



# The Merry Widow

illustrations by Diana Schoenbrun  
text by Kamala Schelling

## *The Pontevedrian Embassy, Paris*

The tiny Balkan country of Pontevedro is in trouble: Strapped for cash, the national government is teetering on the edge of bankruptcy. But Baron Mirko Zeta, the Pontevedrian ambassador to France, has a plan to save his beloved homeland. He knows that Hanna Glawari, a phenomenally wealthy widow from Pontevedro, is staying in Paris, and he intends to introduce her to Count Danilo Danilovitch, an attaché at the Pontevedrian embassy. If Hanna marries Danilo, Baron Zeta reasons, she will return to Pontevedro with her money, whereas if she marries a Parisian, she (and her millions) will remain in France.

What Baron Zeta hasn't counted on is the fact that Hanna and Danilo already know each other. Lovers in their youth, they were forced to part by Danilo's aristocratic parents, and she has resented him ever since. As for Danilo, he was left heartbroken by their separation and has decided never to fall in love again. But when Hanna and Danilo unexpectedly meet in the Pontevedrian embassy, old sparks begin to ignite new fires, and soon both Hanna and Danilo find themselves in a whirlwind of comic entanglements, diplomatic disputes, and undying love.

## Main Characters



**Hanna Glawari**  
*A rich young widow*



**Count Danilo Danilovitch**  
*An attaché at the  
Pontevedrian embassy*



**Baron Mirko Zeta**  
*Pontevedro's ambassador  
in Paris*



**Njegus**  
*Baron Zeta's assistant*



**Valencienne Zeta**  
*Baron Zeta's wife, in love  
with Camille de Rosillon*

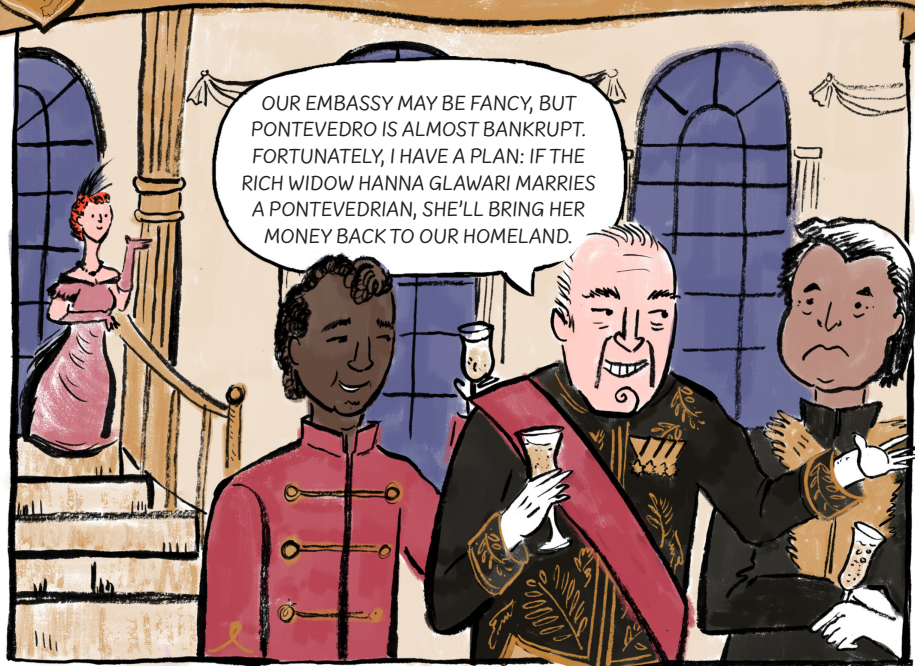


**Camille de Rosillon**  
*A young Frenchman,  
in love with Valencienne*





# A lavish ball in the Pontevédrian embassy in Paris.



OUR EMBASSY MAY BE FANCY, BUT PONTEVEDRO IS ALMOST BANKRUPT. FORTUNATELY, I HAVE A PLAN: IF THE RICH WIDOW HANNA GLAWARI MARRIES A PONTEVEDRIAN, SHE'LL BRING HER MONEY BACK TO OUR HOMELAND.



While Baron Zeta worries about finding a husband for Hanna, his wife, Valencienne, is enjoying a dalliance of her own.



I LOVE YOU!

I LOVE YOU, TOO, BUT I NEED TO SEEM RESPECTABLE. WE CAN'T TALK LIKE THIS IN PUBLIC.

WELL IF I CAN'T SAY IT TO YOU, I'LL WRITE IT!



