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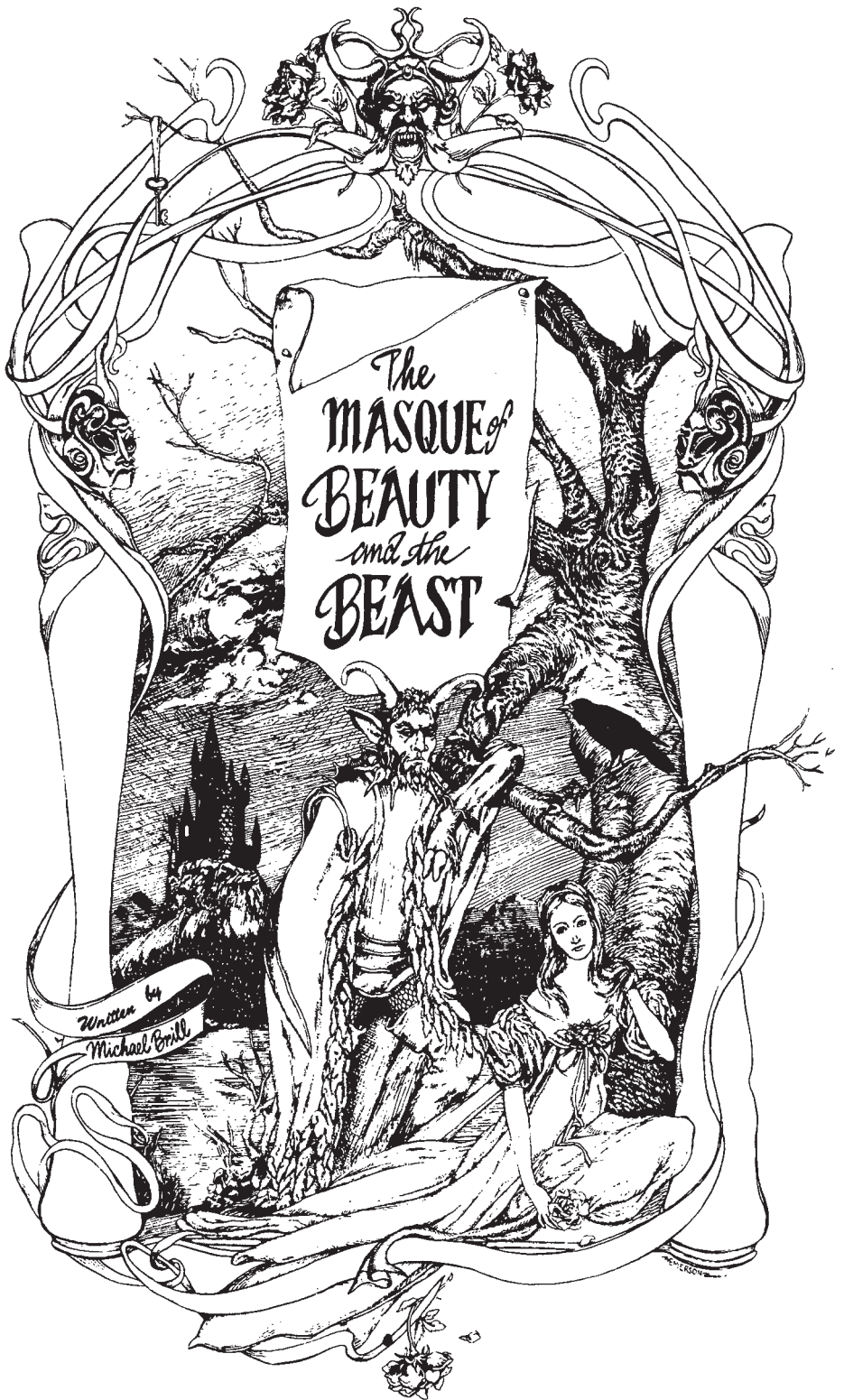
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*Dramatic Publishing*





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# **The Masque of Beauty and the Beast**

By

MICHAEL ELLIOT BRILL



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**FOR KATHERINE HUTCHINSON**  
**My very best friend**

## IMPORTANT BILLING AND CREDIT REQUIREMENTS

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## *Notes on Staging* *The Masque of Beauty and the Beast*

It's quite possible to mount a production of this play on a bare stage with no scenery, whatsoever. In fact, this is desirable. The action is very cinematic and calls for rapid, sometimes magical, changes of locale. It is, therefore, advisable that the use of large, awkward, and sometimes unreliable and noisy scenic elements be kept minimal or avoided altogether. If a "set" is to be used the suggestion is that it be as simple, elegant and practical as can be managed and whatever levels are employed be effective in varying the physical relationships of the characters while remaining unobtrusive and working equally well in all locales.

