

The Bremen Town Boys

Book, Music and Lyrics by

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(ASCAP)



Libretto

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*For decades of inspiration and even mentorship at times,
the authors dedicate the score of*

The Bremen Town Boys

to our heroes, the incomparable

Robert B. Sherman

and

Richard M. Sherman

*whose artistry has inspired generations of songwriters
and shall continue to inspire generations more.*

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The Bremen Town Boys

Synopsis

There is a festival to be held on a small stage in Bremen Town. Performing today are the Bremen Town Boys, made up of Christofer, Matthias, Franz and Johann. As this is a charity event, the Princess Marta asks them to play for free. The four musicians refuse, and she turns them into a cat, a dog, a rooster and a donkey, respectively. The only way the spell will be reversed is if they truly repent their selfish, egotistical ways. She ships them off to a farm, which has seen much better days.

Rather than to be sold at auction, the Bremen Town Boys set out on their own. Soon they come upon a small cottage. The rightful owner has just been run off by three robbers Nicholas, Jacques and Gustav. Nicholas, it seems, once had a torrid romance with Princess Marta, and when that ended, he turned to leading a band of robbers in his grief. He still grieves nightly, as, secretly, does Christofer – for the same reasons. The robbers now have control of the cottage. More important to the musicians, their old instruments are found there. The musicians decide to scare off the robbers by basically posing as possessed animals, as they can still sing and talk, and no natural animal can do this. Their ruse is successful. The musicians decide to take up residence in the cottage.

The town Bergermeister, who is also the Producer of the current musical, announces the end of the play. The Brothers Grimm object, as this is not a suitable ending for today's theatre. They are given a challenge, as they never wrote an original story before anyway. They must write a Second Act which would be accepted by Modern audiences.

The Robbers decide that the singing animals which scared them away the previous night must have been a well-plotted trick, so they decide to return to the cottage and take revenge. While storming the cottage, though, they are bested by the musicians. The musicians decide to take the unconscious robbers to the Sheriff. The events in question, however, cause the musicians to decide that by taking up residence in the cottage, which is not theirs, and the selfish egos they have hitherto possessed makes them no better than the three robbers they are condemning. They decide that, after they have transported the robbers to the sheriff, they will leave the cottage to its rightful owners.

The Brothers Grimm have gotten this far into the Second Act, but they are at a standstill. Their travels to the modern day to study with the legendary Stephen Sondheim have taught them this is still too early to end the play. There needs to be a grander complication to occur at this point. This is giving them a bout of writer's block. The cast has also become self-aware, and this means the characters have gotten out of hand and started to try to control the story, themselves. They soon decide to use the Princess for their complication.

The Princess visits the robbers in prison. It seems the entire charity event was her ploy to bring Christofer back to her and, if possible, to mend his egotistical ways, so that the two of them could finally be together. The robbers were to deliver him to her before the musicians could reach Bremen for the event, anyway. However, the robbers had gotten waylaid by a temptingly easy cottage job. She allows them to escape so that they can kidnap Christofer and bring him – and him alone – to her.

The selfless act of turning in the robbers and leaving the cottage to the rightful owners has reversed Princess Marta's spell. The musicians can now await the beginning of the denouement, but it does not come. Soon, news reaches them of the robbers' escape. The characters decide to ask the Brothers Grimm to hurry up with the ending.

The Brothers Grimm are glancing through the numerous demands made by the characters. More realism. Less realism. They come to the conclusion that you can't please everybody. But the stakes are about to get higher. The actors who have been playing these characters so far now feel their own private egos have not been sufficiently stroked during the production. All the actors revolt against the authors, demanding that every bit of the production – including the script – be done their way, and their way alone, or else they will walk en masse.

Fed up with writing, and modern dramatic egos especially, the Grimm Brothers tie up all the loose ends in the story to where a happy ending can be had by all.

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The Bremen Town Boys

CHARACTER DESCRIPTIONS

CHRISTOFER

A truly selfish and egotistical musician. Plays the lute. He is young and very striking. Becomes a cat. Has had a torrid affair with Princess Marta four years before the action. Will learn justice and selflessness. II Tenor.

MATTHIAS

Very awkward musician, especially around the ladies. Also a bit of a negative philosophy. Ironically, becomes a rooster. Plays the drum. Bass-Baritone

FRANZ

Plays the fiddle. Slightly mischievous and wry. Intelligent. Has an underlying moral backbone which we see develop gradually. Baritone.

JOHANN

Plays the recorder. Has an intelligence, but he has also been pushed into the background for so long that he feels underappreciated and neglected, but his ego does not allow him to totally feel inferior. Think Ringo Starr in Hard Day's Night. Becomes a donkey. High Tenor (to A)

PRINCESS MARTA

Loves two things: magic and however many men she can get. However, she loves Christofer, but she cannot admit it. Outwardly stern, but this is a mask for the overwhelming emotions she feels. Devious and calculating, but is ultimately a kindhearted person. Young and beyond gorgeous. Alto with a high belt (to D-Flat).

BERGERMEISTER

An honest corrupt politician, to the extent that this becomes more than a contradiction in terms. He is also the Producer of the current show. In the end, the only person in the show with any true loyalty to anything.

HERALD

The Bergermeister's teenage nephew. So hungry for the spotlight that he won't stop until he upstages everyone. Plays various roles within the show. Tenor.

SHERIFF

May seem bumbling, but more intelligent than anyone he comes in contact with. Always a little exasperated by people and events.

NICHOLAS

The swashbuckling leader of a band of robbers. Dashing and daring on the outside, but an extreme sentimentalist. Also has had a tryst with Princess Marta. The break up led him, in his grief, to the life of an adventurer. However, he cannot stop thinking about her. Baritone.

JACQUES

The youngest member of the band of robbers. A lover of many women, hence he is French. Speaks with an accent. High Tenor.

GUSTAV

The oldest member of the robber band. Unabashedly Russian. Speaks with an accent. A bit of a buffoon. Not a dreamer in the least. Bass (to F).

FRITZI

The owner of a cottage the robber band takes over. Innocent and naïve. Scared of her own shadow.

FARMER

Loves everything so much, he doesn't even know what or who.

