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The Marriage of Signor Cajusse

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There was a rich farmer who had one daughter, and she was to inherit everything. She fell in love with a count — a charming man, it must be said, but one who possessed exactly ten scudi a month and not a great deal more. When the count went to ask for her hand, her father sent him away without ceremony.

But the girl and the count were not discouraged. She had a thousand scudi of her own, saved carefully. She gave him half.

"Take this," she said, "and travel across the Campagna. Stop at every farm, give five scudi here and ten there, and tell each tenant that when the time comes they are to call you Signor Cajusse and speak of you as their landlord. Then bring my father round on a drive and let him see what he sees."

Signor Cajusse — for such the count now called himself — did exactly as she instructed. He hired a carriage, returned to the farmer, and said: "You have quite misunderstood my situation. Come out with me and I will show you who I am."

Off they drove across the Campagna. At every farm and villa the tenants came out, bowing low: "Welcome, Signor Cajusse! Health to you and long life! God prosper you!" The labourers left their work and crowded round to kiss his hand. At a fine villa whose real owner was known to be away, a bribed servant received them with all honours, brought out wine from a bottle Cajusse had left behind the day before, and called him "master."



By the time they drove home, the farmer could hardly forgive himself for nearly losing such a son-in-law.

The wedding was celebrated quickly, with the girl's remaining five hundred scudi funding a handsome apartment for appearances. A few weeks later the couple sat counting their last few coins.

"What do we do now?" said Cajusse.

"Now I go to my mother," said the bride, entirely untroubled, "and tell her everything."

Her mother, being a practical woman who understood that what was done could not be undone, talked the farmer round. He set them up with an income and found Cajusse a proper position. They were very happy, which is, after all, the point of the whole enterprise.

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