When Hanna arrives, the men of the Pontevedrian embassy shower her with compliments.



Baron Zeta has the perfect Pontevedrian to woo Hanna: the ladies' man Danilo Danilovitch. Unbeknownst to Zeta, however, Danilo and Hanna already have a history.





The following day, Hanna hosts a garden party at her villa. Baron Zeta puts his plan into action.

PONTEVEDRO NEEDS  
HANNA'S MONEY—  
AND YOU NEED TO  
MARRY HER FOR  
THE SAKE OF OUR  
COUNTRY.

I'LL NEVER  
GET MARRIED,  
NOT AS LONG  
AS I LIVE.

THEN I'LL HAVE  
TO GET CAMILLE  
TO MARRY HER.

BUT CAMILLE IS  
ALREADY IN LOVE WITH  
A MYSTERY WOMAN ...



Valencienne, meanwhile, has lost  
her fan in the garden. Hanna finds it.

"I LOVE YOU!"  
THIS MUST BE A  
MESSAGE FOR ME  
FROM DANILO!

When Valencienne realizes her fan is gone, she is terrified that her husband will find it. She meets Camille in the pavilion to talk.

IF MY HUSBAND FINDS OUT ABOUT OUR LOVE, I'LL BE RUINED! BUT I HAVE AN IDEA: IF YOU MARRY HANNA, THEN NO ONE WILL SUSPECT US.

BUT I LOVE YOU, NOT HANNA!

TRUST ME ON THIS ONE.



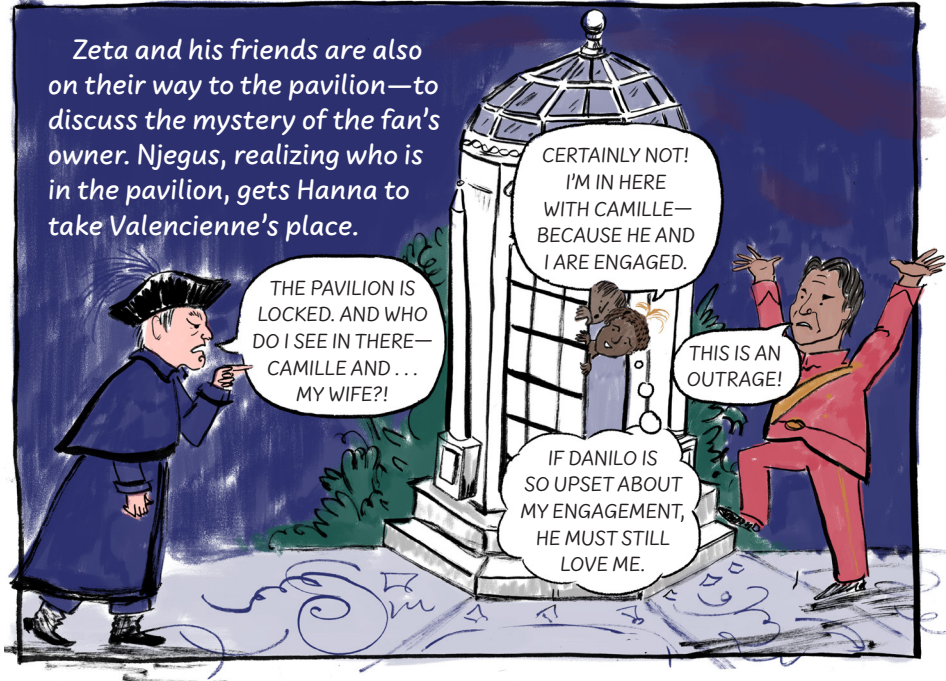
Zeta and his friends are also on their way to the pavilion—to discuss the mystery of the fan's owner. Njegus, realizing who is in the pavilion, gets Hanna to take Valencienne's place.

THE PAVILION IS LOCKED. AND WHO DO I SEE IN THERE—CAMILLE AND ... MY WIFE?!

CERTAINLY NOT! I'M IN HERE WITH CAMILLE—BECAUSE HE AND I ARE ENGAGED.

THIS IS AN OUTRAGE!

IF DANILO IS SO UPSET ABOUT MY ENGAGEMENT, HE MUST STILL LOVE ME.





Danilo heads to Maxim's, one of Paris's wildest nightclubs, to drink his sorrows away.





Njegus inadvertently reveals that the missing fan belongs to Valencienne. Zeta is furious—but he sees an opportunity.



But this is just what Danilo needed to hear.