HISTORICAL CHARACTERS**DAVID MERRICK****THE VOICE OF STEPHEN SONDHEIM**

Both of these are to be portrayed as expected, with respect to these figures.

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and

John D. Nugent (ASCAP)

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"The Bremen Town Boys"

ACT ONE

SCENE ONE

(The CURTAIN stands open, revealing a festive stage with balloons and ribbons. The various ACTORS mingle among the audience, juggling, performing card and coin tricks, whatever additional talent each actor possesses. As the LIGHTS dim, the actors make their way backstage.)

MUSIC #1: "OVERTURE"

(The HERALD, possibly as young as fifteen, somersaults onto the stage. He comes forward and addresses the audience, as a town cryer would.)

HERALD

Hear ye, hear ye! In this, the Year of Our Lord, eighteen hundred seventy five, in the noble town of Bremen... That's in Germany, folks... You know?

(beat)

Well, it could be Bremen, Georgia.

(beat)

In the noble town of Bremen, a festival in honor of the Brothers Grimm will soon begin! To open our festivities, we will hear the long missed and never forgotten - our native sons - The Bremen Town Boys, returning here after a long absence of four years! Now, may I present to you, ladies and gentlemen of the future, our distinguished Bergermeister, Simon Wilhelm!

MUSIC #1A: "FANFARE"

(The BERGERMEISTER strides to Center Stage. The Herald moves away, grudgingly. The FANFARE goes on and on, and the Bergermeister must make a cutting motion with his fingers before it ceases.)

MUSIC #2: "THE BROTHERS GRIMM"

(The Bergermeister turns to address the audience. However, the Herald, anxious for the spotlight, races to upstage him.)

HERALD (CONT'D)

(sings)

NOW YOU MAY HAVE HEARD OF THE BROTHERS GRIMM
WHERE ON EARTH DO THEIR TALES BEGIN
THIS TIME, THIS TIME
WHERE DO THEIR TALES TAKE US THIS TIME?

BERGERMEISTER

(spoken)

Now just a minute, here...

(The MUSICIANS enter, singing and dancing. These are CHRISTOFER, young and dashing, MATTHIAS, awkward and a bit shy, JOHANN, charismatic but still a bit aloof, and FRANZ, who has a slight mischevious streak.)

MUSICIANS

(sing)

OH THE LEGENDS OF THE GRIMMS
WHERE WILL A NEW TALE NOW BEGIN
WHERE TRUE LOVE IS SUPPOSED TO WIN
AND HONOR IS SOMETHING TO RECALL?

THEY TOLD THE TALE OF DEAR SNOW WHITE,

(The Herald cannot stand the attention being taken away from him, so he tries unsuccessfully to upstage even these performers.)

HERALD

OF DEAR SNOW WHITE...

MUSICIANS

HAPPY NOW, BUT ONCE NOT BRIGHT.

HERALD

ONCE NOT BRIGHT...

MUSICIANS

THE FROG PRINCE DREAMED THAT, ONE DAY, HE

HERALD

OH YES, HE DREAMED...

MUSICIANS

WISHED A LOT THAT HE COULD BE

HERALD

HE COULD BE...

MUSICIANS

HIS OWN DESTINY IN LIFE.

HERALD
HIS OWN DESTINY IN LIFE.

BERGERMEISTER
(spoken)
Can I tell the story, here?

(The Musicians come forward and eject the Herald from the stage as the ROBBERS enter. These are NICHOLAS, a true swashbuckler type, JACQUES, dashing and very unapologetically French, and GUSTAV, a slightly older, and typically downbeat, Russian.)

ROBBERS
(sing)
OH THE LEGENDS OF THE GRIMMS!
WHERE WILL A NEW TALE NOW BEGIN
WHERE TRUE LOVE IS SUPPOSED TO WIN,
AND HONOR IS SOMETHING TO RECALL?

(The Herald re-enters with a flourish.)

HERALD
HANSEL AND GRETEL AND SLEEPING BEAUTY
BUT I BELIEVE IT IS NOW MY DUTY
TO TELL YOU ALL A TALE
YOU MAY, DEAR FRIENDS, HAVE JUST AS WELL FORGOTTEN!

(The town's bumbling SHERIFF decides to get into the act.)

ROBBERS, HERALD & SHERIFF
(sing)
OH THE LEGENDS OF THE GRIMMS!

MUSICIANS
OH THE LEGENDS OF THE GRIMMS!

ROBBERS, HERALD & SHERIFF
WHERE WILL A NEW TALE NOW BEGIN

ALL
WHERE TRUE LOVE IS SUPPOSED TO WIN
AND HONOR IS SOMETHING TO RECALL?

AND LIKE SO MANY GRIMM-LIKE TALES,
THERE WERE THOSE VARIATIONS,
AND ADDED SOME NARRATION,
FOR THE BROTHERS ONLY GATHERED THESE!

MUSICIANS
BUT ALL THE TALES, THEY CAME FROM OTHERS...

ALL, EXCEPT HERALD
THE CREDIT GIVEN TO THESE BROTHERS,
AND THAT, YOU NEED TO KNOW
AND NOW I NEED TO SHOW YOU A VERY DIFFERENT STORY!

HERALD
(extra flourish)
A VERY DIFFERENT STORY!

(EVERYONE drags the Herald to a nearby chair and forces him to sit. They take their own positions around the stage. The Bergermeister glares at the Herald and slowly moves back to Center Stage.)

BERGERMEISTER
Everybody wants to get into the act.

HERALD
But you promised, Uncle!

BERGERMEISTER
I never signed a contract!

(The Herald leaps from his seat and almost bounds to Center Stage.)

HERALD
You wouldn't admit it if you did!

BERGERMEISTER
Ix-nay, ix-nay!

HERALD
Ix-nay, my backside! You promised me a part of this!

BERGERMEISTER
(escorting the Herald offstage)
A part, perhaps, but not the whole kit and kaboodle!

(The Bergermeister returns to Center Stage.)

BERGERMEISTER (CONT'D)
Ah, foolish youth! They presume so much false to be true.

HERALD
(offstage)
I heard that.

BERGERMEISTER
(under his breath)
Goody if you did.

