

THE PRINCE OF PEASANTMANIA

A Play In Two Acts

by

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CHARACTERS

JESTER
PRINCE INNOCENT
LORD GREGORY
GLORABELLA
PRINCE RUDOLPH
LORD NOOKIE
CARDINAL MUNCH
JEREMIAH AGATE
MAGDA
SAUNA
BROTHER CONFIDENCE
COUNT MASH
PINA, THE SEER

also

SOLDIERS, GUARDS, DANCERS,
PEASANTMANIANS, etc.

TIME: The Present

PLACE: The Island Kingdom of
Peasantmania, of the
Mainland Coast

THE PRINCE OF PEASANTMANIA
An Adult Fairytale Extravaganza in Two Acts
By Frank Gagliano

INNOCENT: What is there in them that makes them mean and ugly and vicious? —Makes them, in their agony, need to punish each other? Yes: EACH OTHER! The answer's there —there in that daisy chain of pain! Each one the torturer! Each one the victim! Chasing each other with electric prods around the rim of — what . . . —the Cardinal's abyss! How can that be? When it's only for the amusement of the Mainland? —Oh, God; there's the horror! Performing that dance of pain for their sick laughter! —I'm babbling, Glorabella! But the answer is simply . . . I must stay. Because, finally — and I'll never understand this — . . . the ones who chased me, beat me, betrayed me . . . I love them all.

Prince Innocent is summoned to Peasantmania to attend his mother's funeral and, he thinks, to meet, finally, a younger brother he's never met—Rudolph.

His mother had kept Innocent away from the politics of Peasantmania, isolated on the Island of Arcadia, to shield him from corruption. Innocent's first indication that all is not well in Peasantmania is when a woman sneaks into his rooms and paints his throat with her tongue. Then Innocent discovers that his brother Rudolph is some kind of a perverted tyrant who wants the throne. Then there's the laughter that comes from the heavens and quickly goes. And here's the creaking and sudden shift of the ground that keeps you tilted for a few seconds, before the earth rights it's self again.

Then —the Insurrection! And Innocent takes flight through his kingdom, with Rudolf and the Rudolph forces in pursuit. Accompanying, or also pursuing Innocent, are: Glorabella, Innocent's sweet companion from Arcadia—and the wise-mouth, beautiful Sauna, who falls in love with Innocent —and Sauna's ambitious deadly sister Magda —and the despairing Jester, who desires Glorabella —and Pina, the warn-out Seer —and The alcoholic Cardinal, suffering from doubt and existential fatigue —and at times, it seems, the entire populace of Peasantmania are against Prince Innocent and hot on his heels.

Hovering over the chase is a huge eye, hanging above stage “like God's surrealistic yo-yo.” —Then, too, there's the unseen Mainland, that seems to control everything — as well as that celestial laughter, constantly mocking the goings on.

Beginning in a Royal palace and fleeing to what he thinks will be the sanctuary of the cellars of the dissolute Cardinal's Cathedral, Innocent escapes to the Jester's quarters, replete with funhouse mirrors, balloons and a giant trampoline, on which Innocent finally makes love to Sauna.

The journey ends in the sewers of Peasantmania, where Innocent confronts his evil brother, Rudolph, in a fight to the finish.

Told in song, rhyme, hip language, and raunchy and imaginative humor, this wild comedy/drama/extravaganza—first presented at The Milwaukee Repertory Theatre during the Vietnam War—has been rewritten, and resonates more than ever, in this turbulent America, losing its innocence on a global scale.

ACT 1

Scene 1

Discovered: The JESTER. He juggles.
Dances, in a fantastic light show.

A HUGE EYE APPEARS!.

JESTER

(Stops juggling)

There! There! See it?! AN EYE! Shot full of bloody arteries! Forever staring! Just hanging there like -- what? God's surrealistic yo-yo!? Like some pop-art Christmas ornament!? But where's the string? Huh!? Where's the TREE!?

(Shift)

God, wouldn't you love to stab that eye? See tons of syrupy fluid, oozing down from that celestial gash? Thick pupil-pus, making fingers that spider along in slow-motion waves? Pickling the populace for posterity?

(Shift)

Say, how's that for bullshit rhetoric? Well. I'm a Jester. And part of my job is to screw around with language.

(Shift)

Of course you'd love to stab that eye! Everyone would love to stab an eye! Sometime in life!

(EYE -- out.

JESTER juggles again!)

Stab?! Eye?! What eye?! Don't be spooky! THIS -- IS PEASANTMANIA! A grrrrraand place! A Gemutlich place! A Gay place! THIS IS PEASANTMANIA!!!

(WALTZ MUSIC. Lights blindingly up on stage, as WALTZERS in black and white dress EXPLODE onto stage. EACH wears a black and white mask.

Black drapes fly in.

LORD GREGORY enters; very disturbed)

JESTER

Once upon a time -- on the Island Kingdom of Peasantmania -- a Prince finally came home!

(WALTZ MUSIC -- OUT!
The DANCERS freeze, as--
PRINCE INNOCENT runs in!)

INNOCENT

Lord Gregory! Just what kind of a dirty place is this?!

GREGORY

Dirty?

INNOCENT

As in "depraved!" "Degenerate!"

GREGORY

With all due respect, Prince Innocent: The night is heavy with treachery. So there is no time for--

INNOCENT

But someone put a tongue down my throat!

GREGORY

Who did?

INNOCENT

HOW WOULD I KNOW?! You haven't allowed me to meet anyone! I don't know anyone by name!

JESTER

Dites-moi, Prince Innocent: si c'était un homme, ou une femme?

INNOCENT

Une femme, certainment! She just invaded my rooms!

JESTER

Here only three days and twenty-two hours and already some woman has tried to lick his throat! I've lived here most of my life, and I can't even get anyone to lick my STAMPS!

INNOCENT

Here only three days and twenty-two hours, Lord Gregory, and I've just been subjected to the most disgusting, disturbing, disgraceful happening that has ever happened to me in my whole twenty-five years, four-and-a-half months!!! And the first three days were so great! Idyllic!

JESTER

"Idyllic." Sure. Because he was kept under wraps.

(GREGORY gestures. Black drapes fly up)

INNOCENT

Lord Gregory! What are you doing with those black drapes?

GREGORY

No need for them any longer. The mourning period is over, Prince Innocent.

INNOCENT

But mother's only been dead five days!

(DANCERS weep and wail)

GREGORY

It's the law. and Queen Christina made it clear she wanted it this way. As soon as she knew the end was at hand. "A country's business must go on," she said.

JESTER

Even if we don't.

INNOCENT

My mother knew she was dying?

(DANCERS stop weeping and wailing)

GREGORY

Yes.

JESTER

Did she ever.

INNOCENT

Did mother suffer much?

GREGORY

Yes.

JESTER

Did she ever.

GREGORY

All right now; clear the place! Prepare the room for the Ball.

INNOCENT

What Ball?

GREGORY

Tonight! Your coronation Ball!

(MUSIC. Ramp and upper section
move into place. DANCERS quickly
bring in a white throne with black canopy.
A black and white crown, with dazzling jewels,
rests on it. JESTER moves up the ramp.
MUSIC OUT)

INNOCENT

(Mesmerized, as HE looks at the throne and crown)

Then, it's really true. I'm to be king.

Yes.

GREGORY

Lord Gregory, I'm afraid.

INNOCENT

GREGORY

Nothing to be afraid of. I'm your guardian. And Secretary of State. And, until you take the throne, the Commander-In-Chief of all the Armies. Nothing to be afraid of. I'm here to protect you.

(DANCERS make nature sounds:
crickets, birds, owls, etc.,
under following)

INNOCENT

But, on Arcadia -- the Island where I've lived for twenty-five years and four-and-a-half months -- all I do, on my Island paradise, all I'm supposed to do is enjoy myself. I listen to my classical records and I read my books and I look at the green sea. The temperature is always temperate there, so I walk around almost naked. I breathe in pure air there. I talk with my friends there. And I look at the green sea, and at the iris-colored sunsets, That's all I'm supposed to do there.

(SOUNDS -- OUT)

And now I'm supposed to be king of this Island kingdom? Lord Gregory, I used to play king with Glorabella, my sweet companion; used to play out all the good things I'd do if I were king. Playing king was very exciting. But now that it's not a game. . . I am frightened.

GREGORY

(Who has picked up the crown)

Nothing to be afraid of. I'm here to protect you.

INNOCENT

My mother used to say that. Every time she came to see me. “I’m here to protect you.” Never knew what she meant by that; since there was nothing to protect me from, on my island paradise of Arcadia. Then one day, she brought a troupe of puppeteers.

