

The Carousel

A play by B.E. Turner

*Arjuna,
the Lord is located
in the heart of all beings
and causes those beings to ride
on the carousel of illusion.*

Bhagavad Gita 18:61

CAST:

BONNO: A circus clown.

WALDO: A cultured beggar, wino and philosopher. (Act 1)

RUBY: A woman of pleasure. (Act 1)

THE DOLL: A marionette. She struts around in an exaggerated manner, occasionally singing snatches from grand opera. This character is for the director to utilise in ways not realised by the author. She may be given dialogue allocated to other parts if the director wishes. (Act 1)

EMELIA: A grand dame of the theatre. (Act 2)

ARCHIE: A music hall variety artist and Johannes Factotum. He wears a bright waistcoat and bowler hat. (Act 2)

SAPPHIRE: A younger actress. Her colour is blue. (Act 2)

BACKSTAGE STAFF: Required for walk on. These must be member(s) of the real stage staff without make-up or costumes.

The parts should be doubled:

RUBY/EMELIA

WALDO/ARCHIE

DOLL/SAPPHIRE

SET:

The stage is bare apart from an old and battered carousel horse lying on its side and a sitting appurtenance. There is a soapbox on one side of the stage for oratory or for sitting on. There may be debris on the stage, such as is discarded by people attending a carnival. Act 2 requires a moveable stand which has masks and cloaks as needed. It may be in a corner of the stage or just offstage. In act 2 there are two pages from Emelia's play-script lying on stage. The script consists of aged parchment sheets carefully collected together but not bound.

NOTES:

The mimes may be elaborated by director and cast. Physical objects mentioned in the mimes are not actually present on stage. The acts are self contained and may be presented by themselves.

ACT 1

There is carousel music, loud at first but diminishing as the play progresses. The curtain opens, the lights come up. Enter Bonno. Bonno performs his entry mime.

*He walks on peeling and eating a banana.
Throws away banana skin.
Walks about stage in a disordered manner.
Slips on banana skin and does a pratfall.
Stands up and shakes his head.
Picks up banana skin and throws it away (still on stage.)
Looks around not being aware of where the front of the stage is.
Scratches his head.
Finally notices audience.
Comes down.*

BONNO: Day has ended. The carnival is packed up and travelling away to the next fairground. Did you go to the fair? Was it a day in your life that was full of delight? Clowns and acrobats and sideshows. Did you take a ride on the merry-go-round? Did you see the illusions created by Impresario Marvello, the marvellous, mystic and miraculous magician?

Mostly clowns amuse you by the buffoonery of their conduct, but this evening I am permitted to talk. Do not be surprised by the foolishness of the clowns thought. It is the essence of wisdom and insight into the human condition. But you will probably think it is pure folly. Today, expect to be enlightened concerning the folly of wisdom, or perhaps the wisdom of folly.

Enter Waldo with his entry mime:

*He picks up a cigarette butt, inspects it carefully, puts it in his pocket.
He picks up a cigarette butt, inspects it carefully, throws it away.
He picks up a cigarette butt, inspects it carefully, puts it in his pocket.
He picks up a cigarette butt, inspects it carefully, throws it away.
Slips on the banana skin (from previous mime) - pratfall.
Picks up banana skin.
Throws it away.
Shrugs his shoulders.*

BONNO: You again, Waldo, my old friend.

WALDO: Yes, Bonno, it's me again. Has everybody gone?

BONNO: You've missed them, as usual. They left just as the sun went down.

WALDO: I always seem to miss them. Where are they off to now?

BONNO: The next fairground.

WALDO: At Fairfield?

BONNO: Farmeadow.

WALDO: Always the next fairground. Fairfield, Farmeadow, Haven or What-you-may-call-it. If the carnival has gone why are you still here, seeing as you are part of it?

BONNO: *(Including the audience.)* That is not explained.

WALDO: There never are explanations. (*Takes a ticket from his pocket.*) Is your offer of a free ride still available?

BONNO: The carousel is packed up and gone with the rest

WALDO: It can't be gone far, I can hear the music.

BONNO: Fading away. (*The music fades.*)

WALDO: (*Looks at ticket.*) Is the ticket current, even though I missed the ride?

BONNO: Marvello has endorsed it in person.

WALDO: That's good. (*Puts the ticket back in his pocket.*) I'll wait for the next turn of the wheel.

BONNO: (*Putting the horse upright.*) Take a ride on this if you like.

WALDO: (*Moving in a circular way.*) It's not the same. The carousel has a motor that drives it. The horses go around and around and up and down. And there is the music and the excited cries of the children. There is a profound thought in the revolution of a wheel.

BONNO: Why do you say that?

WALDO: It does not have a beginning or an end. I read in one of my books that every play has a beginning and a middle and an end and that makes up the whole.

BONNO: Give us your extrapolation.

WALDO: (*Walks around demonstrating the points - see Aristotle, Ars Poetica.*) A beginning is something not, in itself, after anything, but does have something after it; and the middle is after something and also has something after it; and the ending will have something which comes before it but does not have anything which comes after.

BONNO: Most elucidifying.

WALDO: But if a play was written in a circular way it would not have a beginning or an end and so might go on forever. That is why I wish to ride the carousel.

BONNO: And others might wish to get off.

WALDO: That is their declension. (*Pause*) Is that a cigarette butt? (*He picks up the imaginary butt.*) Only half smoked. That's a rare find. (*Puts the butt in his pocket. During the course of the play he never smokes.*) You know I am a philosopher. I have been told that your Marvello is an enlightened savant. I would very much like to meet him. We might have meaningful conversations. Do you think it's possible to arrange it?

BONNO: You will have to wait for the carnival to come back to town. He never leaves it.

WALDO: Perhaps I won't miss it next time. He is a great man, your Marvello.

BONNO: The most integrated ringmaster. All animals are subservient to the crack of his whip.

WALDO: Passing strange.

Enter Ruby. Her entry mime.

Sees the banana skin.

Picks it up, looks at it, throws it into the audience.

She goes to a rose bush.

She plucks a rose and in doing so pricks her finger.

She sucks the finger.

Smiles, it is better.

Smells the rose and pins it to her breast.

BONNO: Ruby, that is a nice red rose you have plucked.

RUBY: The bush has thorns. Why would a rose bush have thorns?

BONNO: You have raised a matter which requires deep consolation. Ask our friend here, he's a philosopher.

WALDO: (*Goes to the imaginary rose bush.*) Ah yes, genus Acopatharius, phylum Imanixacationaryavouthmedon, species Rosa. It has thorns so that birds will not sit on its branches and cast effluent over the leaves and flowers. It is the purpose of a rose to reflect nature's pristine perfection and so protect itself from stain.

RUBY: And pierce the legs of birds?

WALDO: The birds learn to avoid it. The mustard tree becomes their true delight.

RUBY: (*Aside.*) A red rose with thorns is the signature my game. The occupation of the night. (*Pause, real.*) Where is the carnival?

BONNO: Packed up and departed.

RUBY: They went without me?

BONNO: Of course, they always do.

RUBY: I thought I could hear the music.

BONNO: Faded completely away. Night has come. The stars are starting to glimmer.

RUBY: Stars? Stars and roses again? (*Pause*) I don't see the moon. Why is there no moon?

BONNO: Not for this play. A far greater master commanded it for his night of dreames. Stars and roses only.

RUBY: (*Taking a card from her cleavage.*) I have an invitation from Marvello. I was to join him in his caravan.

BONNO: He's gone with the Carnival, on to the next fairground.

RUBY: When you gave this to me you said it was from him. You said that he had looked from his window and seen me walk by. That he admired me greatly for my beauty and the passion in my eyes. That there was some matter he wanted to discuss with me.

BONNO: Concerning an ancient confession?

RUBY: That's none of your business. (*Pause*) This is no good to me. (*Throws invitation away.*)

BONNO: (*Picking up invitation, giving it her.*) Keep it. No invitation of Marvello is ever reneged. If you arrive before the Carnival is over, then you will go to him. He loves all God's children.

RUBY: (*Putting invitation back in her bodice.*) I'll keep it then. It seems to be worth something.

Pause

WALDO: (*To Ruby.*) You and I have not met have we?

RUBY: I don't consort with beggars.

WALDO: Unless it was on an occasion you forgot.

RUBY: Why would I remember someone like you?

WALDO: Because of my profound knowledge.

BONNO: (*Aside*) Ah, his profane knowledge.

RUBY: A shabby tramp?

WALDO: All travellers are covered by the dust of the road.

RUBY: What has dust got to do with knowledge?

WALDO: It's the cost of my advocation.

RUBY: I don't believe you know a thing. Where do you get this knowledge as you call it?

WALDO: By reading all the books in the acacacademy. I have annotated them and created a complete bibliography. There is nothing that has been written that I have not read.

RUBY: But do you understand it?

WALDO: That is not explained.

RUBY: Have you ever read a book in a lover's eyes?

WALDO: Once... once I looked ... if I can remember... I saw something not in a book. When I was young, I think I looked, I think I saw something frivolous.

BONNO: Frivolity is knowledge.

RUBY: What do you know about it?

BONNO: Knowledge for a clown perhaps.

WALDO: *(Pause.)* I know something about you though. When I sit in the bus shelter with the gaudy girls from the bordello they tell me of your quality and that you remain aloof from them. You never congregate with people of low station. They say you are the First Lady and command the highest fee.

RUBY: They have no right to gossip about me, and you have no right to listen. I know what goes on. You share your bottle of cheap sherry and tell them it leads to enlightenment.

WALDO: It consoles them for the bad company of their business.

RUBY: If they sit in the bus shelter with winebibbers then they deserve bad company.

BONNO: *(Aside)* He said he was a glutton also but I don't believe it. *(Real)* Does bad company require ministrations or punishment?

WALDO: Bad company is a consequence of their vocation.

RUBY: If they are stupid.

WALDO: They are wise beyond measure.

RUBY: Wisdom has thorns. I offer men of quality the face of their hidden lusts. They think it is love. But like your Marvello I can create an illusion. I can draw men into a fantasy dream-world from which they never escape, trapped by their own desire, malleable to my will. That is why Marvello and I are destined to become companions.

BONNO: Who knows what dreams are forgotten in the daylight hours?

Enter the Doll, her entry mime.

Walks in a circle around Bonno.

Walks in a circle around Waldo.

Walks in a circle around Ruby.

Walks in a circle around all three.

Comes down and bows.

Goes back and freezes.

BONNO: We are all here at last.

WALDO: Is this young doll waiting for Marvello also?

BONNO: She's waiting for him to breathe life into her. She wants to become a real girl.

WALDO: Will her nose grow if she tells a lie?

BONNO: That's another book.

RUBY: Why are we here then?

BONNO: There is no explanation.

RUBY: Passing strange. *(There is a snatch of bawdy music off-stage. Ruby reacts to it.)* Excuse me. There is some business I have to attend to. *(Exit.)*

WALDO: Will she be back?
 BONNO: When the transaction is complete. Why? Are you concerned?
 WALDO: Just something. I can't remember what it is now.
 BONNO: You knew her, at another time, another place?
 WALDO: Who knows? Things have passed me by. I get lonely. I would like to go to a ball with a beautiful young lady.
 BONNO: Like you did once in the past?
 WALDO: A memory that fades like a snatch of music.
 BONNO: A snatch of desire?
 WALDO: Perhaps.

