

*Music and trumpets.  
Flowers fall from the sky.  
A Great Spectacle.*

CHORUS

Frozen roses fell in showers when the Queen and her courtiers  
walked abroad.  
Colored balloons hovered motionless in the air.  
Lovers dallied upon divans.  
The ice went so deep and so clear that there could be seen,  
congealed at a depth of a few thousand feet,  
here a porpoise,  
there a flounder!!!

START

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ORLANDO

Orlando was gazing at a frozen flounder five fathoms beneath the  
frozen sea . . .

*An androgynous, captivating figure—Sasha—skates by in slow motion,  
circling Orlando.*

SASHA

*(In a Russian accent)* When a figure skated by him . . .

CHORUS

Orlando, upon seeing the figure, shouted in his own mind,

ORLANDO

*(Shouting at the girl)* melon, pineapple, olive tree, emerald, fox in  
the snow—

CHORUS

All in the space of three seconds.  
He did not know whether he had heard her,  
tasted her,  
seen her,  
or all three together.

And then *the boy* skated by—  
for alas, Orlando,  
a boy it must be.

*Orlando looks at the chorus—incredulous.*

CHORUS

Legs, hands, and carriage, were a boy's.  
No woman could skate with such speed and vigor.

ORLANDO

*(To the audience)* Orlando was ready to tear his hair with vexation  
that this fine person was of his own sex.

*He asks the Queen:*

ORLANDO

All embraces are out of the question?

*The Queen nods.*

SASHA

*(In a Russian accent)* But no boy ever had a mouth like that—

CHORUS

no boy had those breasts—

ORLANDO

no boy had eyes which looked  
as if they had been fished from the bottom  
of the sea.

SASHA

The unknown skater came to a standstill.

ORLANDO AND CHORUS

SHE WAS A WOMAN.

*Cheering.*

*Sasha speaks Russian to Orlando, something ending in "Marousha Stanilovska Dagmar Natasha Iliana Romanovitch."*

SASHA

*(To the audience)* A translation. Hello. I am the Princess Marousha Stanilovska Dagmar Natasha Iliana Romanovitch.

ORLANDO

Orlando trembled, turned hot, turned cold, longed to crush acorns  
beneath his feet.

*(To Sasha)*

Will you come to dinner?

SASHA

Parlez-vous français?

ORLANDO

*(Amorously)* Oui.

*They go off, arm in arm.*

*They sit at a grand banquet table with many nobles.*

*Sasha laughs and chatters in French.*

*Orlando is dumbstruck.*

ORLANDO

*(To the audience)* Whom had he loved, what had he loved, until  
now? An old woman, all skin and bone. A nodding mass of lace  
and ceremony.

Watching the Princess, the thickness of his blood melted. The  
ice turned to wine in his veins. His manhood woke; he grasped a  
sword in his hand; he charged . . .

*Sasha speaks gibberish French to Orlando; it sounds like a sexual  
invitation.*

SASHA

*(To the audience)* A translation. Would you have the goodness to pass the salt?

*Orlando speaks gibberish French to Sasha; it sounds like a sexual invitation.*

ORLANDO

*(To the audience)* A translation. With all the pleasure in the world, madam.

*He passes her the salt.*

*Sasha speaks to Orlando in gibberish French, putting her hand on his knee.*

*Orlando looks at her, bewitched.*

CHORUS

A translation.

Who are these bumpkins?

Does the Duke always slobber like that?

Is the figure with her hair like a maypole really the Queen?

THE QUEEN

Thus began an intimacy between the two which soon became the scandal of the Court.

END

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*The Queen gets up and slams down her chair.*

*Everyone gasps.*

*Orlando and the Princess do not notice.*