(back to audience)

Sorry about that. Anyway, folks, welcome to Bremen! Of course this is the Bremen Town of long, long ago. We stage our play in Eighteen Hundred Seventy Five, yes, but our tale takes place six hundred years ago. German towns were feudal city-states in those days. In other words, as your faithful storyteller portrays the Bergermeister of this town, that means I am the boss around here. I would have owned all the land -- well, except for the Castle and several acres around it.

(beat)

Here, we have a King, a Queen and, oh yes, a beautiful Princess.

(beat)

Why does a royal town bother itself with a Bergermeister - a Mayor, if you will - if they have an enchanting royal family?

(beat)

Well, as they say, it's good for business. Tourists will flock to a town with a Castle and royal family. The public - that's you - are suckers for Castles, moats, Kings, Queens and, of course, Princesses. But here's a secret you'll need to remember-- back then --right here in Bremen Town, the royals didn't have any power-- just ceremonial type stuff you know. But I must admit to you that there was an ardent belief that Princess Marta was a...

(as if revealing a secret)

...sorceress-- a good one, thank goodness! Now most of the time, the Princess is content being who she is and why she is. Though I must tell you that sometimes she carries a grudge the size of France-- and she has an agenda or two that can be real...

(beat)

...man killers. Princess Marta has always gone after the drop dead gorgeous "common" man-- especially musicians.

(beat, working the line)

Well, she loves playing instruments, herself, don't you know?

(beat)

Why no royalty? Dear souls, do you really think the genuine Prince Charmings of the world would put up with Princess Agenda -- sorry -- Marta! Well, the answer is -- absolutely not! But regardless of that, dear audience, that's one of the reasons the royal family has so much freedom here. Now the concert portion of the performance that we are presenting today is going to be performed by a very gifted set of musicians.

MUSIC #3: "GIVE YE THANKS"

(A spot finds the Musicians, playing their instruments. Christofer plays the lute, Matthias the drum, Franz the fiddle and Johann the recorder.)

BERGERMEISTER (CONT'D)

The Bremen Town Boys. The one with the lute is Christofer. Matthias is the one with the drum. Franz has the fiddle, and - last but not least - Johann plays the recorder. Their past here... Well, you'll learn that soon enough. Let us listen.

MUSICIANS

(sing)

GIVE YE PRAISE TO THE SKY ABOVE
THE SUN'S SWEET RAYS FROM GOD, WITH LOVE
GIVE YE THANKS, GIVE YE THANKS,
FOR THE WIND AND THE SKY
GRATITUDE AND SWEET REPLY
IN MORNING PRAYERS FOREVER

GIVE YE THANKS FOR ALL THE CLOUDS,
PROUD AS THEY ARE IN SPLENDOUR
GIVE BLESSINGS, SING VERY LOUD
AND PRAYERS SO VERY TENDER

GIVE YE PRAISE TO THE SKY ABOVE
THE SUN'S SWEET RAYS FROM GOD, WITH LOVE
GIVE YE THANKS, GIVE YE THANKS,
FOR THE WIND AND THE SKY
GRATITUDE AND SWEET REPLY
IN MORNING PRAYERS FOREVER

PRAISING GOD FOR SUN AND MOON,
PRAISING GOD FOR AFTERNOONS
RAISE YOUR VOICE! SAY IT LOUD!
PRAY YOUR GRATITUDE OUT LOUD
IN MORNING PRAYERS, IN EVENING PRAYERS,
IN EVERY PRAYER THEREAFTER

GIVE YE PRAISE TO THE SKY ABOVE
THE SUN'S SWEET RAYS FROM GOD, WITH LOVE
GIVE YE THANKS, GIVE YE THANKS,
FOR THE WIND AND THE SKY
GRATITUDE AND SWEET REPLY
IN MORNING PRAYERS FOREVER

GIVE YE PRAISE TO THE SKY ABOVE,
GIVE YE PRAISE TO THE SKY ABOVE.

(All on stage applaud. The Herald comes bounding in.)

HERALD

Make way for the Princess! Make way for the Princess!

BERGERMEISTER

This kid is like a tax bill - he keeps coming back!

HERALD

Make way for the good and illustrious Princess Marta, heir to the throne of our kingdom! All bow and kneel! Make way for her honor and glory!

(PRINCESS MARTA enters. She is absolutely radiant, and she smiles sweetly.)

BERGERMEISTER

(to the audience)

Well, too late to warn you about everything with her.

(Marta crosses to the Musicians. Matthias, Franz and Johann kneel. Christofer merely inclines his head, almost as if in defiance. It is obvious these two have a past, though a past what... Who knows?)

FRANZ

Dearest Princess Marta. It is pure honor to play for you today.

JOHANN

We are so very excited.

MATTHIAS

We so want to please you!

(Christofer emits a derisive snort.)

PRINCESS MARTA

And what about you, dear lute player?

CHRISTOFER

If we can...

BERGERMEISTER

Only if?

CHRISTOFER

That's what I said.

BERGERMEISTER

That's what he said.

CHRISTOFER

(directly to the Princess)

That's what I said.

PRINCESS MARTA

There's an echo in this story.

FRANZ

What he means, Majesty, is that we've been on the road a long time. It's been a tedious journey, and...

JOHANN

... and we look forward to making this a grand and festive afternoon.

CHRISTOFER

So very forward...

(The other Musicians wince at this remark.)

PRINCESS MARTA

I've heard many great things about you all.

CHRISTOFER

(sarcasm)

Have you now?

PRINCESS MARTA

You most of all, Master Christofer. Since I last saw you, your fame has spread to the entire Kingdom.

JOHANN

That is grand news, Majesty. Fame is a good thing.

CHRISTOFER

(again with the sarcasm)

Sometimes.

(Matthias shoots Christofer a look - "What is going on here?")

PRINCESS MARTA

The concert, as you are aware, is for the sick children of Bremen.

FRANZ

We shall certainly play heartfelty for them.

CHRISTOFER

(aimed directly at the Princess)

Directly from wounded hearts, themselves.

PRINCESS MARTA

And you will play without compensation?

(A very awkward PAUSE.)

CHRISTOFER

Excuse me?

PRINCESS MARTA

Yes. For the children.