The play is called a "Masque" and under this convenient canopy a great many liberties may be taken. Naturally, the more vivid the imagination of the Director the easier it will be to bend conventional stage practices to the needs of the particular production. In respect of directorial prerogative, parenthetical stage direction is given only when it is necessary to clarify some important stage business or make clearer the relationships of the characters. It is not, however, dogma and should be taken with a grain of salt.

Music should lubricate all transitions of locale and may be frequently employed as underscoring for the scenes. The notes which refer to music and sound cues in this script are from the original production.

A word about the five Grotesques. Their Eastern counterparts are the Property Men of the Chinese Theatre. They should be both mysterious and beautiful. Not only are they wonderful "devices" for moving set pieces on and offstage but they can also be used to advantage for the indication of locale. This was done, originally, with the use of large, ornate signs which read, for example, PROLOGUE or BEFORE A TAVERN IN THE TOWN. The Grotesques were employed to carry and display these signs and, several times, they would remain onstage to comment, silently, on the action.

Costumes, props and masks should be as lavish and as opulent as the budget will allow. It is important to single out The Beast in this area. The other characters are easy enough to define but because of the importance of showing the audience the humanizing metamorphosis undergone by The Beast it might be helpful to relate how the situation was handled originally. We first see The Beast in his terrible encounter with The Merchant. Here he should be truly monstrous. The mask should be horned and the expression fierce. The costume should be hairy, the hands made to resemble hooves and some of the body covered with forbidding armor. At this first entrance he should be possessed of a gigantic pair of bat-like wings (which may be operated by two of the Grotesques) and be in constant motion throughout the scene. These wings will play a role in the "masque within the Masque" at The Beast's first encounter with Beauty. This meeting is the next time we see The Beast and here the image of a regal peacock was used, eliminating much of the horror of the first manifestation. The features of the mask were birdlike and the costume very ornamental and elegant.

The narration between the two Beauty and Beast scenes is short but it represents the passage of three months and so it is important to show the Beast's most human manifestation here. A very pastoral look was created, with vines and leaves delicately painted on the doublet and worked into the mask. The last time we see him he is very near death and all the lovely greens had browned. The mask was pitiful and had the look of a miserable puppy about it. The effect was truly touching. The transformation from



Beast to handsome Prince is explained at the appropriate time in the text. Let me refer the Costume Designer to the illustrations Hillary Knight has created for The Golden Book version of Beauty and The Beast. They are inspired.

The play is written in verse. This should not present any difficulties since it was written to be dialogue first and poetry second. The lines are consummately actable and great pains have been taken to avoid metre boredom and foolish phrasing for the sake of scansion and rhyme. However, no script is inviolate and the Author acknowledges the right of the Director to make judicious cuts and alterations to fit the needs of his production.

One final word. The effect of the play upon the audience has proven to be very hypnotic. Whether this is the result of the poetry or enchantment of the story or the desire of the audience for a good old fashioned flight of fancy is unimportant. What is important is that everything be done to heighten and nurture this effect. From the most obvious scenic element to the most insignificant prop great care should be taken and scrupulous attention to detail be paid in order to draw the audience into this world of fantasy and nourish them while they are there.

Running time for the production is approximately one hour and it is recommended that no intermission be taken.

**Michael Elliot Brill**

The following is a copy of the program of the first performance of *The Masque of Beauty and the Beast* as performed by the Enchanted Theatre Company and presented by the Drama Board of The Bathhouse Theatre, a facility of the Seattle Department of Parks and Recreation, in 1977.