(DANCERS act like puppets.
Above, JESTER plays the PUPPETEER,
manipulating invisible strings)

I THREW UP! I don’t know why, but I yelled: “PROTECT ME FROM THEM!”

GREGORY

There are no puppets or puppeteers on this Island Kingdom.

(JESTER, above, laughs. GREGORY looks up, sharply.
JESTER stops laughing; stops playing Puppeteer.
GREGORY gestures to the DANCER/PUPPETS. THEY exit.)

INNOCENT

Lord Gregory: Where’s my brother Rudolph?!

(Thunder. A FIGURE materializes.
HE wears a black cape with black
hood covering his face)

JESTER

There! Rudolph! Innocent’s brother! You guessed it: Rudolph is bad news.

INNOCENT

Lord Gregory: Where is my brother Rudolph?!

GREGORY

He. . .is. . .still delayed.

JESTER

(Aside)
“Liar, liar! Pants on fire!”

INNOCENT

My younger brother, Rudolph: Still delayed? Shit!

GREGORY

Prince Innocent, don't use that language.

INNOCENT

Well, every time I think of poor Mother suffering -- and wanting me to meet a younger brother I've never met--

JESTER

(Above)

-- Wanting?! Ha!

GREGORY

--as YOU told me she did -- when you persuaded me to leave my island paradise of Arcadia to come here -- every time I think of that, I get impatient to meet him! And when I get impatient, I always swear!

(Booming LAUGHTER is heard

What's that laughter?

(THUNDER. RUDOLPH dematerializes)

JESTER

(Above)

See? Rudolph's going. But he'll be back.

(Above, GLORABELLA enters)

GLORABELLA

(Above)

Inny! Inny!

INNOCENT

Glorabella! What's the matter?!

GLORABELLA

(Above)

Inny! They're breaking your unbreakable records!

INNOCENT

Who are?!

GLORABELLA

(Above)

I don't know! People!

GREGORY

Where is this happening, Miss Glorabella?!

GLORABELLA

(Above)

At the library! I did what you said, Inny! I brought them there to donate!

INNOCENT

Lord Gregory! Do you hear?! Glorabella, the sweet, 16-year-old companion I took with me from Arcadia, says people she doesn't know are breaking my donation of out-of-print unbreakable bel canto records at the library!

JESTER

(Above. Blocking Glorabella
from going down the ramp)

I hope you didn't look behind the stacks, sweetheart! That branch is a horny hornet's nest!

GREGORY

(Into portable transmitter)

Guards! Rush to library and stop record destruction.

GLORABELLA

(Above)

That's not all, Inny! There are slums! And something in the air that makes your eyes tear! And garbage in the streets! Even in the nice sections!

INNOCENT

I thought this was an affluent kingdom, Lord Gregory!

JESTER

(Above. Moving in on GLORABELLA)

Don't think I haven't noticed you alone, sweetheart!

GLORABELLA

(Above)

Don't call me "sweetheart!"

JESTER

(Above)

--sweetly sauntering through our sleazy streets!

GREGORY

Affluence and slums, Prince Innocent, are not, I'm afraid, incompatible.

GLORABELLA

(Above; still trying to get by JESTER)

And all the men make slurping noises with with their mouths when they pass you! And they try to touch you!

INNOCENT

Do you hear that, Lord Gregory! They try to touch Glorabella after they SLURP!

JESTER

(Above)

We're a country of slurpers, sweetheart!

GREGORY

It's their way of being friendly.

INNOCENT

I'm responsible for Glorabella, Lord Gregory!

GLORABELLA

(Above)
You're responsible for me, Inny!

JESTER

(Above)
Glorabella! Let me show you where I live!

INNOCENT

I pledged her dying mother I'D take care of her!

GLORABELLA

(Above)
You pledged my dying mother you'd take care of me, Inny!

JESTER

(Above)
It's got fun house mirrors, Glorabella!

GREGORY

We'll both take care of her.

JESTER

(Above)
And balloons all over the floor, Glorabella!

GLORABELLA

(Aside)
Please get out of my way!

JESTER

(Aside)
And a trampoline, Glorabella!

GREGORY

LET HER PASS!

JESTER

(Above)

A TRAMPOLINE, GLORABELLA! THINK OF IT!

(GLORABELLA runs down the ramp.
SHE is about to run into INNOCENT's arms)

GREGORY

Stop!

(GLORABELLA stops)

There is no more time for horseplay or questions! And stop calling the Prince, "Inny!" He's Prince Innocent in this court. At least until he's crowned king! Now, Prince Innocent, prepare to meet your subjects.

INNOCENT

Meet them? Finally? When?

GREGORY

In a few minutes. Now, put this crown on!

INNOCENT

But I'm not king yet.

GREGORY

It's a prince's crown. You must meet your subjects with this crown on! Prepare!

(INNOCENT picks up the crown.

LORD GREGORY exits)

JESTER

(Strolling down the ramp)

How do you prepare for a deluge of pigeon shit?

GLORABELLA

Inny, it was terrible. They don't like music. That's why they broke your records.

(INNOCENT can't seem to put on the crown.
HE places on the throne)

INNOCENT

I'm sure it was only a few hooligans.

JESTER

No hooligans on Peasantmania. Just pigeons.

GLORABELLA

No! There were lots of them! Lots of them!

INNOCENT

Anyway, you heard: Lord Gregory is taking care of it.

JESTER

Greg is very good at pigeon-shit deluges.

INNOCENT

(To JESTER)

Say, can't you run out for iced tea or something?

JESTER

Just pretend I'm not here, Prince.

(distantly)

'Cause I'm really not.

(Shift)

Anyway, I couldn't "run" if my life depended on it.

(Distantly)

And it may. It may.

GLORABELLA

Listen, Inny: Remember, on Arcadia, how my eyes used to itch whenever I felt terrible things were going to happen?

JESTER

Ah! Presentiments.

GLORABELLA

And terrible things usually did happen?

INNOCENT

Yes.

GLORABELLA

Well, look at my eyes now. Look.

INNOCENT

Wow, I can't see the whites!

GLORABELLA

Like a thousand slivers of glass! I've never felt anything like it. We've got to leave.

JESTER

A scratchy sweetheart with presentiments. God, I think I can love her.

GLORABELLA

Inny, you said we'd only stay awhile. But you might not. You're getting too interested. I feel it. We should have left as soon as we got here.

INNOCENT

Now, cut it out, Glorabella! Just don't nag at me! We're free to leave! Whenever we want!

JESTER

(Sadly)

Oh, sure.

GLORABELLA

I don't mean to nag, Inny. But you should have seen them -- those mobs! Grabbing and bending and breaking your unbreakable records.

JESTER

(Real concern)

Did they hurt you, Cassandra?

GLORABELLA

No. Well, just a few bruises. But it's nice of you to ask.

(Double take)

Cassandra?

INNOCENT

Glory, what do you want from me?

GLORABELLA

To leave. Now. Go back. Have fun the way we used to?

INNOCENT

Glorabella, we will; but there are just a few formalities my mother wanted me to--

GLORABELLA

(Moving away)

Oh!

JESTER

(Irish brogue)

Why, Miss Glorabella, if fun's what yer after havin', mosey on down to me fun-hideaway digs, and I will tickle you silly, while we bounce on me trampoline, in a grand game of ripky-pipky!

GLORABELLA

You know something: I don't trust you.

JESTER

(Very serious)

You may just have to.

INNOCENT

We'll have fun again, Glorabella.

GLORABELLA

When?

JESTER

Why not now? Here? Playing a game of --
(He picks up the Prince's crown
from the throne)
"catch the crown."

(Throws it to Glorabella)

INNOCENT

Don't! It's not proper! Give it to me!

(THEY play. GREGORY enters
just as the crown comes his way.
HE catches it.

Moment of silence and inaction)

JESTER

Better give it to the Prince, Lord Gregory. It is his.

(THE EYE APPEARS.
BOOMING LAUGHTER)

GREGORY

(Placing the crown on INNOCENT's head)
LET THE AUDIENCE BEGIN!

(FANFARE. COURTIERS enter above.
THEY descend the ramp. Sing
THE PEASANTMANIAN NATIONAL ANTHEM.
One soloist stands out and sings
some solo lines. SHE is SAUNA.

The JESTER conducts it all

During it, the EYE and LAUGHTER disappear)

SAUNA

(Sings)
Hail to the beauty of our motherland.

COURTIERS

(Sing)
Peasantmania, glory to thee!

SAUNA

(Sings)
Hail to the valor of her countrymen.

COURTIERS

(Sing)
Peasantmania, glory to thee!

SAUNA

(Sings)
Through the world
her goodness shines like Heaven's beacon.