CHRISTOFER

(cynical)

For the... children, is it?

FRANZ

We settled a fair price with your Prime Minister, and...

PRINCESS MARTA

The Prime Minister does not speak for me.

CHRISTOFER

(biting)

No one does.

FRANZ

But we most certainly presumed...

PRINCESS MARTA

The children will appreciate your kind gesture.

CHRISTOFER

Just the children, Highness?

JOHANN

But our expenses!

PRINCESS MARTA

I will pay your lodging.

CHRISTOFER

(any subtlety is gone)

How incredibly generous!

FRANZ

We've already bartered for lodging!

CHRISTOFER

You know, Your Highness. "Give and Take?"

PRINCESS MARTA

We are curious what poor musicians could offer an innkeeper for two nights lodging.

CHRISTOFER

We are resourceful lads.

PRINCESS MARTA

Still?

CHRISTOFER

And always.

PRINCESS MARTA

Too bad resourceful doesn't translate to generosity.

CHRISTOFER

Are you implying, we are selfish?

PRINCESS MARTA

You are, who you are.

FRANZ

A bargain is a bargain, Your Highness!

JOHANN

We must insist on the pay we were promised.

FRANZ

Or we cannot honor our commitments!

(All the Musicians, except
Christofer, throw their instruments
to the floor.)

CHRISTOFER

Looks like it's decided, Majesty. No payment, no music.

(He drops his instrument as well.)

PRINCESS MARTA

Then it is time your vanity was punished.

CHRISTOFER

Not one of us is vain!

PRINCESS MARTA

But I say you are.

CHRISTOFER

Asking fair pay for fair play has absolutely nothing to do
with vanity!

PRINCESS MARTA

No more discussion! I have a spell to impose on each of you.

CHRISTOFER

Ah, magic! Some things never change!

(gentler)

You used to be magic in a different way.

(Princess Marta turns and approaches
him, almost seductively.)

PRINCESS MARTA

I can be.

CHRISTOFER
(derisive)

Not a chance.

PRINCESS MARTA
Then no chance remains for each of you! From this day forward, you will each have an animal's life. Johann will become... a donkey.

JOHANN
A common donkey, Majesty?

PRINCESS MARTA
There is nothing but a common donkey.

CHRISTOFER
Except that one in Jerusalem, Majesty.

PRINCESS MARTA
Disrespect for royalty?

CHRISTOFER
Royalty without power?

PRINCESS MARTA
You shall soon see what power I possess!

CHRISTOFER
In public or in private?

PRINCESS MARTA
Franz... Franz will be a dog. Christofer, a cat, and Matthias...

(savouring this)
A rooster. We will see how vain you four remain, knowing you were once men.

MATTHIAS
All this talk makes me very uncomfortable.

CHRISTOFER
Her speciality.

JOHANN
This isn't fair! We have every right...

HERALD
There are no rights before the Princess! Not now, not ever!

PRINCESS MARTA
The herald speaks the truth. In my kingdom, you have the right to be tested. I was merely testing you.

FRANZ
This is a great relief, Majesty...

PRINCESS MARTA

Relief? Why a relief? You have failed the test. Now, you must pay the consequences.

FRANZ

But Your Highness...

PRINCESS MARTA

Silence!

MATTHIAS

(dropping to the floor)

We appeal to you!

PRINCESS MARTA

Time's up!

MUSIC #4: "MONEY ISN'T EVERYTHING"

HERALD

(a capella)

TIME'S UP!

PRINCESS MARTA

(sings)

THE SPELL WILL NOT BE BROKEN
'TILL WISDOM HAS BEEN SPOKEN
AND MONEY'S JUST A TOKEN ALL TO YOU
WHEN APPEALS TO HEARTS ARE GREETED,
NOT CAST ASIDE, DEFEATED,
AND FOOLISH PRIDE'S DEPLETED.
READ THE SIGN THAT SAYS,

"MONEY ISN'T EVERYTHING,
IT REALLY ISN'T EVERYTHING,
IT REALLY ISN'T ANYTHING BUT PRIDE."

THEN YOU'LL HAVE LEARNED THE ANSWER
A LESSON NOT EARNED EASTER
A SELFISH HEART'S DISASTER EVERY TIME
WHEN THERE'S NO FEAR WITH SOME GIVING,
ONLY THEN WILL YOU BE LIVING
A LESSON THAT IS TAUGHT IN PROSE AND RHYME,
WHICH IS,

"MONEY ISN'T EVERYTHING,
YES, MONEY ISN'T EVERYTHING,
THERE REALLY ISN'T ANYTHING IMPLIED."

SO HOW DOES MONEY MEASURE?
IT'S A TEMPORARY TREASURE,
ONLY A FEATHER IN THE WIND.
ITS COMFORTS ONLY PASSING,
NOT ANYTHING THAT'S LASTING
READ THE SIGN THAT SAYS,

"MONEY ISN'T HAPPINESS,
GATHERS DUST WITH ALL THE REST,
TREASURES LOST WITH HEAVEN'S TEST ONCE WE'VE DIED!"

AS YOU BECOME THESE CREATURES, PLEASE,
WHAT THIS SPELL WILL NOW DECREE,
PLANT A LITTLE SOMETHING FROM A SEED, FOR

"MONEY ISN'T EVERYTHING,
MONEY ISN'T ANYTHING,
MONEY ISN'T EVERYTHING YOU NEED!"

MATTHIAS

Can we plead for mercy?

PRINCESS MARTA

Silence!

(The LIGHTS dim.)

PRINCESS MARTA (CONT'D)

Ji mata, ji jendum, ji hassa, ji di, forces of magic,
listen to me. Teach these men goodness and humility!

MUSIC #5: "TRANSFORMATION BALLET"

PRINCESS MARTA (CONT'D)

Ji mata! Ji jendum! Ji hassa! Ji di!

(Kaleidoscopic lights and other magical effects as the Princess directs this ballet, during which each of the Musicians is transformed into the animals mentioned earlier. Suggest costumes: The Lion King. As the MUSIC climaxes, the scene is also transformed to:)

ACT ONESCENE TWO

(A run-down barn, very early morning. It seems a storm may be brewing outside. Christofer, Matthias, Franz and Johann have been asleep. They awaken and notice what they are become.)