THE FIRST DATE MIME.

*The doll sits with a fan, fanning herself but not continuously.
Bonno helps Waldo on with his dinner jacket, adjusts his tie, brushes him down.*

Waldo looks in the mirror, slicks back his hair, admires himself.

Doll stops fanning. Looks bored.

Bonno picks a rose from rose bush, puts it in Waldo's buttonhole.

Bonno picks another rose, gives it to Waldo.

Bonno sweeps the ballroom floor.

Waldo goes to Doll, doffs his hat, does an elaborate bow.

Doll fans herself.

Waldo down on his knees imploring her for a dance.

Doll closes the fan, puts it down beside her.

Waldo gives her the rose.

She pins it to her bodice, nods, smiles, yes she will dance.

Waldo holds out his hand.

She puts her hand on his and holds the hem of her gown.

They walk onto the dance floor, take position for a waltz.

Bonno taps the music stand, conducts the music.

Waldo and Doll dance, circling around to the eerie carousel music.

The music stops.

Waldo and Doll applaud silently.

Bonno bows, departs the stage.

Waldo escorts Doll back to her seat.

Bonno enters with a bottle of wine and two glasses.

Bonno pours a tasting sip for Waldo.

Waldo hold wine to the light, sniffs bouquet, sips, nods.

Bonno pours wine for both of them and goes.

They drink, look into each other's eyes.

Doll puts her head on Waldo's chest.

Bonno returns and kicks at the discarded tinsel on the floor.

He sweeps the floor.

Doll becomes a lifeless floppy doll.

Waldo sits on the carousel horse.

END OF MIME

Enter Ruby putting money in her bodice.

BONNO: A satisfactory consolation?

RUBY: That's my business.

WALDO: The ineluctable modality of the consultation.

BONNO: Why do you say that?

WALDO: Because nobody understands it.

RUBY: What rubbish. Explain what it means then.

WALDO: It doesn't mean anything in particular.

BONNO: The ineluctable modality of the obscure?

WALDO: *(Takes the ticket from his pocket.)* The ineluctable enjoyment of the carousel ride. The ticket is still current. *(Puts the ticket back.)*

The Doll wakes up, applauds, sings a snatch of "Within these sacred halls" from the Magic Flute. (If she can reach the high notes.)

RUBY: Waldo, why would a grown man such as you wish to ride on the merry-go-round?

WALDO: When I was a child I did not have the poverty that I have now. I recall the time when toys like this were a source of joy and delight. Now I am bound to endure a life of melancholy. I wish return to a time when things were simpler, when life was a happy melody.

BONNO: But you do have wisdom. You have studied philosophy, mathematics and arts of all kinds. You have conducted an exegamination of the factorials desiring the stricture of divers fundamentals such as quantum, quarks (of various colours and emotes) muons, bisons, bosons, elephants and etcetera, omitting the construence of disorder, and you have them all tied up together with a thread of logic. You understand the mechanicals of the univalve and how the word turns. Give us your speech.

Waldo stands on the soapbox and delivers his speech in a declamatory manner at a breathless pace and illustrates the thesis with animated movements. The Doll applauds and sings snatches from opera throughout.

WALDO: The end of the beginning is not of narcissus the beginning of the finish or otherwise reversed or retarded or visceral versa and whether the circularity has one or another is a matter of debate for the circle has a centre which knows the difference between the middle and the outside and so is measured by a pair of callipers whether beheld by mighty wind-blown-bearded man in clouds of thunder or otherwise so consider that the snake consumes its tale and hence the story continues forever and on without increasing or decreasing or otherwise and as a result resumes at the beginning of the end.

BONNO: Bravo.

RUBY: What does that mean?

BONNO: It's the essence of wisdom.

RUBY: The essence of folly.

BONNO: Exactly.

WALDO: At the moment of reflexion from the calm and unruffled perfect silver mirrored surface the light returns from source to source for decay shall bloom and wither goeth or wither cometh or whither rank or parsimonious as dust goes to ashes and ashes go to dust we determine that what is given is taken and as the measure of one is taken the measure of the other is given and hence all is in balance and the light returns by reflexion from the silver mirrored surface back to whence it came.

BONNO: Excellent inversion.

RUBY: He's talking nonsense. *(To the audience.)* Isn't he talking nonsense?

BONNO: I don't think so. They seem to be taking it in.

RUBY: They paid good money to listen to this.

BONNO: No refunds available.

WALDO: Quiet. It be so that a surd numeral as defines rational conception is deified as being divisible by remainder without leaving sufficient quota and oftentimes commencing in the middle or thereabouts the locus describes a prescribed location whether imaginary virtual or actual before being inscribed with inevitable certainty and supplied with a prescription which is in no way proscribed whether required by logic or not and having begun at the commencement the direction of the line proceeds in an orderly fashion from the preceding procedure until meeting the final conclusion forming a figure which may be circular elliptical rhomboidal irregular or not whatever the case may be.

BONNO: Bravo, bravo. *(Claps his hands silently.)* Applause please ladies and gentlemen.

Ruby shakes her head. Bonno applauds. There are applause sound effects. The Doll goes off, comes back with a virtual bouquet, gives to Waldo. Waldo bows. Bonno shakes Waldo by the hand. When the applause dies down, silence.

WALDO: How did I go today.

BONNO: Very well I thought.

WALDO: I didn't jumble the words.

BONNO: You always do, but no more than usual. It doesn't matter really, nobody knows the difference if it doesn't make sense.

RUBY: Well it's over at least. We don't need post mortems. *(There is a snatch of bawdy music off-stage. Ruby reacts to it.)* Excuse me. There is some business I have to attend to. *(Exit.)*

(Pause)

WALDO: Will she be back?

BONNO: She always returns when her business is completed.

WALDO: There's something. I can't remember what it is now.

BONNO: What was that?

WALDO: Things have passed me by. I get lonely. I would like to be in love again.

BONNO: Like you were once in the past?

WALDO: A memory that fades.

THE DOMESTIC BLISS MIME

Waldo give Doll the bouquet of flowers.

She gives him a kiss on his cheek.

She pours water into a jug from the tap.

Pours water from jug into a vase on the table.

Puts the flowers into the vase.

Arranges them.

They both look at the arrangement with delight.

They open the door of the house and go outside.

They walk through the gardens hand in hand.

There is a twittering of birds, a rustle of leaves.

They go to the rose bush.

Waldo picks a rose, gives it to Doll.

Doll smells the rose, a delicious aroma.

Doll pins the rose to her bodice.

Doll picks a rose, smells it, puts it in Waldo's buttonhole.

There are no thorns on these roses.

*Two children come up to them, a boy and a girl.
 It is not known if the children are theirs or not.
 Waldo picks up the boy child.
 The boy child puts his arms around Waldo's neck.
 Doll hugs the girl child to her waist.
 Waldo puts the boy child down.
 Bonno throws Waldo a long skipping rope.
 Waldo and Doll take ends of the rope and turn it for skipping.
 The boy child skips five times.
 It's the girls child's turn, she runs in and misses the skip.
 They start again.
 The girl child skips successfully five times.
 Waldo throws the rope to Bonno.
 The children run off. Goodbye.
 Waldo puts his arm around Doll's shoulder.
 She puts her arm around his waist, rests her head on his shoulder.
 They embrace.
 They are in love.*

END OF MIME

WALDO: Why were we skipping the rope?

BONNO: It's what children do when they are happy.

WALDO: So the two of us were like children? Is that what it means? That we were as innocent as children?

BONNO: You can make of it what you wish. After all, life is open to interpolation. It might mean one thing, it might mean another.

WALDO: Passing strange.

BONNO: It may well be a dull drum beating. The eminent professors, Wattman and Belcher, have written their thesis.

Enter Ruby putting money in her bodice.

BONNO: A satisfactory contribution?

RUBY: That's my business.

WALDO: The night is proceeding according to expectoration then?

RUBY: You may expectorate what you may expect.

BONNO: The expedition of the night confirms that the stars shall revolve around the heavens in an orderly procedure, that the sun shall set and rise and that the spirits of the earth shall be drawn into the cold ink-blue air to gambol in the starry welkin and then return to their dank-dead homes at dawn.

The doll sings snatches from the Queen of the Night aria from The Magic Flute.

WALDO: So now we know what we are.

RUBY: What?

WALDO: Spirits of the earth released to heaven for a night of frivolity under the whirling stars.

RUBY: That's a foolish thing to say.

BONNO: But we now know where we are going.

RUBY: Around in circles.

WALDO: It seems to be that way, fortunately. *(Pause)* Do you think anybody is out there watching? *(Referring to the audience.)*

BONNO: It's hard to say actually.

RUBY: Can't you see them?

BONNO: Who?

RUBY: The audience.

BONNO: Oh them. (*Looks into the auditorium.*) Can't seem to see a thing. I have the glare of the lights in my eyes. There's probably nobody there anyway.

RUBY: Why are we doing this then?

BONNO: Why does anyone do anything?

RUBY: We have to have something to do. Otherwise there's no point to existence.

WALDO: That's a good obstruction. But my, dear Bonno, I think there's some sort of obscuration between us and them.

BONNO: There may well be.

THE WALL MIME

Doll walks in a circle and bumps into the fourth wall.

Bonno does the wall thing on it.

Ruby and Waldo look on.

So what, it's been done so many times before.

Waldo takes a (virtual) sherry bottle in a paper bag from his pocket.

Drinks.

Offers the bottle to Ruby.

Wipes her hand over the neck of the bottle and drinks.

Ruby gives bottle back to Waldo.

Bonno puts his hand through a hole in the wall.

Does a double take.

Ruby and Waldo look on in surprise.

Doll makes a gesture of amazement.

Bonno looks through the hole.

He puts his arm through the hole and feels around.

He waves his fingers around feeling nothing.

Ruby comes up and looks through the hole making a face.

Doll struts around at random.

Waldo consults his manual of geometry.

He goes to the hole and tries to dislodge a brick.

It is quite firmly bound.

The other three come to help him.

Suddenly the brick becomes free and they fall back in a heap.

They pick up the brick and inspect it, passing from one to the other.

Waldo carefully places the brick down on the stage.

They start removing bricks from the hole.

They gradually get easier to dislodge.

Waldo and Doll place the removed bricks in a neat pile.

Eventually the hole is just big enough to get through.

Bonno goes through the hole and bows to the audience.

Applause. (Ruby and Waldo and Doll applaud silently.)

He goes back and continues brick removal.

As they remove more bricks the wall becomes unstable.

They try to hold it up.

It collapses down on top of them.

They pick themselves up and dust themselves off.

Doll continues placing the fallen bricks in the neat pile.

WALDO: There, we can see them at last.

BONNO: A good audience.

RUBY: We deserve it.

WALDO: I always held the belief that there should be communication across the gulf, through the barriers that impede understanding between the various factions and creeds and races and points of political assimilation.

BONNO: Careful old boy. This isn't parliament.

RUBY: No. I keep thinking about the carnival and Marvello and where they are now.

BONNO: It's well past midnight. It will be still on the way to its destination.