COURTIERS

(Sing)
Making her children so proud and free!

SAUNA

(Sings)
Hail to the father of our motherland.

COURTIERS

(Sing)
Peasantmania, glory to thee!

SAUNA

(Sings)
Long live the father of our Motherland.

COURTIERS

(Sing. Big finish!)
PEASANTMANIA! GLORY TO THEE!

INNOCENT

Good God! What was that supposed to be?!

GREGORY

Our National Anthem.

INNOCENT

But, that's a disgusting piece of music!

SAUNA

(Above)
Bravo!

GREGORY

You can compose a new one.

INNOCENT

(Up to SAUNA)
The voice is marvelous, though.

(SAUNA throws him down a kiss)

GREGORY

May I present member of your royal family.

INNOCENT

Before you do, Lord Gregory, I'd like to say something to everyone, if I may.

(He takes out notes and reads from them)

I want you all to know that I'm glad to be here. I mean, really glad. I haven't seen much of this Island Kingdom yet, but --

(HE stops reading)

INNOCENT

(Continued)

Well, in point of fact, I haven't seen any of it. for my own protection I was sort of whisked away so fast from the boat that night I arrived, that my feet hardly touched the ground. I mean that. Literally. These two big guys, you know, got on either side of me, bent my arms, each took an elbow, picked me up and --

JESTER

Whisk!

INNOCENT

Right. So my kingdom went by in a blur.

JESTER

As you were whisked along!

INNOCENT

Right! But, I have seen most of this Palace. And it's really quite impressive. I mean--the John in my suite--that alone--

(LOUD CREAKING NOISE.
EVERYBODY TILTS)

JESTER

The foundation, your highness. It sinks an eighth of an inch. Every three months.

(CREAKING NOISE over.
ALL un tilt)

GREGORY

Now that you're here, we'll get to that. Have you finished?

INNOCENT

Just to tell you that. . .

(Reads from notes again)

INNOCENT

(Continued)

I look forward, as real king --

(Stops reading. Laughs)

I'm laughing, because I used to play at being king on my island paradise of Arcadia; and once I fell off my make-believe throne and banged my knees and cried. And through my tears I issued a decree abolishing -- guess what?

(No reaction)

Pain! Isn't that funny?

(No reaction)

Anyway--

(Reads from notes again)

I look forward, as a real king, to my responsibilities; the ones my mother, Queen Christina, finally wished me to fulfill, And with your help -- which Lord Gregory assures me you are willing to give -- with the help of God almighty, whom I believe in and who has protected me all my life -- and with the help of my brother Rudolph--

(The JESTER raises his hand.
EVERYONE gasps. Stops when
the JESTER quickly lowers his hand)

I look forward to being a good king.

GREGORY

Are you through now?

INNOCENT

Yes. I am.

GREGORY

Good! LORD NOOKIE!

LORD NOOKIE

(Steps forward. Bows. Always wiping his brow)

Your highness I -- uh --would like to -- offer the services of my investing and -- uh -- law firm -- which has serviced the royal family's business interests --

JESTER

Criminal interest!

LORD NOOKIE

A misunderstanding -- your -- uh -- highness! If your mother had --uh-- had given me just--uh--one hour, I --uh--could have persuaded her to--uh--

JESTER

Hand over the royal treasury!

(The JESTER raises his hand.
ALL laugh! Lowers his hand..
THEY stop laughing)

LORD NOOKIE

Slander! I can--uh--prove it! I --uh--your highness would --uh--give me just--uh--just 15 minutes, perhaps --uh-- I could --

JESTER

Steal your royal eyeballs!

(The JESTER raises his hand.
ALL laugh! Lowers his hand..
THEY stop laughing)

LORD NOOKIE

All right! Poke--uh--fun! But, I --uh-- tell you there is nothing --uh--more important to the --uh-- State than --uh--fiscal--

JESTER

(Together)

LORD NOOKIE

Thievery!

Responsibility!

CARDINAL MUNCH

YOU ARE WRONG, LORD NOOKIE! THERE IS A HIGHER RESPONSIBILITY!

LORD NOOKIE

Well --uh-- yes, I see what you mean -- my good Cardinal Munch. But --uh-- even you must agree that --uh -- as the old saying goes -- man does not live by God alone!

JESTER

In fact: He doesn't live by God at all!

(The JESTER raises his hand.
ALL gasp! Lowers his hand..
THEY stop gasping!)

CARDINAL MUNCH

(To GREGORY)

Can't you silence that braying of Beelzebub?!

GREGORY

You know I can't He's a Peasantmania tradition.

CARDINAL MUNCH

If you are not a moral coward, you'll wave that tradition, so that your blasphemies can be properly dealt with.

JESTER

Forget it! I'm a coward!

CARDINAL

(To Innocent)

Note the overt blasphemies, overt in this land! I was happy to hear you declare your belief in God, your highness. That bodes well. Perhaps now I'll have someone with whom I can examine religious matters. Yes. Every Friday night, after Mass, we'll talk about theology; while together, we share a goblet.

JESTER

Knowing the Cardinal; perhaps you'll share a cask!

(The JESTER raises his hand.
ALL laugh! Lowers his hand..
THEY stop laughing)

CARDINAL MUNCH

(To Innocent)

I want you to stem this wave of moral anarchy! I want you to restore to the
mother church the power to--

INNOCENT

Shouldn't I kiss your ring?

CARDINAL MUNCH

Kiss my -- what?! Why, yes. I'd forgotten.

(INNOCENT bends and kisses the ring)

AGATE

(Stepping forward)

I'm sure he'd rather you kiss his butt.

CARDINAL MUNCH

Revive the Inquisition, Prince Innocent! REVIVE THE INQUISITION!

AGATE

But the Inquisition is with us, Sweet Prince. Isn't that right, Lord Gregory?

GLORABELLA

(Stepping out)

Don't call him "sweet!"

(SHE's yanked back)

LORD GREGORY

There is no Inquisition, Jeremiah Agate.

MAGDA

(Stepping out)

This, Prince Innocent, is Jeremiah Agate.

INNOCENT

(Extending hand)

Hi there, Jeremiah.

MAGDA

(Extending JEREMIAH's hand)

This is Jeremiah Agate: Head Librarian, Art and Social critic; leader of the new humanity --

AGATE

Dedicated to annihilating the old humanity in the arts, the sciences, the body politic!

MAGDA

The old humanity, Prince Innocent, was phony, sentimental, compassionate.

AGATE

The New Humanity, therefore, is real, unsentimental, anti-compassionate; which, when universal, will make us all bone-hard and clear-eyed. We are, therefore, an irritation to the power structure; an irritation that's tolerated because of my large and every-growing following. An annoying irritation; a constant irritation; a --

JESTER

Peasantmania's psoriasis!

MAGDA

It's really a positive force, your highness. A responsible--

INNOCENT

Who are you?

MAGDA

Magda. Some call me, sister Magda.

JESTER

Because she breaks the back of everybody's brother.

MAGDA

(to JESTER)

I'LL SMASH YOUR ELBOWS, YOU LITTLE--!!!

AGATE

Magda!!

MAGDA

(To INNOCENT)

Because of my philanthropic calling, your highness, they call me a "do-gooder," a dirty word in Peasantmania. Why doing good should be a term of reprobation, I don't know. But I couldn't care less. I'm here to use my energies --

SAUNA

(Above. Stepping a bit down ramp)

--to whip the ding-dongs off her boyfriends. OR MINE!

MAGDA

You must forgive, Sauna, Prince Innocent! Sauna's MY SISTER -- and thinks it's cute to have a VILE MOUTH!!!

INNOCENT

Say there, Miss Sauna; I certainly do admire your top voice!

SAUNA

And I admire your tiny bottom, Sweet Prince!

GLORABELLA

(Rushing out)

Inny: Don't let them call you "sweet!"

GREGORY

Stop calling the Prince, "INNY."

(GREGORY yanks her back.

CHIMES. EVERYONE stiffens;
cups one ear)

ANNOUNCER'S VOICE

(Over)

Today's 1P.M. war count of human beings destroyed: Enemy human beings --
31. Peasantmanian human beings -- 9. Mainland human beings temporarily
disabled -- 6.

(CHIMES)

AGATE

Your highness! what about the war!

GREGORY

What about the war?

INNOCENT

What war?

(The EYE appears. Lights dim.

The JESTER raises his arms, as if HE
were conducting a chorus. ALL hum --
a menacing low chord)

GREGORY

Do you want to say something against the war, my brave Jeremiah Agate?

MAGDA

Careful, Jeremiah. Careful.

AGATE

No. No. Of course not.