MATTHIAS

It was no dream.

FRANZ

Unless we're still asleep!

(A splash of water from the roof hits Franz.)

MATTHIAS

Still think we're asleep, Franz?

FRANZ

(shaking himself dry)

I suppose not.

MATTHIAS

Hear that, folks? He supposes not.

JOHANN

Reality will do that to you.

MATTHIAS

Let's hear it for reality!

JOHANN

So we've been reduced to common... barnyard animals.

CHRISTOFER

There is nothing barnyard about a cat.

FRANZ

Or a dog.

MATTHIAS

I hate to admit this friends, but...
(looking around)
... we're doomed!

CHRISTOFER

Why are we doomed?

MATTHIAS

What does this place remind you of?

CHRISTOFER

A country farm.

JOHANN

A very poor country farm.

MATTHIAS

Exactly.

FRANZ

Was a nice touch for the Princess to crate us up and ship us here...

CHRISTOFER

Her speciality, putting you down and squishing you with her heel.

JOHANN

And we must spend our lives here?

MATTHIAS

That would be most depressing.

CHRISTOFER

You doomsayers really amuse me. Don't we all understand each other? In our own voices? In our native tongue?

FRANZ

Yes. We do.

CHRISTOFER

Well - there's one advantage.

MATTHIAS

An optimist. Hooray.

CHRISTOFER

And if we can talk, we must have brains. And hearts. We don't think and feel like animals!

FRANZ

I'm as hungry as a dog.

CHRISTOFER

As you were every day as a human.

FRANZ

True.

CHRISTOFER

And it means, you won't eat as much as a common mongrel.

JOHANN

He won't become a fat dog.

MATTHIAS

So we have brains, voices and hearts...

CHRISTOFER

We do!

MATTHIAS

And one thing missing. Are we not musicians?

CHRISTOFER

Of course.

MATTHIAS

Then we are musicians without instruments!

CHRISTOFER

Unless... Unless they've also been turned into animals and are here in this barnyard!

MATTHIAS

Oh no! I refuse to play a cow. Or a sheep.

CHRISTOFER

Gents, I'm sure we'll find our instruments. Look at it this way...

MUSIC #6: "THERE'S A BRIGHT SIDE"

CHRISTOFER (CONT'D)

(sings)

THERE'S A BRIGHT SIDE TO THE WINTER,
THERE'S BEAUTY TO THE SNOW.
IN EVERY STORM'S A GLITTER
IN THE RAINBOW THAT WILL SHOW.
THERE'S A BRIGHT SIDE TO YOUR TROUBLES
IF YOU KEEP THE SUN IN VIEW.
THERE'S A BRIGHT SIDE TO YOUR TROUBLES
WITH THE BRIGHT SIDE HEART OF YOU!

THERE'S A BRIGHT SIDE WITH THE RIGHT MIND
AND THE PROPER POINT OF VIEW.
THERE'S A BRIGHT SIDE TO YOUR TROUBLES
WITH THE BRIGHT SIDE HEART OF YOU!

THERE'S A BRIGHT SIDE TO DISASTER,
THERE IS PROMISE WITH EACH DAY.
SOLUTIONS WILL COME FASTER
IF YOU THINK THERE IS A WAY.
THERE'S A BRIGHT SIDE TO YOUR TROUBLES
IF YOU CAST ALL DOUBT AWAY.
THERE'S A BRIGHT SIDE TO YOUR TROUBLES
WITH THE BRIGHT SIDE HEART OF YOU

THERE'S A BRIGHT SIDE WITH THE RIGHT MIND
AND THE PROPER POINT OF VIEW
THERE'S A BRIGHT SIDE TO YOUR TROUBLES

WITH THE BRIGHT SIDE HEART OF YOU!

ANYONE AT ALL CAN FIND SOLUTIONS
IF ONLY THEY WILL REALLY TRY
AND WITH SOME HEALTHY CONSTITUTIONS,
THEY WILL FIND A WAY TO MAKE LIFE FLY
WHAT GOOD IS THINKING NEGATIVE
WHERE NO POSITIVE WILL DO?
THERE'S A BRIGHT SIDE TO YUR TROUBLES
WITH THE BRIGHT SIDE HEART OF YOU.

WE'RE NOT AS BAD AS PEASANTS,
WE'RE NOT HATED LIKE SOME KINGS.
OUR STATE OF LIFE IS PLEASANT.
WE CAN DO MUCH BETTER THINGS.
WITH OPTIMISTIC THINKING,
OUR SHIP'S NOT REALLY SINKING,
AND WITHOUT THE HELP OF DRINKING,
WE CAN MAKE A WISH COME TRUE!

MUSICIANS

THERE'S A BRIGHT SIDE WITH THE RIGHT MIND
AND THE PROPER POINT OF VIEW
THERE'S A BRIGHT SIDE TO YUR TROUBLES
WITH THE BRIGHT SIDE HEART OF YOU

THERE'S A BRIGHT SIDE TO YOUR TROUBLES
LIKE ROLLING DICE WITH DOUBLES
THERE'S A BRIGHT SIDE TO YOUR TROUBLES
WITH THE BRIGHT SIDE HEART OF YOU

CHRISTOFER

WITH THE BRIGHT SIDE HEART OF YOU!

(THUNDER — BOOM! Giant flash of
LIGHTNING.)

MATTHIAS

There's a bright side to that?

CHRISTOFER

A little rain won't kill you.

MATTHIAS

Unless the roof caves in...

(An old FARMER enters, drenched, and starts putting out food for the animals. He hangs a sign announcing an auction and kneels in front of Franz, hugging him. The farmer is crying.)

FARMER

Sorry, old friend. We just can't keep the farm anymore. So many years, it's been. So many years, my wife and I worked and worked, and now... Now, it's all over. But you will all have one last happy meal here together. I'll give you each an extra portion of food today! One last... happy... day.

(breaks down)

Farewell, dear friends. I loved you all. I loved you all...

(The farmer exits, crying.)

FRANZ

He loved us all?

(Matthias goes over and reads the auction sign.)