The Drama Board of The Bathhouse Theatre  
 presents  
 The Enchanted Theatre Company  
 in  
**THE MASQUE OF BEAUTY AND THE BEAST**

Written and Directed

by

**MICHAEL BRILL**

Produced by

**JOHN CHAMBLESS**

*The Cast*

(In order of appearance)

The Narrator.....	Norman R. Newkirk
The Silver Grotesque.....	Harry F. Domek
The Golden Grotesque.....	Robert Haynes
The Burgundy Grotesque.....	Susanna Burney
The Merchant.....	Gary Pierce
The Green Grotesque.....	Susan Segalla
The Brown Grotesque.....	Thomas Harryman
The Bank Solicitor.....	David Clark
The Merchant's Three Daughters:	
Haughtense.....	Rosanne Jurich
Dyspepsia.....	Deborah Hoover
Beauty.....	Pamela Bridgham
The Beast.....	Marc Corbett Bridgham

*The Production Company*

Set Design.....	Charles Kading
Costume Design and Construction.....	Marilyn Raichle
Masks and Props Design.....	Clarke Schumacher
Poster, Graphics and Costume Painting.....	Joelle de La Fontaine
Millinery Design.....	Susanna Burney
Jewelry Design.....	Jodelle Stith
Program Cover Design.....	Charles Emerson
Masks Painted By.....	David Hastings
Set Construction.....	Ron Lester
Technical Direction & Lighting Design.....	Bruce Brittingham
Assistant to Mr. Brill.....	Michael Beaudreau
Assistants to Ms. Raichle.....	Richard Castillo
	Lisa Chambless, Susanna Burney, Karen Hatcher
Assistants to Mr. Schumacher.....	Harry F. Domek
	Robert Haynes, Lisa Chambless, Thomas Harryman
Assistant to Mr. Kading.....	Jodelle Stith
Electrician.....	Michael Beaudreau
Sound.....	Clarke Michael Evans
Backstage Running Crew.....	Jim Guilfoil
	Lisa Chambless, Jodelle Stith, Charles Hatcher
Assisrant to Mr. Brittingham.....	Sandra Fay
The Drama Board.....	Karalyn Morrison, Chairperson
	Sandra Fay, Secretary/Treasurer

## *The Cast*

(In order of appearance)

The Narrator

The Five Grotesques

The Merchant

The Bank Solicitor

Haughtense

Dyspepsia

Beauty

The Beast (later the Prince)

## *The Action of the Play*

Prologue

Scene One..... The Merchant's House in Town

Scene Two..... The Farm (three months later)

Scene Three..... Before a Tavern in the Town (later that day)

Scene Four..... The Forest (later that night)

Scene Five..... The Palace of the Beast

Scene Six..... The Garden of the Palace (the following day)

Scene Seven..... The Farm (immediately following)

Scene Eight..... The Palace of the Beast (immediately following)

Scene Nine..... The Palace of the Beast (three months later)

Scene Ten..... The Farm (immediately following)

Scene Eleven..... The Farm (three days later)

Scene Twelve..... The Palace of the Beast (immediately following)

Epilogue

*(Music cue # 1. Preshow)*

*(Music cue # 2. Prologue)*

**NARRATOR**

*(In moonlight with the stage blanketed in low lying dry ice fog)*

Moonlight and a gentle, misty veil.  
The perfect setting for a fairytale.  
Here, for an hour, you and I will climb  
The silken threads of "Once upon a time . . ."  
And we will lure you with our conjurations,  
If you will lend us your imaginations,  
With which to weave fantastic tapestries;  
The eye to dazzle and heart to please.

Beat drums and let the trumpets bray,  
To herald the commencement of our play.

*(Music cue # 3. Entrance of the players. Enter The Merchant, The Bank Solicitor, Haughtense, Dyspeppsia, Beauty and two Grotesques disguised as Assistants to The Bank Solicitor, carrying on a small table and chair. They all freeze.)*

**NARRATOR**

A Merchant, who was wealthy beyond measure  
(Whose life was filled with every mundane pleasure)  
Came suddenly to ruin, sad to say,  
In what seemed but the passing of a day.  
Forced to undersell all that he owned,  
To pay the Moneylenders what he'd loaned  
And lost, he found himself with little more  
Than three young daughters and the clothes they wore.