RUBY: Fairfield?

WALDO: Farmeadow he said.

BONNO: Crawling along under this glorious canopy of night, the sky fretted with silver starlight. When day comes everyone will see the carnival laid out at the caravanserai.

(During the following list the Doll mimes the various items.)

WALDO: The roundabout itself.

RUBY: The merry-go-round.

BONNO: The carousel.

WALDO: The disappearing man.

RUBY: The Ferris Wheel.

BONNO: The big dipper.

WALDO: The sideshow tents.

RUBY: The coconut shy.

BONNO: The dodgems.

WALDO: The bearded lady.

RUBY: The thin man.

BONNO: The tattooed lady.

WALDO: The Chinese magician

RUBY: Marvello as well.

BONNO: The Wall of Death.

WALDO: The Big Top.

RUBY: The sawdust ring.

BONNO: The ringmaster with his whip

WALDO: Jugglers.

RUBY: Acrobats.

BONNO: Clownes.

WALDO: Tightrope walkers.

RUBY: Trick cyclists.

BONNO: The hall of mirrors.

WALDO: The house of horrors.

RUBY: The elastic man.

BONNO: The dancing bear.

WALDO: The lion tamer.

RUBY: Prancing white horses.

BONNO: The hurdy gurdy.

WALDO: The daring young man on the flying trapeze.

RUBY: "The great globe itself..."

BONNO: "...and all that it inherit."

WALDO: What could be more marvellous than that?

RUBY: What could be more marvellous than that?

BONNO: What could be more marvellous than that?

ALL: What could be more marvellous than that?

Pause

WALDO: Was there the tunnel of love?

RUBY: Of course. All carnivals have one.

WALDO: Why didn't we mention it?

BONNO: There is no explanation.

WALDO: I would think that there is no explanation for love either.

RUBY: Love is a four letter word.

BONNO: We don't mention it in family entertainment.

RUBY: Passing strange.

Silence. There is the a snatch of bawdy music offstage again. Exit Ruby.

WALDO: She's gone again.

BONNO: To her inevitable destination.

WALDO: She will be back?

BONNO: In a moment.

WALDO: *(Pause)* Love seems to be a painful necessity.

BONNO: That could be an astute observation.

WALDO: Needed for the progeneration of the human race. Painful for the inevitable consolation. But you are lucky.

BONNO: Why do you say that?

WALDO: I have never read a story about a clown who fell in love.

BONNO: I thought you said you'd read all the books? Clowns are always falling in love. You have to be a clown in order to be able to fall in love. There is nothing so sad as the story of clowns in love.

WALDO: And nothing is as sad as when love departs.

BONNO: Ah yes, when love departs it is a sad day.

THE FINAL PARTING

Waldo stands centre stage, his back to the audience, head hung.

Doll circles around ignoring him.

There is something between the two, shown by body language.

Waldo goes to the rose bush and picks a rose.

Offers it to Doll.

She demurs.

Offers it again.

She takes it reluctantly.

There is a thorn on the stalk.

She pricks her finger.

Throws the rose down, sucks the wound.

Waldo goes to the rose bush for another rose.

Pricks his finger and drops the rose.

Pretends it doesn't hurt.

Bonno comes with a plaster for Doll's finger.

He puts on the plaster.

Doll ogles him.

They start to flirt.

Waldo moves to the other side of the stage, his back to them.

He feels betrayed.

Doll puts her hand on Bonno's arm.

*She looks over her shoulder at Waldo.
Turns back, puts her head on Bonno's shoulder.
Bonno disengages her hand from his.
Puts his hand on her shoulders and moves her away.
She understands, hangs her head.
Bonno goes to the seat.
Doll stands still, looking out into the audience.
Waldo and Doll turn and face each other.
They are sad as it is time to say goodbye.
They come together and look into each other's eyes.
What they see is defeat.
They turn.
They walk away from each other, heads down.*

END OF MIME

BONNO: So that is the tunnel of love.

WALDO: A far too complicated world, believe me. What I would like to see is the tunnel of mystery.

BONNO: The tunnel of mystery is good. But I must say my dear Waldo you have shown me a story with a beginning, a middle and an ending.

WALDO: Such is the way of love. There is always an ending. But then you might start again with another affair.

Ruby returns.

WALDO: So you are back.

RUBY: It would appear so.

BONNO: Passing fair.

WALDO: *(To Ruby)* I don't know you do I?

RUBY: Only what you've heard about me.

WALDO: That is all?

RUBY: Yes.

WALDO: We never knew each other?

RUBY: Never.

Silence. The carousel music starts faintly.

BONNO: It must be near that time.

WALDO: We put on a good show I think.

BONNO: It's not what we think that counts.

WALDO: The night is passing.

RUBY: Passion is spent.

WALDO: And yet we haven't fathomed the eternal mystery.

RUBY: Haven't reached the end of desire.

BONNO: But we are all still here. There will be another day to enjoy the circus.

WALDO: Another day of study,

RUBY: Another day of commerce.

BONNO: Soon the four-horsed chariot of the sun will rise to light the dawn.

The carousel music increases in volume.

WALDO: I hear them coming.

RUBY: In the distance.

WALDO: Coming nearer.

RUBY: Closer and closer.

The Doll starts up, does her entry mime in reverse and exits.

BONNO: The caravan of Marvello will draw nigh. He will rise in the morning refreshed, don his robe embroidered with stars and moons, and welcome you into his scented arms.

There is a snatch of bawdy offstage music.

RUBY: I have to go.

BONNO: What now? When your hierophant is arriving?

RUBY: I have a rendezvous. A Count of impeccable breeding. It can't be missed.

Exit Ruby.

BONNO: Soon the carousel will be assembled. All tickets will be redeemed.

WALDO: I have to go.

BONNO: What now? When your ride on the roundabout is available?

WALDO: I have a tutorial with my professor at the University. It can't be missed.

Exit Waldo. The music increases in volume. Bonno comes down.

BONNO: Daylight has come. The carnival is returning. Do you want to come to the fair? Will it be a day in your life that is full of delight? Clowns and acrobats and sideshows. Will you take a ride on the merry-go-round? Will you see the illusions created by Impresario Marvello, the marvellous, mystic and miraculous magician?

The music increases in volume as the lights go down and the curtain closes.

Act 2

There is carousel music, loud at first but diminishing as the play progresses. The curtain opens, the lights come up. Enter Bonno. Bonno performs his entry mime.

*He takes a (virtual) banana from his pocket which he peels and eats.
He throws away banana skin.
He walks about stage in a disordered manner.
Slips on banana skin and does a pratfall.
Stands up and shakes his head.
Picks up banana skin and throws it away (still on stage.)
Looks around not being aware of where the front of the stage is.
He scratches his head.
Finally notices audience.
Comes down.*

BONNO: Day has ended. The carnival is packed up and travelling away to the next fairground. Did you go to the fair? Was it a day in your life that was full of delight? Clowns and acrobats and sideshows. Did you take a ride on the merry-go-round? Did you see the illusions created by the impresario Marvello, the marvellous, mystic and miraculous magician?

Mostly clowns amuse you by the buffoonery of their conduct, but this evening I am permitted to talk. Do not be surprised by the foolishness of the clowns thought. It is the essence of wisdom and insight into the human condition. But you will probably think it is pure folly. Today, expect to be enlightened concerning the folly of wisdom, or perhaps the wisdom of folly.

Enter Emelia with the play-script which she places on the sitting appurtenance. She performs her entry mime.

*She adopts a dramatic theatrical pose with arms outstretched.
Moves about the stage in a flowing dramatic manner.
Comes down, centre stage.
Claps silently.
Curtsey bows to the audience, centre, right, left, centre.
Blows kisses to the ancient gentleman in the box.
Picks up the banana skin and throws it into the wings.*

EMELIA: Bonno, you know that a lady should not be allowed to fall onto her bum.

BONNO: Certainly. I would not think of such a thing.

EMELIA: But you left that banana skin on the stage.

BONNO: It was there so you could throw it away.

EMELIA: What do you mean?

BONNO: It is part of the play.

EMELIA: A part of the play? Are you telling me you put it there for a purpose?

BONNO: The script has been written.

EMELIA: I see. You know who writes the scripts then?

BONNO: That is a question I cannot answer.

EMELIA: There are no explanations. *(She looks out into the auditorium and then looks back to Bonno.)* I've come to present the play again. Has the carnival gone?

BONNO: They left just as the sun went down.

EMELIA: I can still hear the music.

BONNO: Fading away into the distance. *(The music is fading.)*

EMELIA: Where are they off to now?

BONNO: The next fairground.

EMELIA: At Straightford?

BONNO: Caravanserai.

EMELIA: Always the next fairground, Straightford, Caravanserai, The Bull and Tickle or What-you-may-call-it. Still I am not going with them just yet. There is the play to consider and that has not been completed.

BONNO: Two more pages have arrived. *(He picks them up. Emelia takes one of the pages and reads from it.)*

EMELIA: It's the title page. "Carnival by Zygmunti Stary."

BONNO: Yes, we already know that.

EMELIA: "With assistance from The Ancient Marathon Warrior, Anton Antonovitch and Monsieur Bleakoh."

BONNO: Master Shakestaff is no longer mentioned.

EMELIA: I think that is a fine decision. It was a poor scene. You can't satirise The Master, he's too empowered for that. Oh I have acted in his plays many times. Such integration. Don't you love his incoiled complexion?

BONNO: I don't know much about acting.

EMELIA: But you will fill in for me in our presentation? I'm still short of one actor.

BONNO: There appears to be a universal shortage, but I appear to be more of a Master of Ceremonies than an actor.

EMELIA: You know the lines and you are eminently suited for such a role. After all clowns are masters of the universe.

BONNO: True.

EMELIA: And the universe is mastered by folly.

BONNO: As has been said many times. *(Looks at the other page.)* This other page, it says: "Remove page 42."

EMELIA: That's the Master's scene.

Bonno removes page 42 and places the title page at the bottom of the script. The three unwanted pages can be made to disappear by a conjuring trick or screwed up and thrown into the audience. He puts the script down.

BONNO: This play we are presenting, it's just a patchwork of episodes. It isn't finished and it seems to have very little rhyme or reason.

EMELIA: But you are a clown. You should understand that. Your performances have very little rhyme or reason.

BONNO: That is a buffoonery which is designed to provoke laughter in the children. What you are attempting here is legitimate theatre, an exposition of the motivation and character of the puppets on the stage.

EMELIA: Who have very little rhyme or reason.

BONNO: True. But their actions make you laugh and cry do they not? This audience here, *(referring to the actual audience)* will not like a play that is unfinished and has little rhyme or reason.

EMELIA: It appears to be a very sparse audience, probably because the critics will have slated us.

BONNO: And you don't mind that?

EMELIA: All the best plays are slated by the critics. Anyway this is better than sitting around waiting for someone who never arrives.

BONNO: Ah yes, two clowns sitting under a tree talking about nothing. It was accounted a good play.

EMELIA: A fortuitous innovation with great consequence.

BONNO: And few incidents. So we shall present this patchwork for this audience. When it is finally completed and prepared what do you intend it for?

EMELIA: Your Impresario, Marvello has many other enterprises beside the sawdust ring I believe.