(HUMMING and EYE--OUT)

1-1-26

AGATE

(Continued. To INNOCENT)

But I do have all the right in the world to object to his drafting members of my New Humanity Movement. Now that you're here, I want you to leave us alone. Call up instead those hundreds of loafers, riffraff, bums still to be cleared out; which, after all, is the purpose of this war.

INNOCENT

I'm going out of my mind! Laughter and eyes and --

CONFIDENCE

(Slightly stoned)

Jeremiah Agate doesn't know what the real reason for the war is, your highness. No one does. No one is supposed to. It's just something that goes on. Isn't that so, Lord Gregory?

(To AGATE)

Now, you know the game, Jeremiah. Play the game, Jeremiah. and do not get excited, Jeremiah.

AGATE

(To INNOCENT)

I want you to crush this turned-on phony Faith Healer! I want you to--

CARDINAL

(With great bitterness)

This, your highness, in Brother Confidence. So called Minister of the -- the --

CONFIDENCE

First Morality Church of Peasantmania, your highness.

CARDINAL

Ah -- yes. Undoubtedly, his highness will be invited to participate in his -- his --

CONFIDENCE

Chapel meetings.

CARDINAL

And, undoubtedly, his highness will accept -- and perhaps -- enjoy himself. THAT IS, if his highness does not mind DAMNING HIS SOUL TO HELL!

(JESTER raises his arms.
The CROWD -- as one -- gasps)

CONFIDENCE

I do off you the hospitality of my humble chapel; where the modern spirit, and the modern world can wrestle with the modern problems, without fear of damnation. I am sure the good Cardinal is joking about that -- in this day and age. By the way, has the good Cardinal invited you to share a ride in his famous DUESENBERG?!

(JESTER raises his arms.
The CROWD -- as one -- gasps)

CARDINAL

(Unnerved)

This so-called Minister should know by this time that that much-maligned machine is now in the royal museum.

CONFIDENCE

(To INNOCENT)

While my establishment may lack the grandeur of the historical-church, I make up for it in progressive and stimulating activities.

MAGDA

They beat each other up. Isn't that right, Brother Confidence?

INNOCENT

How do you know that, sister Magda?

SAUNA

Because my sister Magda used to be A MEMBER of his "humble" chapel!

MAGDA

And my sister Sauna used to be a FUGITIVE FROM PEASANTMANIA!

(JESTER RAISES HIS ARM.
crowd GASPS)

CONFIDENCE

Yes, we scourge each other -- those of us who require it. Scourging is a tradition that dates back to the Medieval Church. Isn't that so, Cardinal Munch?

MAGDA

They take drugs!

CONFIDENCE

Short cuts on the pathway to paradise.

GREGORY

THAT'S ENOUGH! I've been patient with you, Brother Confidence--ALL OF YOU! I've allowed you all to have your say--to let off steam! But my patience is fast running--

MASH

(Materializing)

--OUT OF AIR! And your power is soon to be flushed down the toilet, Greg!

(To INNOCENT)

I'M COUNT FERNANDO MASH! Soldier! Patriot! And devoted servant to the ONE TRUE CROWN!

INNOCENT

Then you're my devoted servant.

MASH

Devoted -- WHAT?! It's time you had a Peasantmanian education. Meet PINA, The Seer!

(PINA materializes. CROWD gasps. Parts)

MASH

(Continued)

No one knows where Pina lives. No one knows who Pina is. But in all our records there is a mention of a Pina, The Seer—a presence you'd do best to fear.

GREGORY

All right! All right, Pina: Recite some of our history for Prince Innocent.

JESTER

And keep it simple, girl! And easy on the rhymes!

PINA

(Elegant. Grand.

Takes HER time taking stage)

I have seen each generation of the royal family die a hideous death.

Especially your great grandfather,
the obese drag-queen,
Franz-Elizabeth;

whom the starving people, in a rage,
choked to death with a pound of garbage.

JESTER

And garbage was selling for fifty dollars a pound in those days!

INNOCENT

(To GREGORY)

I thought Great Grandfather Franz died of the vapors!

PINA

I was there when you born;
the robust son your evil father thought
would be the kind of thorn
that was for Peasantmania meant,

INNOCENT

I, a thorn?! Father wanted a thorn?!

PINA

But, I saw your mother,
whose passion for peace
the evil king could never
conquer,
never dent;

INNOCENT

EVIL again! Evil King?!

PINA/JESTER

(Together)
demand the robust boy
be called Prince Innocent!

JESTER

(To PINA)
Sorry, baby, But I have heard it all before.

GREGORY

Let her go on! LET'S GET THIS OVER WITH!

INNOCENT

And Rudolph, what about my brother?

JESTER

Tell him, Baby, and hit him with the "instead-said-dead-bled" rhymes. I always liked those.

PINA

Fifteen months later, at the sickly Rudolph's birth instead--

INNOCENT

Sickly?! My brother Rudolph, "sickly?"

PINA

the Queen turned red, when the disgusted king said:
"It would be better if that runt were dead."

INNOCENT

My brother Rudolph, a sickly runt?

JESTER

Careful what you rhyme with “runt,” Pina!

PINA

And I was in the Palace,
helping someone to be bled;
when the Queen was told
the King’s throat had been slit,
and that the king was dead.

INNOCENT

A father -- MURDERED!

PINA

(Weary)

Good God! Must I go on with these silly-assed rhymes?

JESTER

That’s you’re role, baby!

PINA

WHAM! How do you like that, “Baby!?”

JESTER

Aaaah! My feet are stuck!

(CROWD gasps and cringes!)

PINA

And that, “Baby!?” Wham!!

JESTER

Aaaaaah!! My kidneys!

(CROWD cringes and gasps!)

PINA

And THIS, baby!!! WHAM WHAM WHAM!!!

JESTER

Aaaaaaaah!!! I'm TWISTED TWISTED TWISTED!

(CROWD: Ditto)

PINA

And don't ever call me, "Baby!" I'm Ms Pina to you!

JESTER

You win! You win, Ms Pina! Just don't whammy the crotch!

PINA

You're lucky I don't whammy your eyeballs, you little fart!

GLORABELLA

Inny, this is getting weirder and weirder!

GREGORY

YOU! —stop calling the Prince, Inny! And PINA — finish your job!

PINA

I happened to be present when the Queen,
fearing he'd be a strong but evil crusader,
decided to send Innocent to the Island of Arcadia.

INNOCENT

Is that why she sent me away?

PINA

Then, when Rudolph's evil grew,
like a gnarled and crooked tree,
she struggled with a plan to set Innocent free--
bring him back -- with his own eyes the corruption to see --
only to decide to let him on Arcadia be;
never to corrupt him with the game of royalty.

INNOCENT

What is all this? Evil? Corruption? Monster?

JESTER

(Body still all twisted)

Pardon, Ms Pina, but did you ever find a rhyme to rhyme with Peasantmania?!

PINA

Finally, I was there when she banished Rudolph --
whose need to hurt became a mania --
FROM THE KINGDOM OF PEASANTMANIA!
Ha! Ha! WHAM!

(JESTER falls, released from spell)

INNOCENT

Banished? But I thought my brother Rudolph had been kidnapped by the
Gypsies.

(JESTER jumps to his feet,
conducts the CROWD)

CROWD

(Sing: B, F#)

Ha! Ha!

SAUNA

(Sings a high C)

Ah!

INNOCENT

Lord Gregory! You told me my brother was ransomed; on his way back to help
me run my kingdom.

(JESTER conducts the CROWD)

CROWD

(Sing: B, F#)

Ha! Ha!

SAUNA

(Sings: C)

Ah!

PINA

(Fatigued)

I have seen the great swaying of the people of Peasantmania; toward the crown; against!

GREGORY

No!

PINA

(Fatigued)

Toward God; against!

CARDINAL

No!

PINA

I have seen the magical power -- when he faced the people face to face -- of your exiled brother, RUDOLPH!

(THUNDER. The black-hooded RUDOLPH materializes again)

PINA

And I see now the fear you'll fear, when you face your brother face to face!

INNOCENT

Fear? Why should I fear my own brother?

MASH

Because he's vowed to kill you!

GREGORY

Unless you kill him first!

INNOCENT

I don't understand!

GREGORY

You're about to get the throne. Rudolph wants the throne. And everyone in Rudolph's way must be annihilated. No half-way measures. No mercy, Example: Rudolph had one of his enemies arrested on some trumped-up charge or other. And when your mother decided to let the poor man go, Rudolph demanded that the man be tortured. And he made out such a convincing case for torture that your mother struck him. In a rage, he threatened to kill her. His own mother! That was when she banished him.

PINA

And Rudolph roamed the world, waiting for his chance to return.

