

SCENE 1.I.

At the Hotel de Bourgogne in 1640, the stage is set for an evening of theater. The hall, resembling a tennis court adapted for performance, features a dimly lit, oblong space with a complex arrangement of seats, a stage adorned with royal emblems, and no chairs in the pit area, creating a dynamic and improvised ambiance for the audience. An array of lusters, about to be lit, promises illumination and spectacle. As the curtain rises, the space buzzes to life with a diverse crowd pouring in: troopers announce their entrance with authority, claiming free access by virtue of their military affiliations, while a bustling mix of burghers, lackeys, and pages, among others, fill the room with anticipatory chatter and various activities.

The scene vibrates with the energy of early spectators seeking entertainment and pastime; some engage in fencing, others settle for card games, casting aside formality for leisure and camaraderie. The atmosphere is charged with anticipation, as the crowd awaiting the play 'La Clorise' navigates the social playground of the hall. Moments of humor and tension unfold—a guardsman chasing a moment of romance, a pickpocket sharing his dubious expertise with eager apprentices, and pages mischief-making under the watchful eye of authority—all painting a vivid tableau of a night at the theater in the 17th century.

A sense of community and revelry dominates as individuals from various walks of life converge in this shared space, each with their motives and expectations for the evening's entertainment. Names like Rotrou and Corneille echo the cultural and historical significance of the venue, reminding attendees of its storied past. Anticipation builds for Master Balthazar Baro's 'Clorise', setting the stage for a night of intrigue, drama, and the collective experience of theater-going in an era where such events were central to social and cultural life.