BONNO: His ways are inscrutable. I know little of his goings on outside of the circus.

EMELIA: There are rumours that he owns a marvellous theatre with capacious stalls, a circle, the gods and even boxes with cherubim's painted in gold flying in a starry blue sky. I have made an embassy to him in ancient times to see if I could perform it there and here is his reply. *(She takes a letter from her purse or bodice. Takes out her glasses, peers at the letter.)* I can't seem to make it out.

BONNO: Let me see. *(She hands him the letter. He peers at it, turns it upside down, sideways, shakes his head.)* It is an irrelevant obfuscation, not to be understood by people in our station.

EMELIA: I see, there are no answers yet from those in high regard.

BONNO: Ah, but there are questions. If you ask the correct question you are bound to receive an answer. *(He hands the letter back. She puts it in her purse or bodice.)*

EMELIA: Passing strange.

BONNO: But tell me have you replaced the two actors who came with me to the carnival after our last meeting?

EMELIA: Yes. Leonardo has been replaced by Archie.

BONNO: Oh yes. Leonardo was an actor in the old style but lacked depth. We have assigned him to the box office but he does have pretensions. However I am surprised that you have employed Archie. He was with you before but when he came to us we discovered his lack of skill, so we had to let him go.

EMELIA: Oh, I assure you, this is a different Archie. He has developed a superior competence as an entertainer and some quality as an actor.

BONNO: And where did these come from?

EMELIA: The playwright of course.

BONNO: Zygmunti Stary?

EMELIA: No, the one who writes our lines.

BONNO: Oh, the old fellow with books and inkwells floating around his head. *(Pause)* And young Emerald, have you replaced her?

EMELIA: A young actress by the name of Sapphire has taken her part.

BONNO: Another stone I see.

EMELIA: Yes, one of a different colour.

BONNO: Emerald came to us because she wanted to become Marvello's paramour but he never had that intention. He offered her a position riding the white ponies and she took it because she thought it might eventually lead to his boudoir.

EMELIA: She always had a high opinion of herself. That's what you get from the Method School. They teach them that the style is superior to that of the Old School.

BONNO: And your new actress, she is from the Method School?

EMELIA: She has her own methods. I appreciate her more than I did Emerald. Sapphire does not flaunt her talent. But here comes Archie now.

Enter Archie. His entry mime is the famous soft shoe shuffle which the director and actor can choreograph. It ends with a bow to the audience.

BONNO: The new Archie I see.

ARCHIE: Completely refurbished and willing to express my quality your highness. I can sing songs from the music hall and I can perform comic sketches.

EMELIA: He can act too.

ARCHIE: I can even perform conjuring tricks.

BONNO: Show us one. Can you pull a rabbit out of your hat?

ARCHIE: Oh I can do better than that, I can pull a rooster out of my hat.

EMELIA: Can you really? Give us a demonstration.

Archie makes magical gestures over his hat. He takes out a ceramic egg which has obviously been planted.

BONNO: That's not a rooster, that's an egg.

ARCHIE: But one day it will hatch and grow up to be a rooster.

BONNO: *(Takes the egg and taps it against the side of his head.)* It's a pretty hard egg.

ARCHIE: That's because it was laid by a rooster.

Bonno puts the egg in his pocket. If conjuring can be managed he makes it disappear, pulls it out of Archie's ear and then puts it in his pocket.

EMELIA: Roosters don't lay eggs Archie.

ARCHIE: Anything can happen in the world of dreams. But tell me Bonno, why did the rooster cross the road?

BONNO: I have no idea, why did the rooster cross the road?

ARCHIE: Cock a doodle doo! I asked you the question; why did the rooster cross the road?

There is a routine here where they dance in circles around the stage crowing and imitating the gait and flapping wings of a rooster, ad-libbing the repetitive lines.

BONNO: I told you I don't know. Why did the rooster cross the road?

ARCHIE: Cock a doodle doo! I asked you first; why did the rooster cross the road?

BONNO: Etc.

ARCHIE: Etc.

EMELIA: Stop that clowning.

BONNO: But that is our vocation.

EMELIA: Will there ever be an answer to the vexed question of why the rooster crossed the road?

ARCHIE: Not until the end of time.

BONNO: You are a jester I see.

ARCHIE: Part of my bag of tricks. Tonight I am a Jack of all trades. I can please the nobility and I can crack the ears of the groundlings. I can act the giddy goat. I can dance a jig. I can amuse the humble man and I can grind out an honest ballad for the delight of the motley. Archie is my name and entertainment is my game.

BONNO: You have become advanced in your character I see.

ARCHIE: It's one small step for a man.

BONNO: But a gigantic leopard for Everyman.

ARCHIE: If you say so. But I can perform any style under the sun.

EMELIA: The sun has gone down.

ARCHIE: *(Walks around looking up and down.)* It certainly has. But how is it that you haven't got a moon? It would be most enlightening to have a moon. Enlightening. Ha, that's smart. If we had the man on the moon we could have leopards, but all you have here is this dim and dismal street light.

BONNO: *(To the lighting box.)* Bring up the lights please. *(The lights, which are perfectly adequate, flicker up and down and then return to their former level.)*

EMELIA: You should know why there is no moon my dear friend. It is the property of the master's dream.

ARCHIE: I am sure that I saw the celestial orb the other evening.
EMELIA: But we weren't in a play then.
ARCHIE: No, you and I and the rest of cast were having a supper.
EMELIA: Ah supper. I remember the time when I had a lover. We would have supper under the harvest moon. There would be roses on our table and stars in the sky.
BONNO: *(Aside)* Stars and roses again. Will he ever get them out of his mind?
EMELIA: The Gypsy fiddler would come to us and play a sentimental Romany air. It was an evening redolent with romance. Do you remember such a time Archie?
ARCHIE: *(Is reluctant to come into her dream.)* I remember times like that. I've had a host of young friends. I would invite them out for a banger mash and a pint of porter.
EMELIA: Oh Archie you have lost your romantic soul. Do you not have a heart that is burnt with Passion?
ARCHIE: Madamé I can have the soul of a Romeo if that is how you wish me to play the part.
BONNO: Romeo, Romeo, I know about Romeo. Didn't he come to an unhappy end?
ARCHIE: He had to die a sad death. It was why he was in the play. That was where he was meant to be.
BONNO: And everyone has to be somewhere.
EMELIA: You are so right Bonno. But if that is the case why are we here?
BONNO: There is a method in the universal scheme. Also it is something to do.
ARCHIE: I agree my dear friend. It is something to do. But I seem to have come after the carnival has packed up and gone. *(He takes a ticket from his pocket.*
I have this free ticket. It was given to me by a scholar. Is it still available?
BONNO: *(Takes the ticket.)* It is current for any sideshow entertainment that we offer. You may wish to see Ling Ho the Chinese Magician or ride the carousel or drive the Dodgems or witness the Wall of Death. *(He passes the ticket back. Archie puts it away.)*
ARCHIE: I remember the Wall of Death. The man on the motor cycle rides around and around defying gravity and never falls off the wall.
BONNO: A most circular entertainment.
ARCHIE: One day I might join the carnival and take a ride on the carousel.
EMELIA: Surely you will not redeem your ticket.
ARCHIE: Nothing is decided. I remember when I was a child what joy I had riding the Merry-go-round with the horses going up and down and the music playing.
EMELIA: At present you here to perform in the play.
ARCHIE: Yes, for the present.
EMELIA: Very good Archie. But here comes the final member of our team.
Enter Sapphire. Her entry mime.
She walks on leading a poodle.
They both walk around the stage showing off their graces.
The poodle cocks its leg at the carousel horse.
Sapphire tugs at the lead but can't move it.
She smiles to those present in an embarrassed way.
She lets go of the lead and the dog runs off.
She comes down and does an elaborate and elegant bow to the audience.
BONNO: Young lady, welcome to our party. *(She offers the back of her hand and he kisses it.)* Are you part of the play?

SAPPHIRE: We are all part of the play.

BONNO: Naturally.

EMELIA: Bonno, I would like to introduce you to Sapphire, who plays a leading role in our little entertainment.

SAPPHIRE: Are you associated with the carnival Master Bonno?

BONNO: An eminent representative.

SAPPHIRE: Has it departed yet?

BONNO: Oh yes, it certainly has. They all packed up and left just as the sun went down.

SAPPHIRE: If you are a part of the show why is it that you are here when they have gone?

BONNO: There is no explanation.

SAPPHIRE: Passing strange. We had hoped to present our play before the Impresario Marvello, had we not Emelia?

EMELIA: Indeed. But for the present we are to perform the incomplete and disjointed scenes before this audience.

SAPPHIRE: I must say this is a new thing for me. To act in a play before it is actually finished.

BONNO: No play is ever finished. The univalve is till expanding.

SAPPHIRE: *(Takes an invitation from her bodice or purse*

.) I have this invitation from Marvello for an audience. It was given me by a lady of the night.

EMELIA: Surely you will not redeem it.

SAPPHIRE: Nothing is decided. Surely I would wish to consider possibilities for advancement. *(She puts the invitation back.)*

EMELIA: Sadly.

BONNO: But tell me young lady, I am not a great actor myself, if I am to play a part how do I realise my character?

SAPPHIRE: It is your first mistake when you say you own the character. You do not own the character, the character owns you.

EMELIA: Certainly, she understands the essence of our art. When I hear an actor say 'my character' I know they've missed the mark. Don't you agree Archie?

ARCHIE: They come and go as they will, like the wind flowing through the sky.

SAPPHIRE: Most poetic Archie.

ARCHIE: Something I try to avoid. But tell me, have you been practicing your aria.

SAPPHIRE: My aria? You call a popular music hall ditty an aria?

EMELIA: What's this all about Sapphire?

SAPPHIRE: Archie has been teaching me a music hall song.

ARCHIE: She has an excellent voice for it too, and even a cockney accent. I thought we might have a little entertainment to lighten up the ponderous nature of this script.

BONNO: I think that is an excellent idea. Let us have this interlude. Music Maestro please.

Backing music needs to be piped in. What I have in mind is 'My Old Man Said Follow the Van' but any popular song of the genre will do. The cast and backstage crew join in the choruses and the audience may be primed with a lyric sheet in the programme. Sapphire may have a bird in a cage if that can be managed. There is

applause and bows when the number is finished. Archie gives Sapphire a (virtual) bouquet.

EMELIA: Thank you Sapphire. I knew you had a great deal of versatility. Do you all know your parts?

BONNO: Certainly. I have studied the book and am the master of all the parts.

ARCHIE: The master of all the parts is a clown?

BONNO: Precisely.

ARCHIE: So that's why it doesn't make much sense.

BONNO: But what types of plays are we about to present?

EMELIA: All types of course.

BONNO: That is most meliflorous.

EMELIA: Tragedy.

ARCHIE: Comedy.

SAPPHIRE: History.

BONNO: Pastoral.

EMELIA: Tragical-historical.

ARCHIE: Pastoral-comical

SAPPHIRE: Tragical-comical-historical.

BONNO: Scene individual.

EMELIA: Poem unlimited.

ARCHIE: Heroic.

SAPPHIRE: Absurdist.

BONNO: Kitchen sink.

EMELIA: Irreal.