MASH

And remained a leader-in-exile to an underground that has never stopped working for him.

(RUDOLPH dematerializes)

GREGORY

And through the years, your mother thought of nothing but her next visit to you. But I kept after her. Pleaded with her: "Bring Innocent back." But she would say what she'd always say: "Lord Gregory, the game of royalty is till not for Innocent."

INNOCENT

SHE WAS RIGHT!

(CYMBALS)

JESTER

AND NOW PRINCE INNOCENT RENOUNCES THE VERY RESPONSIBILITY HE TOLD US HE HAD SOUGHT! AND PULLS A TANTRUM TO BOOT!!!

(CYMBALS)

INNOCENT

I don't want it! I won't have it! This isn't a modern kingdom. It's the Land of Oz! I want out! I renounce the throne! Give it to Rudolph!

MASH

Yes! Yes!

GREGORY

You can't! On her death bed your mother finally understood. "Get Innocent! I prefer Innocent!"

INNOCENT

She was delirious!

GREGORY

She was in pain! But she was not delirious!

INNOCENT

And she would want me to be happy! She would want me to return to Arcadia, my island Paradise!

GLORABELLA

Yes, Inny! Yes!

GREGORY

You can't return to Arcadia! The Rudolph forces were already there!

INNOCENT

DID THEY DESTROY IT?!!!!!!

GREGORY

No! They just wanted you! Now they're on their way here. You must be

GREGORY

(Continued)

crowned king, unify our people. Then we'll be able to fight --

INNOCENT

No!

GREGORY

Yes!

INNOCENT

What must I do to show you how I feel?!

(HE runs around turning over objects,
smashing whatever can be smashed.
CROWD scurries out of his way.
Spent, INNOCENT falls, exhausted
to the ground.

Silence)

GREGORY

You will be king.

MASH

And remain a country of marshmallows? Never! Your mother's soft ways cut our balls off! But no more! No more! It will be Rudolph; Rudolph and the iron fist of law--Rudolph's law! I'll be back! BUT NOT ALONE!!!

(EXITS.
SILENCE)

GREGORY

My Lords and Ladies: This audience is OVER!

(WALTZ UP. EVERYONE except INNOCENT,
SAUNA and JESTER above waltz off, taking the
throne with them.

THE PRINCE OF PEASANTMANIA remains
on the floor; eyes closed; hands over
his ears)

JESTER

INTERLUDE BEFORE THE FINAL WALTZ.

(EXITS)

SAUNA

(Above. Sings)

Sola, Perduta, abbandonata.

(SHE walks down the ramp)

INNOCENT

Alone. Lost. Abandoned.

SAUNA

(Sings)

In landa desolata.

INNOCENT

In a desolate land.

SAUNA

(Sings)

Orror.

INNOCENT

Horror.

(Beat)

Puccini. Manon Lescaut.

SAUNA

Right. And you feel like the heroine.

INNOCENT

Yes.

SAUNA

You don't look like the heroine.

INNOCENT

Sauna, if you're going to be a wise ass, please waltz off with the rest.

SAUNA

I'm afraid to go home! My sister Magda -- since I just confronted her in public -- in front of you -- will be. . .unpleasant to me.

INNOCENT

"Unpleasant?"

Example: Once, when we were kids, my sister Magda tried to perform a make-believe operation -- on my tonsils. I got wise when I saw the real knife. So did my daddy. Beat the hell out of her. She never forgave me for that.

INNOCENT

She said you were a fugitive. What did she mean?

SAUNA

I ran away from Peasantmania once. I thought I'd find a place out there to make music. But there -- like here -- nobody wanted to make music. Didn't matter anyway. They dragged me back.

INNOCENT

(Probing)

Who dragged you back?

SAUNA

The Mainlanders.

INNOCENT

Those Mainlanders again! What about them?

SAUNA

They forced me back to live with my sister They like to see people who hate one another claw and tear at each other. You really like my voice?

INNOCENT

Yes. But about those Main--

SAUNA

(Looking around nervously; whispering)

If you like, I'll really sing to you; I mean a whole song.

INNOCENT

Why are you looking around like that? And why are you whispering?
--You're afraid to sing here. Right? Why?! --IS THIS PLACE BUGGED?!

(Looks for hidden mikes)

SAUNA

(Still whispering)

I'm not afraid. I sang that crappy National Anthem, didn't I?

INNOCENT

(Still looking for the hidden bugs)

They ordered you to; that's why!

GLORABELLA

That's not why. I wanted to meet you! That's why!

(INNOCENT stops looking)

I heard you were nice, sweet and --Look, this is not a place to make real music
--and I am afraid. anyway, I know a better place --the Jester's place--he lets me
use it!

INNOCENT

(Speaking defiantly to the bugs)

THERE IS NO BETTER PLACE -- THERE WILL BE NO BETTER PLACE TO MAKE
MUSIC THAN IN THE PALACE OF THE PRINCE OF PEASANTMANIA ! Sauna, you
will sing here! NOW! Because I need to be calmed down and singing CALMS ME
DOWN! So sing! . . .anything. . .please. . .

SAUNA

(Sings)

ANGEL HAIR IS--
ANGEL HAIR IS--
STRETCHED ALL OVER THE CHRISTMAS TREE, O.

MADE OF SPUN GLASS--
LIKE A VEIL IS
COVERING ALL OF THE BROKEN BRANCHES.

DIMMING LIGHTS
ARE BLINKING ON AND OFF
THROUGH SPIDER WEBS. . .
SPUN SPIDER WEBS.

(Speaks)

This isn't right. It's not Christmas and it's too sad. I don't why this song
dropped in.

INNOCENT

Because it is right. I know the song. Go on.

SAUNA

(Sings)

UP ABOVE THE--
GOLDEN ANGEL
CRIES FOR ALL
OF HER WOUNDED BRANCHES.

BUT THE SADNESS
OF THE TINSEL--
SILVER TEARS
NEVER REACH THE GROUND, O.

INNOCENT/SAUNA

(sing together)

CARDBOARD BELLS
KEEP SWAYING ON STRING
NEVER TO RING. . .
NO ONE CAN SING.

INNOCENT

(Sings)

ANGEL HAIR IT--
CUT MY FINGER.
RED DROPS FALL
ON THE PLASTIC SNOW, O.

INNOCENT/SAUNA

(Sing together)

DROP BY DROP
ON BROKEN BRANCHES. . .
SEE -- THE TREE IS ME.

INNOCENT

I will not stay here. I never pulled a tantrum on my Arcadia. I was never so frightened on my Arcadia. I've got to get back to my Arcadia. NO! I'm not going to stay here until some power-hungry nut of a brother comes along and does me in! Not a chance! Listen, Sauna. . .Sauna you got away once--

SAUNA

Yes.

INNOCENT

--and you like my tiny bottom.

SAUNA

Oh, yes.

INNOCENT

Help me and my tiny bottom get away.

SAUNA

Impossible.

INNOCENT

You did it before.

SAUNA

Yes. But they dragged me back.

INNOCENT

But you did it! You must have had help. An underground?

SAUNA

Well--

INNOCENT

Spread the word. Help me. I'll take you back with me. Back to a real Arcadia. Where everyone makes music. Just get me off this Island, Sauna. After that, I'll do the rest. I'M A PRINCE. I must have some goddamned value!

SAUNA

I don't know. It's dangerous. And it will take so much time to arrange.

INNOCENT

It can't! It must be soon. Today. Think of it, Sauna; a place to make music.

SAUNA

. . .--Yes! It's worth a try! I'll get word to you!

(SHE impulsively hugs him.

Quickly realizes what she's done.

Backs away)

Yes, my Prince: Wait! . . .Wait!

(SHE quickly exits)

INNOCENT

(Directly to AUDIENCE)

One time my mother made a party for me on Arcadia. I was allowed to drink wine for the first time. I got tipsy. The thing I remember was that everything sounded hollow, like I was in a cave, and I couldn't close my eyes because everything would spin and I'd fall, fall. And yet everything I saw with my open eyes was slightly lopsided and distant -- even close objects -- as if I were looking at them through the wrong side of binoculars. And I dreamed up in my dreams that night a complete poem. I've always hated it because I've never wanted to understand it. But it keeps coming back like a cheap tune.

I have viewed the world
through bloodshot eyes.
And I have heard what seemed like
bloody cries and screams
through sea-shell ears.

And was it laughter that I heard?
And were they human forms --
that vapor that kept swaying around my head?

My brain was lead
and what I said was noise, not words,
that flowed on through the blazing haze
around my bed.

