

Orlando Orlando: Synopsis

Zoroastro foretells that the hero, Orlando, will finally achieve Glory; the people approve. But Orlando cannot decide between Love and Glory. Zoroastro urges him to abandon Love and wage war: the people celebrate. Orlando is troubled by dark visions and resolves to find Glory in Love: a hero is no less strong in the arms of a woman.

Dorinda tries to understand her own emotions: is this Love? The song of the nightingale comforts her. Orlando, perhaps hallucinating, believes that he has heroically rescued the beautiful Isabella. Dorinda tries to hide her feelings, whatever they are.

Angelica declares her love for Medoro: the people hear this and are afraid. Angelica hopes that Orlando will be calm. Angelica and Medoro proclaim their relationship: Zoroastro warns that Orlando will be jealous. Angelica distracts Orlando with questions about Isabella and challenges him to prove his faithfulness. Orlando vows to prove his love, by fighting monsters everywhere.

Dorinda consoles herself with vain hopes. Angelica sends Medoro away, to avoid Orlando's anger. Dorinda notices their intimacy and confesses that she was also in love with Medoro. Angelica and Medoro try to console her, but she will not be comforted. Zoroastro warns that Angelica's affair with Medoro is dangerous, and that Love leads people into error.

Angelica admits that she treated Orlando badly, but her love for Medoro was too strong. Orlando confronts Angelica and becomes mad with anger and jealousy: he believes he is in Hell.

INTERVAL

Medoro asks Dorinda for protection from Orlando. Dorinda is happy that Medoro is attracted to her; she realises that she is still in love. The people know that darkness is upon them now.

Orlando, still hallucinating, first imagines himself in love with Dorinda; then that she is the murdered brother of Angelica. He vows revenge but abandons his weapons: now he thinks he is dying. Dorinda cannot watch any more: her thoughts turn to Medoro again.

Orlando confronts Angelica again, threatening suicide. Dorinda concludes that Love is a dangerous illusion, a wind that turns people's heads. Zoroastro instructs the people to learn from Orlando that Love leads to madness, and to pay attention to the hero's glorious victory. A dark storm is rising, where the hero will triumph. Rain turns to fire and hailstones...

Dorinda tells Angelica that Orlando has killed Medoro. Orlando confronts Angelica for the last time: she weeps, but he has no mercy. He declares that he is purging the world of all evil monsters, and falls into a trance...