*(Narrator exits as action begins)*

**MERCHANT**

You parasite! You leech!

**BANK SOLICITOR**

Good sir, take care!  
Such flattery won't get you anywhere.  
You know it might go hard with you in Court  
If I should quote those words in my report.

**MERCHANT**

Shylock!

**BANK SOLICITOR**

Must I once more remind you,  
I'm just an agent of the Court that fined you?  
I do not act upon my own behalf  
But in the Law's good name.

**MERCHANT**

Don't make me laugh.  
By this you stand to profit handsomely.  
You'll have your share of what you squeeze from me.

**BANK SOLICITOR**

It's true, that for my services, I rate  
A portion of the take . . .

**BEAUTY, HAUGHTENSE AND DYSPEPPSIA**

Oh!

**BANK SOLICITOR** (*correcting himself*)

The Estate!  
It's only fair, as you'll agree, good neighbor,  
That I should have some payment for my labor

*(He ogles the necklace that Haughtense wears)*

Well, bless my bankbooks, what have we here?  
My word, but that's a striking lavalier!

**HAUGHTENSE** (*lying*)

It's paste, of course, and hardly worth a thing.

**BANK SOLICITOR** (*detecting the lie*)

You'd be amazed the price such "paste" can bring.  
Let's have the earrings, too. Though awfully small  
Some "paste" is better than no "paste" at all.  
They're very pretty but it hardly pays  
To deal in tacky jewelry, nowadays.  
I'm rushed just now, but soon as I am able  
I'll send someone to get that chair and table.  
Yes. They're the last two items on my list.  
Unless you've thought of something I have missed.

**MERCHANT**

You've got it all. There's nothing left to take.  
Now leave my house!

**BANK SOLICITOR** (*producing a document*)

There must be some mistake.  
This was your house, but now, as you can see,  
The Court's assigned your house and lands to me.

**MERCHANT** (*looking over the document*)

Extend my credit. Give me one week more.

**BANK SOLICITOR**

You've had this same extension twice before.

**MERCHANT**

Three months ago three ships of mine set sail  
From India . . .

**BANK SOLICITOR**

I know! I've heard this tale.

**MERCHANT**

They're filled with countless riches from the East.  
Each worth the ransom of a king, at least.

**BANK SOLICITOR**

Give up. Those ships were lost at sea.

**MERCHANT**

Not so!  
They've been detained. They'll come to Port, I know.

**BANK SOLICITOR**

I'll be delighted, when and if they do,  
To sell all your possessions back to you.  
But now, dear Sir, I must be on my way.  
It's been a pleasure seeing you. Good day!

*(The Assistants exit)*

It warms my heart and sends a tingle through me  
To know you'll always be indebted to me.

*(Bank Solicitor exits)*

**HAUGHTENSE**

Ruined!

**DYSPEPPSIA**

How can we ever hope to face  
Our friends after this terrible disgrace?

**MERCHANT**

What friends? The ones we had when it was sunny?  
Fair weather flocks that vanished like our money.

**HAUGHTENSE**

Those goodly neighbors whom we wined and dined . . .

**MERCHANT**

Have turned their ears quite deaf, their eyes quite blind  
To our misfortune. Hypocrites, the lot!

**HAUGHTENSE**

They will come 'round again, you'll see.

**MERCHANT**

What rot!  
You're silent, Beauty, while your sisters thunder.

**DYSPEPPSIA**

No doubt she's overjoyed.

**HAUGHTENSE**

Well, it's no wonder.  
Society and Fashion make no place  
For fools, like her, who will not keep the pace!

**DYSPEPPSIA**

To think that Fate would deal us such a blow.

**HAUGHTENSE**

Heaven knows what we'll do or where we'll go.

**BEAUTY**

We have the farm.

**HAUGHTENSE AND DYSPEPPSIA**

The farm!!

**DYSPEPPSIA**

You surely joke!

**BEAUTY**

We must adopt the ways of simple folk.  
For now we have to tolerate our lot  
And make the best we can of what we've got.

**MERCHANT**

Beauty is right. We have no other choice.