Ah, there -- click, click --
Now the camera's holding steady,
and my mother's sweet, sweet sighs
and cool, cool hand
have put the sparklers out behind my eyes.

But tell me;
after all the aspirin, tomato juice,
and all the soothing words from her. . .

INNOCENT

(Continued)

tell me why my headaches still recur;
and why the finished print remains a blur?

(Pause)

I've got to get out here. Use every means; everyone; not just Sauna.

JESTER

(Appearing)

ANNOUNCING THE FINAL WALTZ; BEFORE ALL HELL BREAKS LOOSE!

(MUSIC: Waltz played by a
very tacky ballroom waltz BAND.)

GLORABELLA waltzes out into
INNOCENT's arms. THEY waltz)

INNOCENT

Glory: Soon as you get a chance, I want you to gather up my recordings, books,
other important things.

GLORABELLA

Inny, are we really going?

INNOCENT

We're going to try. I'll get someone to help me. Just be ready -- and be nice to
everyone.

GLORABELLA

Even him?

INNOCENT

Yes. Even the Jester.

GLORABELLA

But, he keeps after me; says funny things about "ripky-pipky" and like that.

INNOCENT

Humor him. It won't be for long. I promise.

(GLORABELLA, reluctantly, waltzes
over to the JESTER; as PINA waltzes
out and over to INNOCENT.
THEY all waltz)

INNOCENT

I get the impression you're very weary, Ms Pina.

PINA

To the marrow of my soul, Prince.

INNOCENT

And all those whammies!

PINA

Exhausting; more and more. But that's what I do: I whammy.

INNOCENT

Whammy me back to Arcadia! And tag along! Relax there. For the rest of your
life. No need to whammy on my Arcadia.

PINA

That's sweet, sweet Prince; but Pinas never retire. Not voluntarily, they don't.

INNOCENT

You start. Break the habit.

PINA

I break the habit, and they break me. That's the only way a Pina retires. But nice
try, nice Prince. And thanks for your confidence. But never trust a Pina. Never.

(PINA waltzes over to GLORABELLA; as
JESTER waltzes over to INNOCENT)

JESTER

I say, Prince: Please put in a good word to Glorabella for me. I mean, if you're not pinned or anything like that.

INNOCENT

We're just friends; and I'll be happy to. If you help me.

JESTER

Do what?

INNOCENT

Escape.

JESTER

Do you know what they do to unfunny Jesters who help Princes escape?

INNOCENT

I've been sizing you up. I think you're bored here.

JESTER

To the very eyeballs, Prince.

INNOCENT

I'll take you with me, if you help me. I offer you a real adventure; and -- perhaps -- No! Definitely! -- Glorabella in the bargain.

JESTER

Promise?

INNOCENT

My word

JESTER

. . .I've got to MC some street festivities. After that -- we'll see!

(JESTER waltzes over to PINA
and GLORABELLA.

The three of them waltz together;
as LORD NOOKIE waltzes out and over
to INNOCENT. THEY waltz)

LORD NOOKIE

How -- How -- uh -- can I --uh --prove that I am --uh --really on your side?

INNOCENT

Money! Get me lots of money.

LORD NOOKIE

Bribery? (Delighted)

INNOCENT

Yes.

LORD NOOKIE

I'm shocked! (Delighted)

INNOCENT

I'm in a hurry.

LORD NOOKIE

How much?

INNOCENT

As much as you can get in a half hour.

LORD NOOKIE

Agreed!

(LORD NOOKIE waltzes off to JESTER.
THEY dance. PINA and GLORABELLA dance;
as the CARDINAL waltzes out and over
to INNOCENT. THEY waltz)

INNOCENT

. . .so I'm looking forward to visiting the Cardinal's wine cellar. I hear there are many secret tunnels there.

CARDINAL

Yes. Some leading to God knows where.

INNOCENT

I'll try to get away. Soon.

CARDINAL

Good. Then we'll talk. About theology, Peasantmania, and our common enemies.

(The CARDINAL waltzes off to dance
with PINA and GLORABELLA;
as MAGDA and JEREMIAH AGATE
waltz out and over to INNOCENT.

The THREE waltz)

INNOCENT

I'm told, that in your capacity as general agitator, you've made it your business to know all the secret passageways in this palace.

AGATE

Of course.

INNOCENT

Tell me about them. I'll issue a decree recognizing your New Humanity Movement.

AGATE

Trust you?

MAGDA

Tell him about one passageway. If he issues the decree, you tell him about all the others.

AGATE

That panel on the wall: Press it!

(AGATE waltzes over to PINA.

MAGDA waltzes over to LORD NOOKIE.
CARDINAL and JESTER waltz over to
GLORABELLA; as CONFIDENCE waltzes out
and over to INNOCENT)

INNOCENT

--and they tell me there are secret rooms at the Chapel; private rooms where
people can literally disappear.

CONFIDENCE

All right. Here's the key. But, remember -- the New Morality gets official
recognition.

(CONFIDENCE waltzes over to
MAGDA and LORD NOOKIE.

THEY waltz as LORD GREGORY waltzes
out and over to INNOCENT. THEY waltz)

INNOCENT

--and my evil brother, Rudolph?

GREGORY

He's been seen in Peasantmania.

INNOCENT

LORD GREGORY: Is there no way for me to bow out gracefully?

GREGORY

No. You either take the crown and unify us, or chances are you die. Now there;
place this around your neck.

(GREGORY holds up medallion.

All action stops)

GREGORY

This is the Peasantmanian Royal Medallion. The coronation is not official unless this medallion is placed around your neck.

(GREGORY waltzes off to join
AGATE and PINA; as SAUNA waltzes
out to the PRINCE)

SAUNA

It's all set. I've got local clothes ready. And disguises. We put them on and --
ouch —that medallion—

INNOCENT

Gregory said I had to wear it. Or the Coronation's incomplete.

SAUNA

Why should you care? You'll be gone.

INNOCENT

That's true, but —

GLORABELLA

(Dancing over)

What kind of evil is she whispering to you, Inny?

SAUNA

Glory —

GLORABELLA

Don't call me "Glory."

SAUNA

Glorabella: I don't wish evil on the Prince. I'm trying to help him. And you.

GLORABELLA

Sure.

INNOCENT

She is, Glory. She's helping us to escape.

(MAGDA and AGATE dance over)

MAGDA

There is talk about a medallion.

AGATE

Let us have it and I give you another panel to press.

GLORABELLA

Don't let them press your panels, Inny!

SAUNA

Please go, Magda!

CONFIDENCE

(Dancing over)

Why don't you all "please go" and let me chat with the Prince about his medallion.

LORD NOOKIE

(Dancing over)

And while you --uh -- chat, I --uh -- will protect the medallion in my --uh-vault.

GREGORY

(Dancing over)

Innocent, hold on to that medallion!

(ALL ad lib and dance in on INNOCENT,
crowding him upstage; as the MUSIC
becomes discordant and fast)

JESTER

Prince, watch it! Pina's going to --!

(PINA winds up and delivers an exhausting whammy that freezes EVERYONE. SHE weaves her way through the frozen people and takes the medallion from around the neck of the frozen PRINCE INNOCENT)

PINA

I told you not to trust me, Prince. God, I'm tired of all this.
(SHE snaps her fingers and runs out with the medallion; as EVERYONE unfreezes; just as sounds of gunfire and shouting are heard)

MASH

(Entering)

The Insurrection has begun! Now, where's that medallion?!

GREGORY

Mash! It's Rudolph's forces! Prince, prepare to fight!

(GREGORY and MASH engage and exit. JESTER grabs GLORABELLA and exits with her. ALL the rest rush off screaming and shouting as the ramp and upper level and throne are moved off stage.

Silence.

PRINCE INNOCENT alone)

INNOCENT

Alone!

INNOCENT

(Continued)

Glory! Sauna! Magda!

(His shouts echo. INNOCENT runs
upstage and confronts a FIGURE)

FIGURE

(Reaching out hand)

Innocent! I'm a friend! Come with me!

(INNOCENT hesitates. Takes the FIGURE's hand)

JESTER

(Appearing above)

Hold it!

(INNOCENT and FIGURE freeze)

There's a sound that's got to happen. I know it. And you are about to hear a sound. What I don't know is if the sound you are about to hear now will be the sound I mean. Because the sound I mean will mean that a new pallet of darker colors will have been added. The sound I mean will mean a shift in the environment. The sound I mean will mean that the proceedings have been shoved up to a new plateau. I can't describe that sound; but I'll know it when I hear it. Listen.

(SOUND: The dissonant trumpets
of Jericho)

That's it! Clear out all the waltzes from your head! Pull down your cheeks, lower your lip, your mouth line -- and brace yourselves! Because, from here on in --
EVERYTHING SHIFTS!