BONNO: That's what this is, isn't it?

EMELIA: Possibly.

ARCHIE: Farce.

SAPPHIRE: Theatre of cruelty.

BONNO: Whodunit.

EMELIA: Musical theatre.

ARCHIE: Opera.

SAPPHIRE: Ballet.

BONNO: Pantomime.

EMELIA: Black comedy.

ARCHIE: Puppetry.

SAPPHIRE: Physical theatre.

BONNO: Tragicomedy.

EMELIA: Commedia dell 'arte.

ARCHIE: Restoration comedy.

SAPPHIRE: Melodrama.

BONNO: Slapstick.

EMELIA: Psychodrama.

ARCHIE: Vaudeville.

SAPPHIRE: A mask.

BONNO: Burlesque.

EMELIA: Extravaganza.

ARCHIE: Comedy of menace.

SAPPHIRE: Drama de tramoya.

BONNO: Miracle play. (*Ends*) Are we going to have our first scene now?

EMELIA: Of course. *(She picks up the top page of the script and shows it around.)* **Scene One, the Creation of the Universe.** Bonno you are the Compeer, the rest of us are just numbers. *(She puts the page on the bottom of the script. The actors now take on the persona of the parts they are acting – Bonno, very much the clown, remains in character, the others quite flat and expressionless.)*

BONNO: *(Bonno stands on the soapbox. A possible clown routine here; Bonno carefully places one foot on the box. Carefully places the other foot but it misses the box and lands on the floor. Teeters but does not fall over. Repeats etc. Archie makes a stirrup to catch the errant foot but it now lands on the box.)*

Allow me to commence.

In the beginning, as we say, O dear, as we say, for it was said aforesaid in the hoary book, there was a singular void, a mote without formula but a singularity in the shape of an atom, which contained all things, all thoughts, all chimeral constituents and this mote was a solo point which might be defiled mathematically speaking as located without area, without space and not being anywhere in particular, apart from in the mind of the original thought, and from that came a bursting forth in a marbled effulgent bloom of chaos all in a micro milli nano interval of temporal continuance as the mighty conscience breathed the first breath, the ‘a’ of which begins all sounds as the mouth is opened and the exhalation commences.

Then comes the continuum.

EMELIA: One.

ARCHIE: Two.

SAPPHIRE: One two one two one two.

EMELIA: All different.

ARCHIE: Not the same.

SAPPHIRE: Two one two one two one.

EMELIA: The like and the opposite.

ARCHIE: The opposite and the like.

SAPPHIRE: One two one two one two.

BONNO: The beginning declension of that initial temporal instant was a composting of two unlike and opposite particles in love and hate. Since then the two hold together by the attraction of the like for the unlike and the detraction of the like for the like or the unlike for the unlike and this is the underlying factor of the illusion.

Bonno might need to go to centre stage if the soapbox is to one side.

Waltz music under.

Archie and Emelia waltz around Bonno for one circuit.

Bonno quietly repeats his line above in time to the music while rotating to keep facing the dancers.

Bonno stops talking and rotating.

Change of partners.

Emelia and Sapphire do another circuit in the opposite direction.

Change of partners.

Archie and Sapphire do another circuit in the opposite direction.

The music stops. End of scene. Actors back in character.

EMELIA: Yes, dear audience, that is our first scene, entitled ‘the Creation of the Universe’. You may applaud now.

SAPPHIRE: I see. He’s talking about the big bang theory.

EMELIA: So it would seem.

ARCHIE: And the animals going into the ark two by two.

EMELIA: Nothing to do with that at all Archie. I think he's saying that the universe is composed of two by twos.

ARCHIE: I see. Well next time He creates one He'll have to have three by three.

SAPPHIRE: Why?

ARCHIE: To make it more interesting. It means a man could have two marriage partners

SAPPHIRE: I would hope not. Two people together are bad enough.

EMELIA: I assume all the partners will be different.

SAPPHIRE: I think he's talking about polygamy.

ARCHIE: No. Each sex would be different. A male, a female and a neuter.

BONNO: Or hermaphrodite. You are making things very compelled. Are we to have another scene Emelia?

EMELIA: Yes, but you only have a short speech at the end.

BONNO: 'For this relief much thanks.'

Bonno moves back (upstage.)

EMELIA: *(Emelia takes the next page from the script and addresses the audience.)* **Scene two. The Birth of Infants.**

ARCHIE: So, after the birth of the universe there is the birth of infants.

EMELIA: Yes. You see it has dramatic unity.

SAPPHIRE: In a peculiar sort of way.

EMELIA: You have to look at it deeply to see the connections.

ARCHIE: A few too many fathoms for me.

*Emelia puts the page on the bottom of the script.
They are now acting different characters which are quite shallow.
There is the sound of a baby crying.
Emelia comes down with a baby in a shawl.
Archie and Sapphire crowd around.*

EMELIA: Coochie coo.
SAPPHIRE: What a lovely baby.
ARCHIE: *(Disinterested.)* Quite cute.
EMELIA: Coochie coo.
SAPPHIRE: What are you going to call him?
EMELIA: Horatio C. Earwiggle.
SAPPHIRE: Oh, he has a middle name and a surname.
EMELIA: Of course.
ARCHIE: We don't have middle names and surnames.
SAPPHIRE: Why is that?
ARCHIE: Because we are not real people of course.
SAPPHIRE: Just actors.
ARCHIE: The lowest of the low.

The baby starts wriggling in Emelia's arms.

EMELIA: Horatio you really are a wriggler.
ARCHIE: An earwigler of course.

*Emelia puts the baby down on the stage.
They watch it as it crawls around.*

EMELIA: It's crawling around.
SAPPHIRE: It's growing fast.
ARCHIE: Like the beanstalk.

There is a sound of a baby crying.

Emelia has another baby in her arms.

EMELIA: Coochie coo.
SAPPHIRE: What a lovely baby.
ARCHIE: *(Disinterested)* This one is a girl.
EMELIA: Coochie coo.
SAPPHIRE: What are you going to call her?
EMELIA: Hermione C. Earwaggler.

The baby starts wriggling in Emelia's arms.

EMELIA: Hermione you really are a waggler.
ARCHIE: An earwaggler of course.

*Emelia puts the baby down on the stage.
They watch it as it crawls around.*

EMELIA: They're both crawling around.
SAPPHIRE: And growing fast.
ARCHIE: Like the beanstalk.
SAPPHIRE: They're starting to walk.
EMELIA: Take their hands.
ARCHIE: Come to me Horatio.
SAPPHIRE: Hermione, we shall become one like the other.

*Archie takes the hand of Horatio and Sapphire takes the hand of Hermione.
They walk around with the children hand in hand.*

BONNO: *(On the soapbox.)* The children in this fabrication of reality are the result of what has been thought. They are made up of thoughts and follow the path of the thoughts as the wheel of the wagon follows the foot of the ox. They begin their journey with clear bright eyes and confidence in the order of things. And their songs are sung to the shining sun and the dew on the chill morning leaf. Wither they come or wither they go is believed to be or may not be the decision of some other determinant unknown to which they are asked to sing their song of praise.

End of scene. The actors get back into character. They take brief bows and ask for applause.

EMELIA: Yes that went quite well.

SAPPHIRE: You haven't shown me scene three yet Emelia.

EMELIA: *(Picks up script.)* No it hasn't come down.

ARCHIE: Are we not going to scene three see?

SAPPHIRE: You've got your words de-concatenated Archie.

ARCHIE: What do you mean? Of course I've seen the sea. *(Sings)* 'Oh I do love to be beside the scene three'

A Routine. Archie and Bonno prance around the stage swimming, diving and dancing with each other while Archie sings 'I do love to be beside the seaside.'

EMELIA: That's enough children. *(She takes the top page from the script and reads.)* 'Scene Four – pre-pubescent children.' The rest of the page is blank.

SAPPHIRE: Who'd want a scene about pre-pubescent children?

EMELIA: Exactly. *(She places the page on the bottom of the script, takes the next one.)* **Scene fourteen – a tragical dumb show of blood and retribution.**

ARCHIE: We seem to have omitted some scenes.

EMELIA: Yes.

ARCHIE: Why is that?

EMELIA: There is no explanation.

ARCHIE: There never are explanations.

BONNO: It could be that there are a number of innovations between a pre-pubescent children's scene and a tragical dumb show.

SAPPHIRE: Are we going to have this scene now?

EMELIA: Of course. This scene is contributed to the script by the Ancient Marathon Warrior, the first playwright in many respects.

BONNO: Explain the plot to them.

EMELIA: *(She comes down and declaims.)* A story of murder and blood
 where a king asked his daughter
 to marry death on the altar of his ambition,
 where his wife slew him in revenge
 and where son and daughter slew their mother
 at the word of a god.

The stand with cloaks and masks is brought on. It does not matter if the stage hand(s) appear(s) on stage. The actors have their backs to the audience. When they take on a character they turn and don the appropriate cloak and mask. When they die they cast cloak and mask onto the stage and turn back. Archie and Sapphire double parts.

Agamemnon, a king. He wears a gold mask and a purple cloak. *(Archie)*

Clytemnestra, a queen. She wears a silver mask and blue cloak. *(Emelia)*

Kalkis a priest. An orange mask and a cloak embroidered gold on black. *(Bonno)*

Iphigenia, a virgin bride for sacrifice. A red mask and a white cloak. *(Sapphire)*

Orestes, the son. A black mask and a maroon cloak. *(Archie)*

Elektra, the daughter. A white mask and black cloak. (Sapphire)

The masks and cloaks do not need to be plain. The colours should be prominent or highlights in ornate masks and costumes. This mime is a representation of part of The Orestia by Aeschylus. See also The Iphigenia at Aulis by Euripides and other classic Greek plays. The mime should be augmented with sound effects.

Agamemnon dons his cloak and mask and turns to face the audience.

He stands on the hill above Aulis with the wind blowing in his face.

Clytemnestra dons her cloak and mask and walks to the middle of the stage facing Agamemnon.

Kalkis dons his cloak and mask and crosses.

He stands before the altar, arms upraised to the sacrificial fire.

He turns to face the centre.

Iphigenia dons her cloak and mask and puts palms together in prayer.

She pauses, looks towards Agamemnon's back, moves to him and touches the hem of his robe.

No reaction.

She looks to Kalkis, walks towards him and kneels with head bowed.

Clytemnestra stands centre stage, looking out.

Sound of camp-fire, clink of armour, creak of hawser, wind sighing, waves washing on shingle shore, muttered conversations and rattle of chain.

Kalkis puts his hand under Iphigenia's chin and raises her face.

She looks at him and he draws her to her feet.

They turn and chant rituals to the gods of earth and fire.

The ritual fire rises.

Kalkis leads Iphigenia, without protestation, to the altar and binds her to it.

Agamemnon turns to look at the two women.

Kalkis raises high the ritual knife and plunges it into Iphigenia's breast.

Iphigenia dies on the altar casting down cloak and mask and turning back upstage.

Clytemnestra goes to the cloak kisses it and lays it out in the posture of the dead.

She turns and looks at Agamemnon.

He turns back, looks at the sea.

Clytemnestra goes to Agamemnon.

He turns, proud and haughty.

Clytemnestra lays down the purple carpet before him.

