Smeraldina.

*Truff.* (*with mock chivalry*). Forget my adored Smeraldina! I am the servant of the Prince Taèr. Like master, like man. He's in love with Princess Dardanè; she's the only woman in the world for him, just as Smeraldina is for me. All the ladies in Georgia were raving for him, but he wouldn't look at them, said they were all as ugly as sin, compared with Dardanè. 'My Dardanè! My adored Dardanè!'

*Smer.* Well, if you're like the Prince, I'm like my mistress Dardanè. She'd never so much as dream of anybody but Prince Taèr. I don't wonder either. Do you remember the wicked magician and how he threw an enchanted veil over her that would make her fall in love with every man she saw? It had no effect on her at all; she could think of nobody but Taèr.

*Truff.* Yes, and then do you remember all the horrid creatures he slew—the monkey that was all on fire, the donkey whose tail was a sharp sword and the great bird that spat boiling oil in his face? And how he fought with them all for the love of Dardanè? And wouldn't I do just the same for Smeraldina?

*Smer.* (*prosaically*). I wish you'd find me something to drink. I'm dying of thirst.

*Truff.* Oh my poor dear Smeraldina! Oh my lovely princess! (*Searches wildly all over the stage*) Not a drop of water anywhere! Oh, whatever shall I do? What's that? A bottle? Yes, a bottle it is—and a glass too. However did they get there? (*Business with bottle, etc.*) Perhaps some shepherd left it behind, or another traveller, maybe. (*Smells bottle*) I wonder what it is? it smells rather like Cyprus wine. (*He pours out a glass and offers it to SMERALDINA with exaggerated ceremony*)

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## ACT I, SCENE 2

Adorable princess, may I supplicate your exalted highness to permit your most devoted humble slave to offer you a glass of wine?

(SMERALDINA *drinks and at once forgets everything*)

*Smer.* Who are you?

*Truff.* (*sings a snatch of the song*). Your own Truffaldino, your ever faithful lover, the very mirror of constancy like his master Prince Taèr of Nanking.

*Smer.* Go away! Truffaldino? I've never heard of him, nor Prince Taèr nor Nanking neither. Go away!!!

*Truff.* (*sings again*). That's a good joke! Come along. We must hurry up and make for Nanking; the Prince and Princess may be here any minute and if they find us doing nothing there'll be trouble. *You'll catch it from your mistress Dardanè!*

*Smer.* (*very angry*). How dare you talk to me? My mistress indeed! Dardanè? Who's she? I never heard of her. You go away!

*Truff.* You've got the magician's veil on you, you're after new lovers, I can see. Come along, make haste!

(*He seizes her by the arm and tries to take her to the horses. She struggles and slaps his face, escapes from him and runs away towards Nanking.*)

*He sings again; miming business, expressing complete amazement and exhaustion, almost fainting. He reaches for the bottle and drinks. Bewilderment and forgetfulness*)

What's this place? How did I get here? On horseback, was it? Yes, I'm sure of that, I feel so stiff behind. I can't remember a single thing.

Why, there's a town! I hope I can get something to eat there. I want my dinner, I want my dinner. I can't remember anything else, but I'm quite sure of that.

(*Exit towards Nanking*)

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## SCENE 3

*ZELOÙ comes out of the cave.*

*Zeloù.* Begone, poor wretched slaves! Yet you once more  
 Will meet and love each other as before,  
 If those you serve have courage to defy  
 The dangers which about their paths now lie.  
 Hither they ride, Taèr and Dardanè;  
 Rise, murky clouds, and overcast the day,  
 Let lightnings rend the skies, let thunders roll,  
 So that their horses, out of all control,  
 Separate one from the other. Each alone  
 Must here seek shelter. So shall I make known  
 To each their fates.

Already Dardanè  
 Towards my cavern makes her woeful way.

*(ZELOÙ retires into the background. Darkness, thunder  
 and lightning, etc.)*

## SCENE 4

*Enter DARDANÈ, terrified and distracted.*

*Dardanè.* Oh whither shall I fly? where seek for help?  
 Do I still live? Indeed a miracle  
 It was that saved me. Ah, what did I say?  
 'Twas my misfortune saved me, if he's dead,  
 My own adored Taèr, Taèr, Taèr!  
 Where can I find him? Him, the only hope  
 And comfort of my misery! Cruel stars,  
 Why do you thus torment me?  
*Zeloù (advancing).* Dardanè,  
 Your cruel stars have laid but little on you  
 Compared with what's to come.  
*Dard. (terrified).* Who spoke? What's this?



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## ACT I, SCENE 4

Monster, your shape appals me! Oh ye Gods,  
 How can I save myself? Oh heavens!

*Zelou.* Stay!

You cannot fly from me. I raised the storm,  
 The thunders and the lightnings which divided  
 Dardanè from Taèr.

*Dard.* Then make an end;  
 Deprive me of my life, for I'm deprived  
 Of all I lived for.

*Zelou.* Oh unhappy woman,  
 I pity you. Taèr is still alive,  
 But you no more will see him. Rather tremble  
 For *your* life; but not now. Your dire misfortunes  
 And those that must befall Taèr as well  
 Are only just beginning.

*Dard. (despairingly).* But Taèr—  
 Shall I see him no more?

*Zelou.* Yes, you will see him,  
 And yet you will not see him. He for you  
 Must now be counted lost. Your cruel fate  
 Lays harsh conditions on you, dreadful trials,  
 To test your courage and your constancy;  
 Yes, you must face your almost certain death,  
 Death to Taèr and death to Dardanè,  
 Ere you may see each other once again,  
 And find your happiness.

*Dard. (forcing herself to courage).* Then tell me, monster,  
 What the conditions laid upon me are.

*Zelou.* Be not affrighted, Dardanè. The first  
 I lay upon you now, as you shall see.

*(ZELOÙ stamps on the ground. DARDANÈ is suddenly transformed into the appearance of a young man dressed as a noble oriental warrior)*

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*Dard.* Oh, what is this? Why am I thus transformed?

*Zeloù.* You tremble at so little? Do you desire  
 To find your lost Taèr?

*Dard.* How can you ask  
 If I desire that one and only thing  
 That ever I desired?

*Zeloù.* Then to Nanking  
 Proceed, and there present you as a man  
 To Taèr's father, the old King Fanfùr,  
 Take a new name and offer him your service.  
 Your slaves are there already; when they see you  
 They will not know you. You shall seem to all  
 To be a man. Remember, you must never  
 Disclose yourself to anyone. Should you  
 By the least gesture your true self betray,  
 Taèr is lost for ever.

*Dard.* Is this all?  
 So light a task you lay on me? I swear  
 I never will betray myself.

*Zeloù.* So light?  
 So light you think the task? You little know  
 To what extremes of agony and woe  
 That manly shape will bring you. Mark my words.  
 Whatever happens, hide from all your name,  
 Hide that you are a woman, steel your soul  
 To steadfastness and courage, in the last  
 Extremes of danger count your life as nothing,  
 Or else Taèr is lost to you for ever.

*Dard.* You think to frighten me with mysteries  
 More hideous than yourself? My solemn vow  
 I here renew. Never will I reveal  
 That I am a woman. All that I may suffer  
 I will endure. Only I pray you, tell me,