

# **TWO SLATTERNS AND A KING**

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## PERSONS

THE KING

CHANCE THE VICE

TIDY THE FALSE SLATTERN

SLUT THE TRUE SLATTERN

THE  
PROLOGUE  
AND THE  
EPILOGUE  
SPOKEN  
BY  
CHANCE

# **TWO SLATTERNS AND A KING**

## PROLOGUE

I am that cunning infidel  
By men called CHANCE,—you know me well.  
It is through me you met your wives;  
Through me your harvest blights or thrives;  
And one and all, through me, to-day  
Hither you came to see the play,  
Which if your favor still you lend,  
As now, so on until the end,  
You shall be taught what way a King  
Though a sublime and awful thing  
And even wise, may come to be  
A laughing-stock,—and all through me!

*(Exit)*

(ENTER KING)

KING

I am the King of all this land:  
I hold a sceptre in my hand;  
Upon my head I wear a crown;  
Everybody stands when I sit down. *(Sits)*  
*CHANCE (Appearing to audience; he is invisible  
throughout the play to the other players in it.)*  
Excepting me,—please bear in mind  
I sit whenever I feel inclined. *(Sits)*

KING

Although my lands are wide and long,  
My walls right thick, my armies strong,  
I am not wholly satisfied.

CHANCE

That is because you have no bride.

KING

Who speaks?—Come forth and, if you dare,  
Say once again what causes my care!  
Why I am discontent with life!

CHANCE

It is because you have no wife.

KING

A woman in my royal house!  
A woman! A wife! A bride! A spouse!  
Bold stranger, this is not the cure,  
For a woman I could never endure!

CHANCE

Per-CHANCE to-morrow you will find  
You have altered your imperial mind.

*(Exeunt KING and CHANCE severally)*

(ENTER TIDY)

TIDY

I am TIDY, I have been  
All my life both neat and clean.  
From my outside to my in  
Clean am I unto my skin.  
Every day into a bucket  
My hands I dip, my head I duck it;  
And if the water plenty be  
I sometimes wet some more of me.  
This is my kitchen, where you will find  
All things pleasant and to your mind;  
Against the wall in orderly pairs—  
One, two,—one, two,—observe my chairs.

In the middle of the room my table stands:  
I would not move it for many lands.  
My basins and bowls are all in their places;  
The bottoms of my pots are as clean as your faces.  
My kettle boils so cheerily,  
It is like a friendly voice to me;  
About my work I merrily sing,  
And I brush my hearth with a white duck's wing.  
Oh, full is every cupboard, sharp is every knife!—  
My bright, sunny kitchen is the pride of my life!

*(Exit TIDY)*

(ENTER SLUT)

SLUT

I am SLUT; I am a slattern,  
You must not take me for your pattern.  
I spend my days in slovenly ease;  
I sleep when I like and I wake when I please.  
My manners, they are indolent;  
In clutter and filth I am quite content.  
Here is my kitchen, where I stir up my messes,  
And wear out my old shoes and soiled silk dresses.  
My table sags beneath the weight  
Of stale food and unwashed plate;  
The cat has tipped the pitcher o'er,—  
The greasy stream drips onto the floor;  
Under the table is a broken cup—  
I am too tired to pick it up.

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