MATTHIAS

Well, comrades, looks like you and I are going to be sold. Or worse - cooked to feed the auction crowd.

CHRISTOFER

Nobody eats cat.

MATTHIAS

Except poor people.

FRANZ

Or dog.

MATTHIAS

Except very poor people.

JOHANN

Well, I think I'd be too tough to eat...

FRANZ

Which leaves the chicken.

MATTHIAS

Who are you calling a chicken?

FRANZ

Chicken, rooster... Same casserole, different sauce.

MATTHIAS

Those are fighting words!

CHRISTOFER

Fighting words? You boys really amuse me...

MATTHIAS

You won't be amused when we show up on the menu!

CHRISTOFER

We won't be showing up on any menu.

MATTHIAS

And, pray tell, why is that?

CHRISTOFER

Because we are leaving.

MATTHIAS

Leaving? Did you find a boat while we weren't looking?

CHRISTOFER

A boat? We don't need a boat.

MUSIC #7: "ALL WE'LL EVER NEED"

CHRISTOFER (CONT'D)

(sings)

FOUR HOOVES, EIGHT PAWS, TWO LEGS, THAT'S ALL
ALL WE'LL EVER NEED, ALL WE'LL EVER NEED
FOR THE JOURNEY, OUR NEW JOURNEY

MATTHIAS

(spoken)

What journey?

CHRISTOFER

GOT BRAINS, GOT HEART, GOT DREAMS, WE'RE SMART
ALL WE'LL EVER NEED, ALL WE'LL EVER NEED
FOR THE JOURNEY, OUR NEW JOURNEY

MATTHIAS

You're crazy.

CHRISTOFER

WE MAY LOOK THE WAY WE LOOK,
NOT STUCK LIKE THIS IN TOW
BUT BECAUSE WE'RE FRIENDS FOREVER,
THAT'S ALL WE NEED TO KNOW

WITH HEART AND BRAINS, NEED I EXPLAIN
THAT'S ALL WE'LL EVER NEED
ALL WE'LL EVER NEED FOR OUR JOURNEY

MUSICIANS

FOR OUR JOURNEY
OUT THERE, OUT THERE SOMEWHERE

CHRISTOFER

WE'RE NOT DUMMIES IN A FAIRY TALE
WHO SAIL TROUBLES OUT TO SEA.
NO WISHES LIKE THE DREAMERS DO
WE'LL BE THOSE CRAFTY SCHEMERS WHO
SIMPLY TURN OUT FINE.
THE FUTURE: YOURS AND MINE
EVERY SINGLE BLESSED TIME!

MUSICIANS

WE WALK AWAY THIS VERY DAY
OUR FATE IS REALLY IN OUR HANDS
WE CAN SUCCEED, MEN DISGUISED IN BREED,
BUT WE ARE WHO WE ARE, YES SIR!

WE CAN TALK AND WALK
AND BE SMART LIKE HAWKS
FORM OUR DREAM AND MAKE A PLAN

CHRISTOFER

WE MAY LOOK HOW WE LOOK

MATTHIAS, FRANZ, JOHANN

LOOK ODD READING A BOOK

MUSICIANS

BUT BENEATH ALL OUR NOOKS, WE'RE STILL A MAN!

CHRISTOFER

THAT'S RIGHT, THAT'S GREAT. REVERSE OUR FATE
THERE'S SUCH ADVANTAGE TO SUCCEED.
WE'VE GOT JUST WHAT WE ALL NEED.

FRANZ & JOHANN

WE CAN THINK LIKE GUYS IN A BEAST'S DISGUISE
AND THEY WON'T BE WISE TO OUR PLIGHT

MATTHIAS

WE'VE GOT WHAT WE NEED IN SIGHT

CHRISTOFER

WE'VE GOT JUST WHAT WE NEED, ALL RIGHT

MATTHIAS

(spoken)

And our instruments?

CHRISTOFER

(spoken)

One dilemma at a time, one dilemma at a time...

MATTHIAS

Plan B?

CHRISTOFER

Could always stick around to be lunch.

(sings)

WE'VE GOT WHAT WE NEED

MATTHIAS, FRANZ, JOHANN

GOT JUST WHAT WE NEED

CHRISTOFER

WE CAN SUCCEED...

MUSICIANS

ALL RIGHT!

(The Musicians rush offstage. There
is more LIGHTNING and THUNDER.
Then, the LIGHTS fade.)

MUSIC #7A: "PLAYOFF"

Perusal
Only
NOT FOR
PRODUCTION

ACT ONESCENE THREE

(The Black Forest. There is a quaint country cottage at one side of the stage. A path leads to this. The Musicians enter, walking down that path. They are wet from the storm and a recent river crossing. There is another burst of THUNDER.)

MATTHIAS

More thunder. First was that river crossing, and then...

CHRISTOFER

What's wrong with a little thunder?

MATTHIAS

Thunder usually preceeds a good quantity of - more - rain. And do I have to remind you that, as a cat, you hate water?

CHRISTOFER

Had I the brain of a cat, I guess I would. But since I don't...

FRANZ

An advantage, I'd say.

MATTHIAS

Perhaps. But you still have the inside of a cat. So, you will have to eat like a cat, walk like a cat... Go in the woods like a cat...

FRANZ

I suppose we'll all have to go in the woods...

CHRISTOFER

But we all have our brains, so we'll be able to think our way out of bad situations. And, being animals now, look at everything else we get!

FRANZ

Yeah. I get fleas.

JOHANN

Fleas? You?

FRANZ

I find the possibility terrifying.

CHRISTOFER

As often as you bathe? Dear Franz, you're cleaner than a nun seeking virgin certification!

FRANZ

There's no hot water in the woods...

CHRISTOFER

Johann will have super strength.

JOHANN

If you think that means I'm going to carry you around on my back...

MATTHIAS

And what, pray tell, do you get out of this, Christofer?

MUSIC #8: "NINE LIVES"

CHRISTOFER

Well...