He walks majestically to the bath where she washes him.

She casts a net over him and thrusts a spear into his back.

He dies casting aside cloak and mask onto the stage and turns back upstage.

Night noises as before.

Archie becomes Orestes, dons his cloak and mask and surveys the scene.

Kalkis is in a position of prayer beside Iphigenia's body.

Orestes strikes him dead.

Elektra turns, takes her mask and cloak, and looks at Orestes.

There is a moment of recognition then she walks to him.

Together they plunge a sword into Clytemnestra's breast.

She accepts, even welcomes, her death.

All this killing is to be done in slow motion like a graceful ballet.

The actors take a quick bow then get back into character and return the cloaks and masks to the rack.

BONNO: It's a bit like Hamlet.
 EMELIA: Yes, something fully soaked in blood. All the best ones are.
 BONNO: Not likely to amuse the children in the circus.
 EMELIA: That is another world Bonno.
 BONNO: Fortunately.
 ARCHIE: Soaked in blood you say?
 EMELIA: A natural representation. There's nothing like a bit of Greek tragedy to warm the cockles of the heart.
 ARCHIE: I'm not quite sure what it was all about. It wouldn't go across in the music hall I believe.
 SAPPHIRE: But tragedy does portray blood and greed.
 ARCHIE: What is the purpose of the blood and greed?
 SAPPHIRE: That's how you get to the top of the tree.
 ARCHIE: And what happens when you get there?
 SAPPHIRE: You can see for miles.
 ARCHIE: I did not know you were so philosophical. I thought it might be possible to fall off.
 BONNO: 'What goes up must come down.'
 ARCHIE: Indeed, a rise leads to a decline and vice versa, as we say on the stock market.
 EMELIA: Allow me to congratulate you all. Your performance in that scene was most exemplary.
 BONNO: It was a time not to be the clown.
 EMELIA: And time perhaps for an interval.
A new page for the script floats down from the flies. Bonno picks it up.
 BONNO: What is this? *(Hands it to Emelia.)*
 EMELIA: A new scene. **The sound effects mime.**
 BONNO: Haven't we had that one before?
 EMELIA: Yes, it came and went. Now it's back again.
 BONNO: Let us have it then.
 SAPPHIRE: How is it that Archie and I know the parts?
 BONNO: That is not explained.
 SAPPHIRE: Passing strange.

This mime is accompanied by a sound effects recording. Although all the properties are virtual the sounds are real and the actors will have to coordinate their movements to the sounds.

Bonno stands on the sitting appurtenance and takes the stance of a conductor.

He taps his baton on the music stand.

Upraises his hands and conducts.

The music is the introductory carousel music or related to it.

The music dies away quite quickly in spite of Bonno's energetic conducting attempts.

Bonno taps his baton again and the above process repeats.

Bonno is defeated, he drops the baton and sits head in hands.

Emerald marches around the stage in a complete circle beating on a snare drum once for every two paces.

Bonno sits up.

Both the others are standing to one side looking at Emerald.

Emerald beats a drum roll.

There is drum beating which may be decided by the director.

Emerald marches around the stage drumming.

Emelia and Archie follow her playing trombone and clarinet to marching music e.g. John Philip Sousa or some other well known piece which may include instruments other than clarinet and trombone.

Bonno has picked up the baton and is conducting.

There is a blare of discordance and they all drop their instruments put their hands over their ears and fall down.

The carousel music starts.

They get up and dance around the stage and then exit waving and blowing kisses to the audience.

INTERVAL

AFTER THE INTERVAL.

Archie comes on with top hat, cane and jacket and gives a rendition of the music hall song , 'Champagne Charlie', with rest of cast, stage crew and perhaps audience singing choruses. Applause. Sapphire gives Archie a (virtual) bouquet. Archie gives top hat etc to stage hand and recovers his bowler.

EMELIA: That is very good Archie but it is not in the script.

ARCHIE: Just my attempt to liven up an evening which is complicated and obscure in its attempts to be entertain.

EMELIA: Don't say things like that Archie. The evening is perfectly amenable to an enlightened savant.

SAPPHIRE: Yes, I believe it is.

ARCHIE: With a little bit of luck I'll come to understand it in time.

BONNO: But Emelia, if items are to be presented which are not in the script I would like to present a scene of my own from my clown repertory.

EMELIA: Is this a scene of buffoonery designed to make the children laugh Bonno?

BONNO: This is a very serious scene Emelia.

EMELIA: What is it about?

BONNO: A sausage. *(On the soapbox.)* How can one extrapolate the profane virtues of a sausage? How can one designate the method whereby the meat is emasculated in the grinder and added to the crumb of bread, a wide variety of seasons and other stuffings? How it is then encased in a casing deprived from animal intestinals? A sausage is the azimuth, in other words the pineapple, of human invention, highly regarded by ancient and modern civilians. The sausage comes in many formulations. So let me present, for your eternal edification, a scene about a sausage.

The sausage mime

Bonno walks downstage.

He takes off his pack and puts it down beside him.

He sits and takes a newspaper from his pack, opens and peruses it.

He responds to the news items in ways which are different each performance.

He crumples the paper and places it on stage.

He takes kindling from the pack and places it on the paper.

He takes matches and lights the fire.

He warms his hands on the flames.

He places small logs on the fire.

He warms his hands.

He takes a long three pronged fork and a sausage from his pack.

Impales the sausage on the fork and cooks it over the fire.

The fat sizzles as it drips onto the fire.

The sausage is cooked.

He takes hold of it to take it off the fork.

It is hot and he drops fork and sausage.

He sucks his burnt fingers.

He picks up fork and sausage wipes off the dirt with paper napkin from pack.

Holding fork and sausage he takes a plate and knife from pack.

He removes sausage from fork with knife, places on plate.

Takes a bottle of tomato sauce from pack and spreads over sausage.

*He places a napkin around his neck and takes a bite from the sausage.
 The others come down around him.
 Bonno cuts the sausage into pieces.
 He offers Sapphire a piece of sausage.
 She accepts it and takes a delicate nibble which she enjoys.
 Bonno gives pieces of sausage to the others who eat with various degrees of
 delight.
 He eats the rest of the sausage.
 He cleans the saucepan with a paper towel and places it in his pack.
 He picks up the pack.
 He and Emelia go to the sitting appurtenance where they silently discuss the
 script.*

ARCHIE: Did you like the sausage.

SAPPHIRE: It was quite spicy. An Italian sausage I think.

ARCHIE: Needed a little salt I thought. But there is an Italian influence in the play. Leonardo was Italian wasn't he? I feel a definite accent which must have come from him.

SAPPHIRE: And 'Bonno' is Italian isn't it. But this conversation is quite irrelevant to anything.

ARCHIE: It seems to be that sort of play.

SAPPHIRE: What worries me is that fire on the stage. It seems to be catching. I'll get some water and put it out before the Fire Department come and closes down the theatre. *(Goes)*

Archie stamps on the fire.

His pants catch fire and he slaps them with his hands to put it out.

Sapphire returns with a (virtual) jug of water which she pours on the fire.

The fire sizzles as it goes out, the sound being created by the actors' ventriloquism.

A stage hand comes on and sweeps the fire debris into the audience.

Bonno and Emelia come down with the play-script.

BONNO: It says here that a play is an imitation.

EMELIA: So by pretending to eat a sausage you were imitating life.

BONNO: Pardon me, I wasn't pretending. That was a real sausage.

EMELIA: I don't know if I want to believe that.

BONNO: Everything is an illusion anyway. That's why we have theatre. Let us go forward to the next scene in life's journey.

SAPPHIRE: What comes after a sausage?

EMELIA: The first scene after the interval is a scene from country life contributed by the esteemed Anton Antonovich. *(Reads from the top page of the script. **Scene 30 – A comedy of country life.** She places the page on the bottom of the script. There is the sound of chopping which continues under.)*

ARCHIE: What is that sound?

BONNO: It's time chopping away your lives.

EMELIA: Let us commence then.

They get into character.

SAPPHIRE: *(Sapphire is more animated than the others in the delivery of her lines and moves about more.)* When we commenced on the journey we were innocent children.

EMELIA: *(Holding a small dog in her arms.)* My dog actually eats nuts.

BONNO: Fancy that.
ARCHIE: The white ball strikes the red and cannons into the black.
SAPPHIRE: We waited in the carriage for the journey to start. There was an ambient smell of stale train smoke.
EMELIA: My dog actually eats cashew nuts.
BONNO: Remarkable.
ARCHIE: The white ball strikes the black and cannons into the red.
SAPPHIRE: Soon the whistle sounded and we clattered past the private back gardens of suburban houses.
EMELIA: My dog actually eats betel nuts.
BONNO: Amazing.
ARCHIE: The white ball strikes the black and goes into the side pocket.
SAPPHIRE: Soon we were in the country. The everlasting steppes of Central Asia sped past never changing.
EMELIA: My dog actually eats grugru nuts.
BONNO: Incredible.
ARCHIE: The white ball strikes the black and cannons off the bulk into the red.
SAPPHIRE: As night drew in we stopped at a way-station for refreshments. I saw the yellow moon arise above the distant snow-clad mountains.
BONNO: *(Aside)* I see we have the moon at last.
EMELIA: *(Aside)* We'll have to take that out.
BONNO: *(Aside)* Naturally.
EMELIA: My dog actually eats pistachio nuts.
BONNO: Dogs sometimes do.
EMELIA: You weren't supposed to give a line like that.
BONNO: I wanted to break the rhythm.
EMELIA: Why?
BONNO: Because it becomes too regular if presented without variation, and I don't think many people have ever heard of the pistachio nuts.
ARCHIE: *(On the soapbox as a professor of biology.)* The fruit is a drupe, containing an elongated seed, which is the edible portion. The seed commonly thought of as a nut, is a culinary nut, not a botanical nut. The fruit has a hard, whitish exterior shell. The seed has a mauvish skin and light green flesh, with a distinctive flavour. When the fruit ripens the shell changes from green to an autumnal yellow/red and abruptly splits part way open. This is known as dehiscence, and happens with an audible pop. The splitting open is a trait that has been selected by humans. Commercial cultivars vary in how consistently they split open.
BONNO: Besides I'm a clown.
EMELIA: In spite of what you say I do like you.
BONNO: I am merely here to amuse you Emelia.
EMELIA: Yes I suppose you are.
SAPPHIRE: I don't believe that for one minute.
BONNO: *(Including the audience.)* And I'm here to amuse all of you others as well.
ARCHIE: The white ball strikes the black and pots it into the far pocket.
SAPPHIRE: As we sped through the night the moon was our constant companion, at first skimming over the tops of the mountains and at midnight standing proud in the centre of the sky.
BONNO: *(Aside)* That moon will certainly have to go.
EMELIA: My dog actually eats sassafras nuts.

BONNO: That is unusual.

ARCHIE: The white ball strikes the black and cannons off the bulk cushion into the side cushion.

SAPPHIRE: We travelled on for days. I was so excited by the journey that I could not sleep.

EMELIA: My dog actually eats hickory nuts.

BONNO: I am delighted.

ARCHIE: The white ball strikes the black and cannons off the red then into the side cushion.