(SOUNDS crescendos to a deafening peak;
then slowly cross fade into organ music)

ACT ONE, SCENE TWO! THE WINE CELLAR OF PEASANTMANIA'S CATHEDRAL:
WHERE PRINCE INNOCENT LOSES HIS FAITH!

SCENE 2

A wine cellar almost
in total darkness.
A long table; with two
chairs at either end of it.

CARDINAL

(Taking off hood and cloak)

Yes, my boy; it is his Eminence, Cardinal Munch. Nice disguise, eh? Well, what better way to get to know my flock? Relax. You'll be safe down here. You are in the wine cellar of Our Lady Of The Peasants. who is also Our Lady Of The Sacred Heart -- Heartless Heart -- Transplanted Heart. Not that, my boy, is responsibility.

(Looks up. Crosses himself)

Forgive me. Just a little joke. Where are you going?

INNOCENT

Looking for those tunnels that lead out of here.

CARDINAL

They don't exist. One does. And only I know where it is. And I'm not about to show it to you, yet.

INNOCENT

But they're after me and I need to --

CARDINAL

I said -- NOT NOW! Is that not answer enough coming from your Cardinal?

(Shift)

You're safe here. And perhaps, while you're here, a miracle will happen and your forces -- the forces of good, such as they are -- will overcome the forces of evil, such as they are. either way, your being here will put us in a better bargaining position.

INNOCENT

What? Are you planning to use me?

CARDINAL

(Lighting candles around cellar)

Just listen to the divine music. That practicing will go on well into the morning. And in a few hours the choir will begin rehearsing. One hundred heavenly voices. Heavenly. Even when they cry out in. . .pain.

(INNOCENT slumps over table)

Exhausting, this business of being important. Ah, but what you need, what we both need, in veritas -- is vino! Don't be bashful. You must be parched.

(Drinks, draining half the goblet)

Did you know your brother, Rudolph, was an altar boy? Oh, yes. A little saint as he served the Mass. Belonged on a Christmas card, with his rosy cheeks. From the fevers he was always having.

INNOCENT

Always?

CARDINAL

Very sickly. Ah, but no one could swing a church censer like Rudolph. You know, he once filled the censer with sulfur and caused -- you'll pardon the pun -- a mass exodus. But that was merely cute. He'd also instruct the altar boys in

(whispers)

impure and improper acts.

(Full voice)

I once caught one of his seminars. Right down here, in fact. Little boys and sometimes little girls and Master Rudolph, underneath the casks. Lord, but Rudolph was ingenious with spigots! . . .And another time I tracked down a blasphemous wall-writing campaign to your brother: "If God is not dead, then God is evil. Long live God." A non-believing snot, you know. God, I despise non-believers. I'm happy to say that my proving him the blasphemous wall-writer helped to send him on his way. Fortunately, the Mainlanders were on my side then. He had the last word, of course. Just before his boat-to-exile left, Rudolph had the nerve to shout to me, "Beware, Cardinal Munch. My country has betrayed me. Your God will betray you." Imagine? And he might take charge here --that ruthless, perverted--

(Sees INNOCENT dozing off)

CARDINAL

(Continued. Fires next series of questions
at INNOCENT)

Who made the world?

INNOCENT

God made the world.

CARDINAL

Who is God?

INNOCENT

God is the Creator of heaven and earth, and of all things.

CARDINAL

Where is God?

INNOCENT

God is everywhere.

CARDINAL

Is God just, holy and merciful?

INNOCENT

God is all just, all holy, all. . .all—

CARDINAL

—MERCIFUL, as HE is infinitely perfect! Ah Ha! You don't know all your catechism! I knew it! I'd argue with your mother; let me instruct the boy! It is a Cardinal's job to instruct a Prince! "The Arcadia-Priest is good enough," she'd say. I should have taken that as a sign of the demise of my power! Because somewhere within me, something centuries old became enraged! But also — within me — a weariness . . . and an understanding that it really didn't matter . . . NONSENSE! I haven't lost parishioners. THAT'S RIGHT, BROTHER CONFIDENCE! Not a one! And they still kiss our ring! You could bet Rudolph never would have kissed my ring. But you did. And I thank you for that moment; because in that moment that centuries-old position was restored and --

CARDINAL

(Continued. Sees that INNOCENT
is dozing off again)

—Who made the world?

INNOCENT

God made the world!

CARDINAL

Who is God?

INNOCENT

God is the Creator of heaven and earth, and of all things.

CARDINAL

What is man?

INNOCENT

Man is a creature composed of body and soul, and made in the image of God.

CARDINAL

(Grabs INNOCENT by the shirt,
pulls him up)

Blasphemy! Are you saying that God steals?! Stinks?! Sobs?! Stuffs his face?!
Slobbers?! Cheats?! Betrays?! Hurts?! Farts?! Lusts?!

INNOCENT

(Almost choking)

The next one — the next one answers it! — Question: Is the likeness in the body
or in the soul?

CARDINAL

And the answer?!

INNOCENT

The likeness is chiefly in the soul!

CARDINAL

OH, AN ESCAPE CLAUSE, EH?!

(Throws INNOCENT back into the chair,
Laughs, then goes into a terrible coughing fit.
INNOCENT, runs to the CARDINAL;
pats him on the back)

GET AWAY! DO YOU THINK I'M AFRAID TO DIE?! . . . Oh, I'm sorry. forgive me. I'm out of sorts myself. Well, it's not going to be easy for me if that non-believing snot does come to power. Then, too, you're not the only one being pursued, you know. Brother Confidence and his mob are out to do me in. I know my parishioners go to him, too. And what about those ghosts of the heavenly voices, eh? Ah, but that's no excuse. Here you are, weary from fleeing the evil ones -- a guest in God's sanctuary -- and I scream and holler at you. No! No! No! It's not right! Now you just sit there and . . . I know. I'll confess you. Yes. These are uncertain times and uncertain things can happen to one. One must be prepared.

INNOCENT

I went to confession before I left Arcadia. I haven't sinned since I got here. In fact —

CARDINAL

You're more sinned against than sinning. No doubt. Still, at this moment are you not — perhaps — beginning to doubt God?

INNOCENT

When things were good, God was good. Now . . .

CARDINAL

You see? Is there anything more? for example, is your heart completely pure? Is there nothing but good will there?

(Pause)

INNOCENT

Before. . . When I met my "subjects". . . I wanted to smash them.

CARDINAL
You mean you felt rage.

INNOCENT
Feel. Like I've never felt before.

CARDINAL
What else?

INNOCENT
Superior. I felt -- feel superior somehow. Is that a sin?

CARDINAL
Terrible sin. You know we're all shit in the eyes of God!
(smacks his own mouth)
Filthy mouth! See? Even I sin --Ah! That's how we'll pass the time. First--
anymore sins?

INNOCENT
No.

CARDINAL
Good. I absolve you. and for your penance, you'll confess me.

INNOCENT
What?

CARDINAL
Not really, of course. But you are a Prince. It wouldn't be such a blasphemous
game and--

INNOCENT
I could never--

CARDINAL
Ah, well, let's just say you'll just listen to a tale concerning me and your country
men. Now, there's no harm in that. Is there. You'll be the first who ever heard it
this way and, in a way, you'll have to judge.

INNOCENT

I can't.

CARDINAL

YOU DAMN WELL CAN! Why do you think I saved you?! Because you're a victim?! --Who isn't?! No! I did it because I saw in you someone who would listen and maybe understand and --! Oh, why waste words?! I'm giving you sanctuary AND I DEMAND THAT YOU PAY ME BY LISTENING! . . . please.

. . .Good.

(Long pause. HE says the next as if HE's quoting someone and the quote is coming to him in bits and pieces)

The essence is . . . compassion.

(Breaks from it)

I saw Miss Emmy in a tavern. On one of my nocturnal swoopings. She was a plain woman. Sat by herself. Stared ahead. But saw nothing. There was something in that stare . . . something that attracted me. A frenzy? Madness?

(Pause)

Soon she stumbled out. I followed her into the countryside. She staggered to the cliff overlooking the beach.

(Pause)

What a night that was. Pitch black. Foggy. You could only hear the waters breaking below.

(HE drinks)

She was going to jump, of course. I stopped her. Talked about God and how what she attempted would be a sin against Him. I don't know if that did it. I doubt it. But, that's the only pitch I know.

(Drinks)

She was going to kill herself. Because she was pregnant. The young man refused to marry her. But, there were some unusual touches. He was also very plain, she said. They had come together out of a need, she said. Very articulate, this plain woman. Out of a need, she said, to avoid. . .guess?