(sings)

SOME PEOPLE WILL LIVE 'TILL THEY'RE SUCCESSFUL
SOME PEOPLE WILL EXIST 'TILL THEY FIND LOVE
SOME PEOPLE WILL DROP DEAD WHEN THEY FALL UPON THEIR HEAD
AND SOME FROM GREAT LIGHTNING ABOVE
BUT IMAGINE, IF YOU WILL, LIFE GIVES MORE CHANCES
TO TRAVEL, FIND SOME WEALTH AND GRAND ROMANCES
WOULDN'T YOU BE EAGER TO ENGAGE IN SUCH A PLOT,
TO HAVE WHAT YOU HAVE NOT, LIVE LONGER ON THE SPOT
RIGHT NOW?

NINE LIVES, NINE LIVES
NOTHING NASTY NOW SURVIVES,
SO WHEN DEATH FINALLY ARRIVES,
IT WILL GIVE ME ONE MORE CHANCE TO LIVE
TO DANCE WITHOUT PRETENSIONS,
I'LL HAVE ME NINE EXTENSIONS,
JUST IMAGINE THE SENSATIONS LIFE WILL GIVE

NINE LIVES, NINE LIVES
ONLY AGE AND JUST GROW FAT
PICTURE ME WITH FELINE'S HAT!
CAN YOU EVEN PICTURE THAT AT ALL?
WITH NINE LIFE GRAND EXTENSIONS,
WE'RE DEFYING FATE'S SUSPENSIONS
AND LIVING EXPECTATIONS EVERY DAY!

OH TO HELL WITH FATE, I SAY!
WE'LL CELEBRATE THE DAY
I LIVE AND WALK AND SPEAK AND TALK.
PICTURE THIS, AND TRY TO SEE
DEATH DEFYING, LIFE RELYING,
AND SO VERY SATISFYING
LIVES OF SUPER ME!

MATTHIAS, FRANZ, JOHANN

EIGHT TIMES, YOU'LL HAVE NEW CHANCES!

CHRISTOFER
NINE LIVES, I WILL PROCLAIM!

MATTHIAS, FRANZ, JOHANN
EIGHT TIMES, YOU'LL DO NEW DANCES!

FRANZ & JOHANN
ONLY THEN COMES PARADISE.

MATTHIAS & FRANZ
ONLY THEN COMES THE SURPRISE

MATTHIAS, FRANZ, JOHANN
NINE LIVES, NINE LIVES, NINE LIVES!

CHRISTOFER
PICTURE IT, MY DEAREST FRIENDS,
LIVING TO THE VERY END
SOMETHING THAT IS NOT PRETEND AT ALL!

FRANZ & JOHANN
KNOWING ALL THAT IN ADVANCE,
THINK OF WHAT YOU'LL PUT TO CHANCE.
THINK OF ALL THE SWEET ROMANCE YOU'LL FIND.

FRANZ
MEOW, MEOW, MY BROTHER!

CHRISTOFER
NINE LIVES, EIGHT TIMES
THE BEST OF TIMES FOR ME!
NINE LIVES, MOST CERTAINLY!
THINK OF ALL THE WONDERS I CAN DO!

MATTHIAS, FRANZ, JOHANN
NINE LIVES, NINE LIVES FOR YOU!

FRANZ
BUT A CAT CAN ONLY LIVE TO THE AGE OF TWENTY

MATTHIAS
AND A ROOSTER LIVES TO THIRTY, AND THAT IS PLENTY.

CHRISTOFER
BUT DEATH CAN STILL ARRIVE,
BUT THIS KITTY CAN SURVIVE ON ALL OF THOSE...

MATTHIAS, FRANZ, JOHANN
ON ALL OF THOSE...

FRANZ
I PRESUME THERE ARE EXCEPTIONS TO SUPPOSE.

MATTHIAS, FRANZ, JOHANN
NINE LIVES, EIGHT TIMES NINE LIVES!

CHRISTOFER
NINE SENSATIONAL, INSPIRATIONAL...

MUSICIANS
NINE SENSATIONAL LIVES!

MATTHIAS
And that's a fairy tale.

CHRISTOFER
Aren't we in a fairy tale?

MATTHIAS
We are in a tale being told by the Brothers Grimm. And you know their reputation for stretching the truth.

CHRISTOFER
Look who's talking. You stretch veracity like salt water taffy.

MATTHIAS
I happen to like salt water taffy.

CHRISTOFER
Not mixed with the reliance of stated truth.

JOHANN
Okay. You get nine lives. What does the chicken get?

MATTHIAS
Rooster.

JOHANN
Whatever.

MATTHIAS
Well, if you must know, think of the prestige and power the rooster gets in the barnyard. He's the boss.

JOHANN
So?

MATTHIAS
Well, my dear boy, imagine it. The rooster gets all the action!

(beat)
The chicks!

(beat)
The girls.

JOHANN
The girls.

MATTHIAS
(rubbing his hands together)
The girls.

CHRISTOFER

Oh my God.

MUSIC #9: "THE GIRLS"

MATTHIAS

(sings)

THE GIRLS, THE GIRLS, THE GIRLS
I HADN'T CONSIDERED ALL THE GIRLS!
IN POSITIONS THAT I'M IN,
WHEN DOES CARNALITY BEGIN?
MAYBE JUST THIS SIDE OF SIN? AH,
FOR ALL THOSE GIRLS

IMAGINE ME THIS WAY,
EVERY DAY A DIFFERENT GIRL
WHILE I'M IN A DERVISH WHIRL
INTERCOURSING THEM SO
AND SOON I'LL GET TO KNOW
THAT THEY'RE FINE
AND SO ABOUT TO BE MINE

CHRISTOFER

(spoken)

He's delusional.

MATTHIAS

THE GIRLS! THE GIRLS! THE GIRLS!
I HADN'T CONSIDERED THOSE GIRLS!
PICTURE ME JUST ACCESSING THEM
AS I'M UNDRESSING THEM
OH WHAT A BLESSING,
MY BEAK IN THEIR CURLS!
NEVER WEAK IN THE WAYS
MY LIBIDO HAS STAYED
I FELT LIKE A BOY IN THE PAST

THE GIRLS! THE GIRLS! THE GIRLS!
I HADN'T CONSIDERED THE GIRLS!
MAYBE NO BREASTS, BUT THE HELL IF THEY CAN'T!
PLUCKING A VIRGIN CAN MAKE UP FOR THAT!
MAYBE MY MANHOOD WILL COME UP TO BAT
FOR THE GIRLS, THE GIRLS,
FOR THE WONDERFUL, EXQUISITE,
OH FOR A LITTLE BIT,
FEMALE, WOMANLY GIRL!