SAPPHIRE: Eventually we arrived at our country estate. While we were there I slept and time passed.

There is a pause for a moment. The chopping increases in volume and then returns to its former level.

EMELIA: My dog actually eats psychic nuts.

BONNO: That is a rare thing.

EMELIA: What is more, my dog is called Pinter.

BONNO: Why is that?

EMELIA: Because it has paws.

ARCHIE: The white ball strikes the black and cannons off the bulk cushion into the side cushion and then into the red.

SAPPHIRE: We decided to leave the estate and make another journey.

EMELIA: My dog eats actually chinquapin nuts.

BONNO: Remarkable.

ARCHIE: The white ball strikes the black and cannons off the bulk cushion into the side cushion and into the red and then into the side pocket.

SAPPHIRE: When we arrived back at the place we started out from we were older and no longer innocent children.

The chopping stops. There is a pause and then the sound of a string breaking. They get back into character.

BONNO: A story of country life.

EMELIA: Where nothing happens and everything happens. The play is a farce where wise men act the part of clowns.

BONNO: Unlike this play where everything happens and nothing happens. The play is a farce where clowns act the part of wise men.

EMELIA: A play about journeys.

BONNO: That should please the master.

ARCHIE: Life is a journey.

SAPPHIRE: Such is the platitude.

ARCHIE: Uttering platitudes seems to be a part of my old character which won't go away. *(To Bonno)* If I act the part of a music-hall buffoon will that please your Impresario?

BONNO: His ways are inscrutable.

ARCHIE: I know. He is a circus performer. When he is on stage in his tent does he performs acts of deception which astound the audience?

BONNO: Inevitably.

ARCHIE: I also can perform magical acts which astound the audience. I can pull a turkey out of a hat.

BONNO: Indeed? Please demonstrate. *(Archie waves over his hat and takes out the ceramic egg which has been planted during the interval. Bonno takes the egg.)*

That certainly is a real turkey. (*Bonno makes the egg disappear by conjuring or puts it in his pocket.*)

EMELIA: Archie, you are not a magician, let the circus be the circus. We are here for legitimate theatre.

SAPPHIRE: Which is not always legitimate. Like many things it is based on deception.

ARCHIE: Do you mean illusion?

SAPPHIRE: Perhaps.

EMELIA: Yes but it is time to present our next scene to this restless audience. (*Referring to the top page of the script which she places on the bottom after.*) **Scene**

42 – Gimme Gimme Gimme.

Bonno goes off and come back with a large (virtual) box about a metre square.

The box is so heavy a stage hand (or two) is required to help carry it.

It is dropped with a thump onto the stage. (A sound effect can be managed.)

Bonno opens the lid of the box.

SAPPHIRE: Gimme.

ARCHIE: Gimme.

EMELIA: Gimme.

ALL THREE: Gimme gimme gimme.

SAPPHIRE: Gimme.

ARCHIE: Gimme.

EMELIA: Gimme.

ALL THREE: Gimme gimme gimme.

SAPPHIRE: Gimme.

ARCHIE: Gimme.

EMELIA: Gimme.

ALL THREE: Gimme gimme gimme.

Bonno takes an ice cream from the box and hands it to Archie.

BONNO: An ice cream for you.

Archie walks around licking the ice cream.

Bonno takes a necklace from the box and hands it to Sapphire

BONNO: A necklace for you.

Sapphire places the jewellery around her neck and proudly displays it to the audience and those on stage.

Bonno takes a cape from the box and hands it to Emelia.

BONNO: A cape for you.

Emelia drapes the cape around her shoulders and walks around proudly displaying it.

Bonno takes a digital camera from the box and hands it to Archie.

BONNO: A digital camera for you.

Archie walks around clicking the camera at other cast who pose.

Bonno takes a diamond ring from the box and hands it to Sapphire

BONNO: A diamond ring for you.

Sapphire places the ring on her finger and proudly displays it to the audience and those on stage.

Bonno takes a hat with a feather from the box and hands it to Emelia.

BONNO: A hat with a feather for you.

Emelia puts the hat on her head adjusts it and walks around proudly displaying it. The three come down.

\ SAPPHIRE: Gimme.

ARCHIE: Gimme.

EMELIA: Gimme.

ALL THREE: Gimme gimme gimme.

SAPPHIRE: Gimme.

ARCHIE: Gimme.

EMELIA: Gimme.

ALL THREE: Gimme gimme gimme.

SAPPHIRE: Gimme.

ARCHIE: Gimme.

EMELIA: Gimme.

ALL THREE: Gimme gimme gimme.

Bonno takes the last item from the box which is a bird.

It flies out of his hands.

They all watch and gesture as it flies around the stage.

It alights on Sapphire's hand.

She holds it, caresses it, kisses it and lets it go.

It flies off into the wings.

BONNO: Last of all, Blind Hope.

*A stage hand comes on and carries off the box.
It is now so light it can be carried with one hand.
It can be tossed into the air and caught.
It could even be folded up and put in his/her pocket.*

EMELIA: *(Referring to the next script page.)* **Scene 43 – A Glorious Victory**
(Places the page on the bottom of the script.)

BONNO: *(On the soapbox.)* Let us extol the glorious munification of the heroic shoulder of alms who engages in a conflagration of fire, toil and in defiance of land and country. To dispose of living for idealistic enterprises comprises uncommon valour in return for medals with ribands and fragile praise. But when the progenitor of carnage can request a billion of livelihoods to enable such progenitor to traipse over a moiety of ground we must consider whether such actions are of merit and whether such uncommon courage is worthy of worth.

Emelia and Archie march to one side of the stage in a military fashion, Bonno and Sapphire to the other.

SAPPHIRE: This land is ours.

BONNO: Ours.

SAPPHIRE: Yours and mine.

BONNO: Ours.

SAPPHIRE: Mine and yours.

BONNO: Ours.

SAPPHIRE: Not their's.

BONNO: Ours.

SAPPHIRE: God is on our side.

BONNO: This land is ours. We will fight together for what is rightfully ours.

Sapphire becomes a soldier, marches on the spot, halts and stands to attention. She salutes the flag, Bonno hands her a rifle and she shoulders arms.

ARCHIE: This land is ours.

EMELIA: Ours.

ARCHIE: Yours and mine.

EMELIA: Ours.

ARCHIE: Mine and yours.

EMELIA: Ours.

ARCHIE: Not their's.

EMELIA: Ours.

ARCHIE: God is on our side.

EMELIA: This land is ours. We will fight together for what is rightfully ours.

Archie salutes Emelia.

She hands him a rifle and she shoulders arms.

There are battle sounds which continue under.

Sapphire runs across the battlefield rifle in hand.

A gunshot.

Sapphire staggers, shot in the leg.

Drops rifle and crawls into a foxhole.

Archie runs across battlefield rifle in hand, crawls under barbed wire, jumps into the foxhole.

Archie points his rifle at Sapphire.

She holds up her hands in surrender, points to her wound.

SAPPHIRE: Leg.

*Archie puts his gun down out of Sapphire's reach.
He cuts away the fabric surrounding the wound and dresses it.
They sit in silence for a moment while the battle continues.*

ARCHIE: Cigarette.

Archie lights two cigarettes from the pack in this top pocket and gives one to Sapphire.

They smoke in silence for a moment.

SAPPHIRE: My child.

*She takes a photograph from her pocket and hands it to Archie.
Archie looks at the photo takes one from his pocket and hands it to her.
They look at the photos then return them.*

No movement for a short period.

The sound of battle ceases and the all clear sounds.

Archie picks up his gun and shoots Sapphire who dies.

ARCHIE: She was the enemy.

Archie climbs out of the foxhole and marches to Emelia.

She pins a medal on his chest.

They salute each other.

Bonno and Emelia come down with the script.

EMELIA: Well that was quite dramatic wasn't it Bonno.

BONNO: Enough to bring tears into my eyes or hate into my heart.

EMELIA: Do clowns cry?

BONNO: Of course. We are the most profligate weepers. We know the value of laughter and grief to move our audience.

EMELIA: But do clowns hate?

BONNO: Not that you would notice. But we are to produce another scene from one of our authors are we not?

EMELIA: Yes. It will be a sketch from Monsieur Bleakoh.

BONNO: And about waiting naturally.

EMELIA: Of course. Will you play the part of the waiter, Bonno?

BONNO: I know the part salubriously well.

EMELIA: Here is your apron. *(She ties the apron to him. It is a waiter's apron with a pocket in the front in which there is a notebook and a pencil. It can be a virtual apron or taken from the stand.)* And Sapphire you are to be the waitress. Here is your apron. *(It is a frilly apron.)*

SAPPHIRE: Can I have a blue one?

EMELIA: It has blue in it. See.

SAPPHIRE: I would like a little blue of the sea, a little blue of the sky.

EMELIA: The master said the sea was green.

SAPPHIRE: Wasn't it multitudinous? He may have been colour-blind.

BONNO: This is an idle conversation. Do we have a title for this little play?

EMELIA: It's **Scene 59 - Waiting for Tucker.**

('Tucker' is an Australasian word for food. If this is not understood by the audience it might be changed to 'fodder,' 'foder' or some such word.)

A small table and two chairs are brought on. All other props are virtual. The cast go off.

The waiting for Tucker mime.

*Bonno enters with tablecloth and places it carefully on the table.
Goes off and comes back with cutlery and glasses which he places on table.
Carefully arranges cutlery.
Cleans glasses by breathing on them and wiping with his apron.
Sapphire comes on with candle and matches.
Bonno lights the candle.
Sapphire stands at the back waiting.
Bonno goes off and escorts Emelia and Archie to the table.
Adjusts chairs as they sit.
Passes them the wine menu.
They have an animated (silent) discussion concerning which wine to select.
Bonno gives them advice.
They decide.
Archie informs Bonno of their decision which he notes on his pad.
Bonno tears the page from his pad and gives it to Sapphire who exits.
Bonno stands at the back waiting.
Emelia and Archie sit in silence without moving.
This continues until the audience becomes restless but no longer than one minute.*

*Sapphire enters with wine and corkscrew on a platter.
Bonno de-corks the wine and pours a small portion into Archie's glass.
Archie holds glass to the light, tests the nose and sips.
He makes a grimace and asks Bonno for the cork.
Bonno unscrews the cork from the corkscrew and gives it to Archie.
Archie makes another wry grimace and remonstrates with Bonno.
Archie gives the wine menu to Bonno and waves it away.
Sapphire takes the bottle, glasses, corkscrew, cork and wine menu and exits.
Silence as before.
Sapphire enters with food menus and gives them to Bonno who gives them to Emelia and Archie.
Sapphire stands back beside Bonno.
Emelia and Archie have an animated silent conversation concerning their order.
They consult with Bonno who comes down to the table.
Bonno takes the order and gives it to Sapphire who exits.
Emelia and Archie indulge in small talk.
Sapphire returns and stands beside Bonno.
They all become silent as before.*

ARCHIE: (To Bonno.) I say old chap how long do we have to wait for Tucker.

BONNO: (Comes down.) I thought you knew sir.

ARCHIE: What?

BONNO: Tucker never comes.

Quick bows. The table and chairs are removed.

EMELIA: That is an unsatisfactory ending Bonno.

BONNO: But it is ordained that endings are unsatisfactory.