**HAUGHTENSE**

And what of us?

**DYSPEPPSIA**

Are we to have no voice?

**MERCHANT** (*exploding*)

Dear God! It's hard enough to face this matter  
Without a dose of your disgruntled chatter.

**HAUGHTENSE**

But you must realize that this suggestion  
For us, at least, is quite out of the question.  
What do we know of chickens, pigs and cows,  
Of things like chopping wood and pushing plows?

**DYSPEPPSIA**

Look at these hands. How long could they endure  
The tragedy of shovelling manure?

**BEAUTY** (*the voice of reason*)

Sisters, I know it will be hard at first.  
Until we have our new roles well rehearsed  
We'll struggle. Four will have to work as ten  
To get that fallow land to bloom again.  
But we can do it.

**HAUGHTENSE**

Oh, you think so eh?  
Well I think that your brains have blown away.  
I also think that you must be advised  
Of several points which you have not surmised.  
I won't be made to rise before the sun.  
That's something chickens do, and I'm not one.  
I won't milk cows, it's vulgar and obscene—  
I won't "slop hogs", whatever that might mean—  
I won't weave cloth, or sew, or bake the bread—  
I won't scrub floors, wash clothes or make a bed.  
I've never done such things before, and vow,  
I'd rather die than have to do them now.

**MERCHANT**

You've had your say, permit me to have mine.  
This diatribe of yours is assinine.  
If I were you I wouldn't take such pride  
In a mind so narrow and a mouth so wide.  
It's obvious your ego reigns supreme  
To spew out selfishness to this extreme.  
I've never tanned your bottom, now I rue it,  
But tempt me further and I'll hasten to it.  
And if I can't pound logic in your head  
I will impress the other end instead.  
Is that quite clear to both of you?

*(Haughtense and Dyspepsia nod)*

I'm glad.  
To quarrel with my children makes me sad,  
And makes me doubt what I feel in my heart,  
That we will pull together, not break apart.  
I've several notes to write and then we'll leave.  
The less we tarry here the less we'll grieve.

*(The Merchant exits followed by Beauty. Dyspepsia is furious and ready to explode)*

**HAUGHTENSE** *(calming her)*

Say nothing. We will do as we are told.

**DYSPEPPSIA** *(boiling)*

And let more of this foolishness unfold?  
I'd sooner starve than labor for my bread—  
Or make some dirty pile of straw my bed—  
Wear nothing but potato sacks for clothes—  
Have only country bumpkins for my beaux . . .

**HAUGHTENSE**

Shut up!

**DYSPEPPSIA**

I won't!



**HAUGHTENSE**

You will, or else I vow  
I'll slap you silly. Listen to me now.  
If laboring for bread is what you fear  
Beauty will do it. This is her idea.  
It won't last long and we'll be rich again.  
Our luck is bound to turn. So until then,  
Let's bide our time and salve this ugly blister  
By making life a Hell for our sweet sister.

*(They exit, laughing wickedly as they go. Music cue # 4 — scene change to THE FARM. The Grotesques enter and remove the remaining chair and table. The Narrator enters with them to oversee all. The Music covers the scene change and narration)*

**NARRATOR**

Time passes very quickly on our stage,  
But three months does not mitigate the rage  
And spite of those two harpies, whom we'll see  
Are just as hateful as they used to be.  
Their fall from worldly wealth to deepest debt  
Has filled them with resentment and regret.  
But they've not given up, as you will see,  
The smallest part of Pride or Vanity.  
Our Beauty has become her sisters' slave,  
Bearing it all she lets them rant and rave  
And order her about at every turn,  
Having none other than this one concern—  
To ease the burdens of her father's heart  
And see the sorrows of his soul depart.

*(music fades)*

The sisters now proclaim with every breath . . .

*(Narrator exits as sisters enter)*

**HAUGHTENSE** *(entering in farm clothes)*

This life of poverty bores me to death!

**DYSPEPPSIA** *(following just behind)*

I'd scream if I'd the energy to do it.  
God grant me strength this day to get me through it.

**HAUGHTENSE** *(caressing her cheek)*

The peachy soft complexion I once bore . . .

**DYSPEPPSIA**

A miracle is needed to restore!