. . .The abyss. Her word, not mine. The abyss. She talked about how they had witnessed it. And how they had somehow found each other in their of it. The abyss. And it was a terror of such dimensions that it superseded another terror. For her: The bringing forth a monster child. Most of her adult life she feared this. Felt that there were forces in the air that were conspiring for women to bring forth monsters.

CARDINAL

(Continued. Laughs)

But still they came together. I was tempted to ask if coming together wasn't another kind of abyss. And I was also tempted to ask why, if she feared the having of a baby, she didn't insist on some precautions. I guess one doesn't conquer one's fear of the abyss by taking precautions, eh? And it is a sin to take precautions. I persuaded her to tell me who the man was. I went to him. Talk about madness in the eyes. He was all mad eyes and sunken cheeks. Oh, he thought he loved her, and did feel responsible --Ah! I latched onto that. Talked to him about his responsibility to Emmy, to himself, to the child -- to God! Of course, I also talked about God's infinite mercy. In short, I pestered them into doing the proper thing. They got married.

(Drinks)

INNOCENT

You don't have to tell me this.

CARDINAL

On the day the baby was born, I gave confirmation to a hundred angels of Peasantmania; forcing the Holy Ghost into their dear little heads. Afterward, I got into my Duisenberg to hurry to Emmy's house.

INNOCENT

I don't want to hear this. I can feel that I shouldn't hear this.

CARDINAL

I got into my Duisenberg to hurry to Emmy's house. Somehow, while stepping on the brake to avoid a line of the angels I had just confirmed, the car, instead of stopping, lurched forward! . . . No one killed. But many of the children couldn't have done such a monstrous deed. Machines fail. right? And then there's always Fate. Destiny. Them. "Not Allah?" No. Never Allah or His messengers on earth. But, even in my fever I was tempted to push them -- the parents of the maimed -- to seek out the real culprit. Allah! That's right. You see, He must have had something on those little lambs and rode my foot, sat on it and, with extra pressure on his ass, sat down lambs and rode my foot, sat on it and, with extra pressure on his ass, sat down hard and instead of stopping,

CARDINAL

(Continued)

He made me give it gas. Zoom! Zoom! ZOOM! Screams and broken bodies! So I had to have one success that day and a warm manger scene of a fine healthy baby and happy parents would be it. But Allah overloads His work with absurd implications. Have you noticed that? Well, Emmy died in childbirth and the baby was born with the head of a bat. I swear to God --the head of a bat! And the father . . .he just stood there holding the infant in his arms . . . looking at me with all that madness and perplexity and hurt . . .And I'll never forget this . . . He said -- "Whose responsibility is this?" Then he ran with that bat-baby to the same cliff and threw himself and it over the edge ... down . . .

(HE sinks to his knees
in front of INNOCENT)

. . .down into the abyss.

(A long pause. The organ can still be heard,
but it is now being played in a less
expansive mood)

Who can blame anyone . . .?

(Exhausted, HE looks up, some kind
of expectation on his face)

Right?

INNOCENT backs away from
the CARDINAL)

INNOCENT

Show me the way out of here. Do you hear? I don't want to stay in the same room with a lie.

CARDINAL

Lie? what lie?

INNOCENT

You're a non-believer! Believing you believe!

CARDINAL

Not true! What?! That story I just told? . . . I made it up!

INNOCENT

My priest on Arcadia was like a spirit! Materializing from the waves of heat between the palm trees. As I needed him. He didn't even have a name. He was my conception of a saint; smiling, always smiling. And simple. And sober. Nothing of the "abyss" about him. But you -- you're all mouth and gut and slobber. -- And PAIN! And you make me feel that pain. And I hate you for that. WHERE?! --Where is that tunnel?!

CARDINAL

(Rises. Stumbles after INNOCENT
who wildly looks for the tunnel)

No! It's that story that's making you say all this! I told it to you just to . . . to pass the time . . . Good heavens, you don't really believe such hideous things can really happen in this life? . . . in this comedy? . . . in this kingdom? . . . It's my grotesque sense of humor! I'm a joke maker! You mustn't believe a word of it! It's not true! Now, now I'm allowing you to forgive me . . . You will! You will forgive meeeeeeee!

(CARDINAL stumbles back to the
table, collapses at another
chair and sprawls across the
table, knocking goblets onto
the floor)

INNOCENT

How can I forgive you? . . .

(INNOCENT finds the tunnel.
Exits)

CARDINAL

(Slowly lifts his head)

Oh, Lady of the Peasants . . . of the bleeding heart . . . try, try to pray for me.

(ORGAN music up.
Lights down below, up on ramp,
as INNOCENT stumbles on.)

INNOCENT

(Doubling over)
Cramps! Dizzy! Hot!

(A BEAUTIFUL LADY enters on a throne. The Throne is being pushed by someone we can't see.

The BEAUTIFUL LADY wears a jeweled, high-collared gown, a jeweled mask and a jeweled wand)

BEAUTIFUL LADY

(SHE sing/speaks, as the throne is pushed around the stage)
You're safe now, Dorothy. Follow me now, Dorothy.

(SHE repeats the two sentences in Italian, French, German, Russian, and Chinese)

INNOCENT

(Following)
Mother? Mother, Innocent's got cramps! Mother, Innocent's dizzy! Mother, Innocent's tired! Mother, Innocent's confused! Mother, Innocent's scared!

JESTER

Innocent, watch that mother! Beware of mothers with diamond wands! Beware of mothers who call their son's Dorothy! Beware, etc., and so forth! 'Cause that ain't no mother! That's the witch of the north!

(The gown and mask FLY OFF. Underneath is a skeleton costume and skull mask. In HER hand, a bone which SHE uses as a wand. SHE now speaks gibberish and points behind the throne.)

1-3-66

(RUDOLPH appears from behind
the throne and reaches out to INNOCENT.

The LADY IN THE SKELETON costume
keeps repeating HER gibberish
as the WALTZ MUSIC comes up,
and as INNOCENT struggles with RUDOLPH.
It is as if THEY are stuck together
and neither one can break the suction.

The JESTER appears above, waving frantically,
and frantically trying to say something
over the music. Finally, the JESTER
picks up a mike)

JESTER

(Amplified)

INNOCENT! IT'S ONLY AN ILLUSION! IT'S YOUR FEVER!

(Music out. Lights out.
When the lights quickly bump up again,
RUDOLPH is gone; but the SKELETON LADY,
much more softly, is still saying HER
gibberish.)

INNOCENT

What is she saying?

JESTER

She's saying: "Before this play is out, two brothers will really meet. And one will
really die. And someone, indeed, will really stab an eye."

INNOCENT

Which real brother?

GLORABELLA

(Rushing in)

Inny, why did you leave without me?

INNOCENT

Glorabella!

GLORABELLA

Inny! There are terrible things going on out there! Take me away! Now! Quick! I mean it, Inny! If you don't, I'm going to lose you. I know it.

JESTER

(On the ramp)

You are so right, Miss Glorabella. So stop running. Let me take care of you.

GLORABELLA

No! Inny, don't let him touch me! Don't let anyone touch me!

(SAUNA and MAGDA rush on,
carrying peasant clothes)

SAUNA

Innocent, come on!

MAGDA

Mash is after you! And Rudolph is after you!

SAUNA

Confidence and Nookie are a team -- and even they are after you! And nobody knows where Lord Gregory is. Here. Put these on.

INNOCENT

I'm tired. I'm tired.

MAGDA

Innocent, where's the medallion?

INNOCENT

I don't know. I --

SAUNA

Forget the goddamned medallion! Come on!

(SAUNA and MAGDA drag INNOCENT Off)

GLORABELLA

(Following)

Inny! Please don't forget me again!

JESTER

Glorabella! It's no use!

(But SHE's gone. PINA removes her skeleton mask, holds up the medallion; places it around her own neck. JESTER moves down to PINA. Juggles two balls)

How long will it be before you completely take my place, Ms Pina?

PINA

(Taking JESTER's balls and juggling them)

It shouldn't be long now, Little Loser. The fairy tale portion, after all, is almost over. You can see that.

(SHE hands HIS balls back to HIM)

JESTER

(Putting HIS balls away)

In that case, in memory of a fairy tale time that was . . . when my tricks were better than yours . . . and when one could assume a future; --in memory of all that -- one last waltz.

(PINA nods. SHE and the JESTER move toward each other, bow; assume a waltz position.

JESTER turns to the audience)

Oh, yes: This dance will end act one.

(Waltz music up. PINA and JESTER dance. Cordially at first. But soon the waltz turns into a kind of battle and THEY tug and push at each other as the MUSIC BUILDS and)

THE CURTAIN FALLS