EMELIA: Apart from those that are satisfactory.

SAPPHIRE: Will it ever end?

ARCHIE: With a bit of luck it will be over soon.

EMELIA: There are only two scenes to go.

A page script page floats down from the flies.

BONNO: What is this?

ARCHIE: Not one more long tedious scene I hope.

SAPPHIRE: It might be something of enlightenment Archie.

EMELIA: *(Picking up the page.)* It's a revision of the sad scene.

ARCHIE: Oh, that long tedious scene.

EMELIA: It's been shortened considerably. There's just one word and one line and then the bit that we had before about the bird.

SAPPHIRE: What is the word.

EMELIA: 'Unfinished.'

ARCHIE: That would make sense.

EMELIA: We don't need this old page.

Bonno takes the old page page and either makes it disappear by magic or screws it up and throws it into the audience.

BONNO: Somewhat redundant I believe.

EMELIA: Can you do a sad scene Archie? It has been shortened considerably.

ARCHIE: As an actor I can achieve a sad scene, but that is not how I feel within myself.

EMELIA: There's only one line of sadness.

ARCHIE: *(Goes to Emelia and looks at the script. He delivers the line flatly.)*

'Life is but a melancholy flower.' That doesn't seem to be much of a line.

EMELIA: Not if you deliver it like that. Sit down on the seat. Now Sapphire you sit beside him and commiserate as you did in the original scene. *(They sit as requested.)*

SAPPHIRE: Why are you so melancholy?

ARCHIE: *(Sadly but not too sadly.)* Because life is but a melancholy flower.

EMELIA: Come on Archie, you can express more sadness than that.

ARCHIE: *(With exaggerated, over the top, gestures and delivery.)* Life is but a melancholy flower.

BONNO: I see it at last. *(He prances around the stage singing as a badly written Handel aria.)* Life is butter, butter, butter, butter, butter melon cauliflower.

Archie and Bonno prance around the stage singing in two part harmony.

ARCHIE: Life is butter melon.

BONNO: Butter melon.

ARCHIE: Butter melon.

BONNO: Butter melon.

Repeats.

ARCHIE: Butter melon cauliflower.

BONNO: Butter melon cauliflower.

Repeats.

EMELIA: That's enough tomfoolery you two. The audience will think we are mad.

SAPPHIRE: Aren't we?

BONNO: Like all of creation unfortunately.

SAPPHIRE: But what is a butter melon cauliflower?

ARCHIE: It's a melon that tastes like butter.

BONNO: Or a melon that looks like a cauliflower.

ARCHIE: And tastes like butter.

SAPPHIRE: This is so foolish.

EMELIA: Alright then. I assume the author will rewrite it when he's come to his senses. We must take it that Archie has expressed unutterable sadness and so we come to the resolution. Get into your places.

A bird enters from above. They all look at it as it flies around.

SAPPHIRE: What is that flying around?

EMELIA: It's a bird.

SAPPHIRE: A black bird.

BONNO: A white bird.

SAPPHIRE: A blue bird.

EMELIA: A green bird.

SAPPHIRE: A bird of hope.

BONNO: A blind bird.

EMELIA: A rainbow bird.

The bird alights on Archie's hand. He strokes it.

ARCHIE: What are you little bird?

SAPPHIRE: A hope for better things.

BONNO: A god on a crane.

Archie's face is rapture. He holds the bird in his cupped hands and lets it fly off. They bow to the audience and get back into character.

ARCHIE: Well it wasn't too hard now that he cut it back and gave us clowns the opportunity to strut our quality.

SAPPHIRE: I think he's having us on.

EMELIA: Well the old sad scene wasn't that good. I imagine he'll come up with something better in the next revision.

ARCHIE: I hope he cuts it completely.

SAPPHIRE: No hope Archie.

ARCHIE: We must be nearing the end by now.

EMELIA: That is correct. We are now to deliver the final scene. *(Takes the next sheet from the script.)* **Scene finale: The end of the beginning.** *(She puts the sheet back.)*

Emelia, Archie and Sapphire come down. Bonno is on the soapbox. There should be quite animated actor's movements, motivated by the lines. Bonno clowns during his speeches while the others look on with rapt attention.

ARCHIE: Where do we start?

SAPPHIRE: Here

EMELIA: This is here.

ARCHIE: How many?

EMELIA: Three.

SAPPHIRE: We three.

ARCHIE: You and me and you.

SAPPHIRE: You and me and you.

EMELIA: You and me and you.

BONNO: *(On the soapbox.)* And him to give the speeches.

EMELIA: We four.

ARCHIE: What about?

SAPPHIRE: There and back.

EMELIA: Back and there.

SAPPHIRE: Or visceral versa.

ARCHIE: Give us a speech.

BONNO: The end of the beginning is not of narcissus the beginning of the finish or otherwise reversed or retarded or visceral versa and whether the circularity has one or another is a matter of debate for the circle has a scenter which noses the difference between the middle and the outside and so is measured by a pear of callipers whether beheld by mighty wind-blown-bearded man in clouds of thunder or otherwise so consider that the snake consumes its tale and hence the story continues forever and on without increasing or decreasing or otherwise and as a result resumes at the beginning of the end.

EMELIA: Well said

ARCHIE: Bravo.

SAPPHIRE: I thought so.

EMELIA: I didn't trust it before.

SAPPHIRE: You do now?

EMELIA: It fills in a gap.

ARCHIE: Where do we go now?

EMELIA: On and on and on and on and on and on and on and on and on and on and on and on and on.

SAPPHIRE: And on.

ARCHIE: And on.

EMELIA: Without termination.

SAPPHIRE: Without cessation.

ARCHIE: Words without end.

EMELIA: Give us a speech.

BONNO: At the moment of reflexion from the calm and unruffled perfect silver mirrored surface the light returns from source to source for decay shall bloom and wither goeth or wither cometh or wither rank or parsimonious as dust goes to ashes and ashes go to dust we determine that what is given is taken and as the measure of one is taken the measure of the other is given and hence all is in balance and the light returns by reflexion from the silver mirrored surface back to whence it came.

SAPPHIRE: It's a block.

ARCHIE: A stop.

SAPPHIRE: An end.

EMELIA: A final consideration.

SAPPHIRE: Past all care.

EMELIA: Short of words.

ARCHIE: To carry us on.

SAPPHIRE: To wither we goeth.

EMELIA: Or wither we cometh.

SAPPHIRE: A block.

ARCHIE: A stop.

EMELIA: A final station on the line to...

ARCHIE: Where?

SAPPHIRE: There.

EMELIA: Give us a speech.

BONNO: It be so that a surd numeral as defines rational conception is deified as being divisible by remainder without leaving sufficient quota and oftentimes commencing in the middle or thereabouts the locus describes a prescribed location whether imaginary virtual or actual before being inscribed with inevitable certainty and supplied with a prescription which is in no way proscribed whether required by logic or not and having begun at the commencement the direction of the line proceeds

in a orderly fashion from the preceding procedure until meeting the final conclusion forming a figure which may be circular elliptical rhomboidal irregular or not whatever the case may be.

EMELIA: O brave.

SAPPHIRE: My pleasing.

ARCHIE: I thought so.

EMELIA: So did I.

ARCHIE: So I did.

SAPPHIRE: How many?

EMELIA: Three.

SAPPHIRE: We three.

ARCHIE: You and me and you.

SAPPHIRE: You and me and you.

EMELIA: You and me and you.

SAPPHIRE: Where do we start?

ARCHIE: Here.

EMELIA: Give us a speech.

BONNO: In the final consolation as it was never recorded aforesaid in the hoary book there was an illusion which became a singular void a mote without formula but a singularity in the shape of an atom which contained all things all thoughts all chimeral constituents which conversed at the ending to a single point which might be defiled mathematically speaking as located without area without space and not being anywhere in particular apart from in the final thought and dissolved into a marbled effulgent bloom of chaos all in a micro milli nano interval of temporal continuance as the mighty conscience breathed the last breath the 'm' which ends all sounds as the mouth is closed and the inhalation ceases and the two became one.

The stage is in darkness by now. There is the sound of a baby crying. The lights come up. The actors come forward. The carousel music commences quietly about here and increases in volume until the end.

EMELIA: All right now the play has ended and we will rehearse our curtain call. Keep it simple just stand and take your bows.

They stand in a semicircle and take their bows. Archie claps (silently) to the audience and the lighting box.

EMELIA: Archie, what are you doing?

ARCHIE: Applauding the audience and the lighting box.

EMELIA: I thought I told you, we don't do that.

ARCHIE: You might have told Old Archie but I haven't been here before.

Anyway it's a tradition in the Civic Theatre.

EMELIA: But not in my theatre.

ARCHIE: As you wish.

SAPPHIRE: This play is just a collection of sketches strung together on an unlikely theme and does not have a satisfactory conclusion. There are speeches that nobody understands. A proper play should amuse them not confuse them.

ARCHIE: I thought it was quite dramatic. The protagonist has a crisis of sadness and sees Hope in the form of a bird. Then we have the end of the universe as a final resolution followed by the anticipation of new life.

SAPPHIRE: That may be so, but the protagonist's dilemma can hardly be solved by a bird flying around. That is not a true resolution, it's a *deus ex machina*.

BONNO: No. We are all waiting for that to come. It will appear in the script in due course. The univalve is still expanding and the outcome is yet to be revealed.

EMELIA: Is that why the play is incomplete?

BONNO: There are no explanations. This is the script which has been delivered.

EMELIA: I suppose we must accept what has been provided. But daylight is approaching.

BONNO: Soon the fingers of the sun reach from beneath the earth to paint the clouds with a golden glow.

The carousel music increases in volume.

SAPPHIRE: Do you hear the Carnival returning?

EMELIA: In the distance.

ARCHIE: Coming nearer.

SAPPHIRE: Closer and closer.

BONNO: The caravan of Marvello will draw nigh. He will rise in the morning refreshed, don his robe embroidered with stars and moons, and welcome you into his scented arms.

EMELIA: Are you going to leave us Sapphire?

SAPPHIRE: *(Takes her invitation from her bodice.)* No. I shall not accept this invitation.

ARCHIE: She understands about the play.

SAPPHIRE: Yes, I will stay for the play.

EMELIA: But you may wish to go off and take a ride on the carousel Archie.

ARCHIE: That is something I would be happy to do if chance allowed. But the play is not finished, it's still being written, not resolved, not suitable for Marvello's audition. We cannot go to the circus just now.

EMELIA: Then we three shall continue with our rehearsals. I feel now that I have a devoted cast that will see me through to the end.

BONNO: Soon the carnival will grace this fairground. All tickets will be redeemed.

EMELIA: But we shall continue with our practice.

ARCHIE: Yes, let us do that.

SAPPHIRE: Indeed we shall.

Emelia, Sapphire and Archie dance around to the music wave to the audience and exit. Bonno comes down.

BONNO: Daylight has come. The carnival is returning. Do you want to come to the fair? Will it be a day in your life that is full of delight? Clowns and acrobats and sideshows. Will you take a ride on the merry-go-round? Will you see the illusions created by Impresario Marvello, the marvellous, mystic and miraculous magician?

The music increases in volume as the lights go down and the curtain closes.