**HAUGHTENSE**

What?!

**DYSPEPPSIA** *(indicating her hands)*

These, which once were soft as Persian silk . . .

**HAUGHTENSE**

Now have a texture more like curdled milk!

**DYSPEPPSIA**

Our witless sister has a soul so base  
She actually enjoys this wretched place.

**HAUGHTENSE**

Well, she can have it. I, for one, don't share  
Her passion for this foul country air.

*(Sound cue # 5 COW MOOING)*

It reeks of cows and pigs and worse.

**DYSPEPPSIA**

Quite so.  
How any nose can bear it I don't know.

**HAUGHTENSE**

She bears it.

**DYSPEPPSIA**

Yes. And, though I hate to say,  
Her beauty grows with every passing day.

**HAUGHTENSE** *(going after her)*

That sort of talk will set my claws in you.

**DYSPEPPSIA**

I know it's ugly but you know it's true!

*(she sees Beauty approaching)*

She's coming now . . .

**HAUGHTENSE**

Remember not to speak.  
We vowed no discourse with her for a week.

**BEAUTY** *(entering and very excited)*

Father's received word from the Public Court—  
One of his ships, long lost, has come to Port.

**HAUGHTENSE AND DYSPEPPSIA**

What's that?

**DYSPEPPSIA**

Dear God! We're saved!

**HAUGHTENSE**

This can't be true.

**MERCHANT** *(entering and brandishing a letter)*  
It is. Our life of poverty is through.  
You see, Fate smiles upon us once again  
And prophecies that very sweet refrain  
For which we've hoped. When I return from town,  
With gems and gold my purses weighted down,  
We'll celebrate! Now, name what I'm to buy  
And bring to be the darling of each eye.

**DYSPEPPSIA**  
A brocade dress!

**HAUGHTENSE**  
A jewelled fan!

**MERCHANT**  
And you,  
My Beauty, say you will have something too.

**BEAUTY**  
I want for nothing but your safe return  
And have no need for what my sisters yearn.

**MERCHANT**  
My precious angel, you have been to me  
A joy that's greater far than gold could be.  
Do not deny your father such a pleasure  
As laying at your feet some special treasure.

**HAUGHTENSE** *(taking Beauty aside)*  
You wicked girl, you'll break our father's heart . . .

**DYSPEPPSIA**  
Name something or he never will depart.

**BEAUTY**  
A rose, dear father. None grow hereabout.

**MERCHANT, HAUGHTENSE AND DYSPEPPSIA**  
A rose!?

**MERCHANT**  
So shall it be. Come. See me out.

*(as they exit Music cue # 6 scene change to "BEFORE A TAVERN  
IN THE TOWN".)*

**NARRATOR** *(entering)*  
Not knowing Fate has changed her course once more  
To make his burdens greater than before,  
The Merchant journeys through the day to town,  
Arriving as the sun is going down.

*(music fades as the Bank Solicitor enters)*

He meets The Bank Solicitor to find . . . (*he exits*)

**MERCHANT** (*as if they'd been long in talking*)  
Reason is dead and Justice surely blind!

**BANK SOLICITOR**

So sorry! There was little I could do,  
Your creditors moved twice as fast as you.  
Before your ship could dock, officially,  
They'd hired boats to take them out to sea.  
Knowing your ship and all that there was in it  
They couldn't bear to waste one precious minute  
In taking what they felt belonged to them.  
A dirty, but effective, stratagem.  
In one hour's time they had been everywhere.  
And like a plague of locust stripped you bare.  
Your ship stands empty now and it's for sale.  
The price it brings may keep you out of jail.

**MERCHANT**

But I'd pinned all my hopes upon this day.

**BANK SOLICITOR**

Of course it's hard to see them crushed this way.  
I'm sure you thought your fortune would be made,  
But, as it is, at least your debts are paid.

**MERCHANT**

So there is nothing left?

**BANK SOLICITOR**

Perhaps tomorrow  
Another ship may dock to ease this sorrow.

**MERCHANT**

If you extend my credit until then  
I'm sure I could get on my feet again.

**BANK SOLICITOR**

I don't think you completely comprehend—  
Your credit's nonexistent now, my friend.

