

Vineyard I Was and Vineyard

I Am

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Italian

Advanced
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A king, averse to marriage, commanded his steward to remain single. The latter, however, one day saw a beautiful girl named Vigna, and married her secretly. Although he kept her closely confined in her chamber, the king became suspicious and sent the steward off on an embassy. After his departure the king entered the apartment occupied by him, and saw his officer's wife sleeping. He did not disturb her, but, in leaving the room, dropped one of his gloves accidentally on the bed.

When the husband returned he found it, but kept a discreet silence, ceasing, however, all demonstrations of affection, believing his wife had been faithless. The king, anxious to see again the beautiful woman, made a feast and ordered the steward to bring his wife. He denied in vain that he had one, but brought her at last, and while every one else was talking gayly at the feast she was silent. The king observed it and asked her the cause of her silence; and she answered with a pun on her name: "Vineyard I was and Vineyard I am, I was loved and no longer am: I know not for what reason the Vineyard has lost its season."

Her husband, who heard this, replied: "Vineyard thou wast and Vineyard thou art, loved thou wast and no longer art: the Vineyard has lost its season for the lion's claw." The king, who understood what he meant,

answered: "I entered the Vineyard, I touched the leaves, but I swear by my crown that I have not tasted the fruit."

Then the steward understood that his wife was innocent, and the two made peace and always after lived happy and contented.

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