**MERCHANT**

I ask for help. How can you be so cold?

**BANK SOLICITOR** (*starting to exit*)

"God helps those who help themselves", I'm told

**MERCHANT** (*grabbing him*)

And this is your reply to my request,  
A platitude that's second rate at best.  
Don't bandy words with me you thieving toad.  
I wouldn't want my temper to explode  
And dent that patronizing smile you flash.  
Take care or else I may do something rash.

**BANK SOLICITOR**

Sir, if these rabid outbursts do not cease  
I will be forced to summon the police.  
What good will temper do you anyhow?  
The milk is spilt, there's no use crying now  
Go home.

**MERCHANT**

It's night. I'll lose my way, I know.

**BANK SOLICITOR** (*leaving*)

Tomorrow.

**MERCHANT**

There's no place for me to go  
Without a coin to put down for a bed.

**BANK SOLICITOR**

Then take your chances travelling home, instead.

**MERCHANT** (*desperate*)

Give me a coin, I beg you!

**BANK SOLICITOR**

Not a penny.

**MERCHANT**

My curse on you!

**BANK SOLICITOR** (*laughing at him*)

Good sir, it's one of many.  
You see, when you're a simple Bank Solicitor  
You get more curses than the Grand Inquisitor.

**MERCHANT**

The forest's filled with wolves. It's cold. I'll die!

**BANK SOLICITOR**

In that case . . . let me say a last goodbye.

**MERCHANT**

What shall I do?

**BANK SOLICITOR**

I would suggest you pray.  
Goodnight! I think there's nothing more to say.

*(Music cue # 7 transition to the forest. The Merchant is left alone on stage. The Narrator enters, watching him, and as he speaks there come from the various entrances and levels about the stage the four Grotesques. Each Grotesque carries two branches of a gnarled tree. They move slowly and surround the Merchant. The effect should be that of the forest closing in about the Merchant, ominously.)*

## NARRATOR

There's no recourse. The Merchant takes his chance.  
He steels himself but soon his nerve recants.  
With midnight's velvet blanket now unrolled,  
His body gripped with hunger and the cold,  
He's lost his way, and wanders without knowing  
How far he's come or which way he is going.  
Then, suddenly, he sees a distant light  
Which cuts, knife-like, through the black of night.

*(The effect of this light can be managed in many ways. In the original production the Narrator carried a large staff which was surmounted by a ball of simulated stained glass. At this point in the narration he threw a concealed switch in the staff and the ball was startlingly illuminated.)*

*(Music cue #8 The Journey through the forest. A fifth Grottesque takes the staff from the Narrator. The Narrator exits. The Grottesque with the staff uses it to attract the Merchant who follows the light through the ever shifting maze created by the other four Grottesques carrying the branches. One by one the Grottesques leave the stage, the one carrying the ball of light is last. A shift in the lighting here indicates the change of scene to THE PALACE OF THE BEAST. Immediately a Grottesque enters with an ornately carved throne chair. It is offered to the Merchant and left on stage. This Grottesque exits. A second Grottesque then brings on the "fire". This was managed with the use of brilliantly colored silk scarves which when rapidly flipped up and down in the hands of the Grottesque produces the effect of jumping flames. This Grottesque kneels in a position downstage of the Merchant, who warms his hands at the leaping flames. Two Grottesques appear bearing a large table filled with a sumptuous repast. This they bring before the Merchant and kneel to become the ornate legs of the table. The Merchant is dubious. He takes a glass of wine from the table. He sips. It tastes wonderful. He drinks deeply. All this time the Narrator, who has entered to supervise this banquet, has been miming the playing of a violin and this music has filled the scene. The Merchant grows drowsy. The fire dies. The table is removed. The Grottesques and Narrator exit. The Merchant sleeps in his chair. The music fades. Sunlight cascades into the room.)*

*(Music cue # 9)*

*(The Merchant wakes abruptly.)*

## MERCHANT *(voice over on tape)*

For certain this was not a dream I had.  
It was quite real or I have gone quite mad.

*(speaking out)*

Who's there? Can I be heard by any ear?  
I wish to thank my Host if he can hear.

*(voice over again)*