THE GIRLS! THE GIRLS! THE GIRLS!
I HADN'T THOUGHT OF ALL THOSE GIRLS!
NO MORE HEADACHES CLAIMED, I'M TOLD
THINK OF BODIES I CAN NOW HOLD
THE GIRLS! THE GIRLS! THE GIRLS!
THOSE FEMALE, WOMANLY GIRLS!

CHRISTOFER

But these girls aren't the kind you have in mind!

MATTHIAS

THEY'LL SUCCUMB WHEN I DRUM UP WHAT'S ME!
THE ONLY GUY IN THE BARNYARD WILL BE ME,
DON'T YOU SEE? WILL BE ME, ONLY ME,
AND THOSE WONDERFUL, WONDERFUL,
LIGHTNING AND THUNDERFUL,
FEMALE, WOMANLY GIRLS!

CHRISTOFER

I hate to break it to you, but these girls are not exactly
of the human variety.

MATTHIAS

And how many human variety girls have I ever gotten, or am
I likely to get in the future?

CHRISTOFER

None.

FRANZ

You seem to chase women away. In droves.

CHRISTOFER

So how is being a rooster going to help you?

MATTHIAS

What does experience get you?

CHRISTOFER

Confidence.

MATTHIAS

And what does a hen care about how a rooster looks?

CHRISTOFER

Nothing.

MATTHIAS

And what do I lack in the attraction to women department?

CHRISTOFER

You want a list?

MATTHIAS

That was cruel.

CHRISTOFER

That was real.

MATTHIAS

Look, as you are so quick to point out, we have human
brains, and our hearts haven't changed.

CHRISTOFER

And you still look like a rooster.

MATTHIAS

Human brain. Human heart. Look like rooster. Rooster is king of the barnyard. Hens must never resist rooster. So I get...

CHRISTOFER

Oh, dear God.

MATTHIAS

Sort of like an all you can eat pass to a bordello.

FRANZ

(thinking it over)

An all you can eat pass to... wow...

MATTHIAS

And should I decide to love them and leave them...

CHRISTOFER

The whole affair becomes an omelette without consequence.

MATTHIAS

Dead on!

CHRISTOFER

You wouldn't.

MATTHIAS

What do you mean, I wouldn't? This is a Grimm fairy tale! Remember Prince Charming the Disarming? Doing Snow White and Cinderella at the same time? Now, the donkey can't do what I can, the dog can't do what I can, and you, being a cat...

CHRISTOFER

I hate you.

MATTHIAS

When we were children together, we never competed. If we failed at something, we all worked together to help each other out of the difficulty.

JOHANN

He's right, you know.

MATTHIAS

And what did we have then that we never had as musicians playing together?

CHRISTOFER

Confidence.

JOHANN

Teamwork.

FRANZ

Support for one another.

JOHANN

My goodness! Do you realize what we've just discovered?
Everything in our childhood failed to follow us into
adulthood!

MATTHIAS

Which is why we've never been successful.

CHRISTOFER

Okay, where do we start this togetherness?

JOHANN

Did you happen to notice the cottage in the middle of the
woods?

FRANZ

What cottage?

JOHANN

The one which just started bellowing smoke from its chimney.

(Sure enough, there is smoke coming
from the chimney.)

FRANZ

Where there's smoke, there's fire.

CHRISTOFER

And where there's fire, there's food!

JOHANN

And warmth!

CHRISTOFER

And maybe humans who love animals! Shall we, gentlemen?

JOHANN

Let's.

MUSIC #9A: "PLAYOFF II"

(As the Musicians approach the
cabin, it opens to reveal:)

ACT ONESCENE FOUR

(Inside the cottage. The comfortable fire is just visible in the fireplace. Dominating the stage is a long picnic-style table. NICHOLAS leans against the center of the table like the swashbuckler he is. GUSTAV sits on the floor, counting the gold from this most recent robbery. JACQUES sits at the end of the table, drinking a large pint of wine.)

NICHOLAS

Ah, my friends, this is the grandest life of all! No one to tell us what to do! No one to order us about! We take the bounty from the rich and distribute it to the poor!

GUSTAV

The poor? Are you crazy?

NICHOLAS

Not when the poor are the three of us!

JACQUES

Watch this one. He's tricky.

NICHOLAS

And what trick do you use, my good friend, to entice one of your wenches?

JACQUES

Why, anything I can get away with, but of course.

NICHOLAS

And you do get away with a lot!

JACQUES

Well that is, shall we say, my great talent, yes.

NICHOLAS

Great talent! Now there's a laugh.

JACQUES

Do not blame me if you cannot get any.

NICHOLAS

Who says I can't get any?

GUSTAV

You get plenty?

NICHOLAS

Of course! Women love a rougishly handsome, and yet somehow dangerous, fellow! And that's me, dear friends, that's me!

MUSIC #10: "A ROBBER'S WORLD"

(As he strides around the table,
Nicholas grabs a large pint of
stout. He stands, one leg on the
table, in the pose of a
swashbuckler's toast.)

NICHOLAS (CONT'D)

(sings)

I COULD HAVE BEEN A MERCHANT, A SLAVE TO THE MARKETPLACE
I COULD HAVE BEEN A FARMER, BOUGHT LAND WITH LOTS OF SPACE
BUT I PREFER THE ROBBER'S LIFE,
TAKE GOLD AND LAND AND SOMEONE'S WIFE
A LIFE WITHOUT AN OUNCE OF STRIFE
A ROBBER'S WORLD FOR ME!

I COULD HAVE BEEN A BLACKSMITH, OFFER PEOPLE ALL MY WARES
I COULD HAVE BEEN A SEAMAN, AND JOURNEY WAY OUT THERE
BUT I PREFER THE ROBBER'S WORLD
WHERE I GET TREASURE AND THE GIRL
A TREASURE AND A JOURNEY'S WHIRL
UPON THE ROADS RIGHT THERE

(Nicholas leaps off the front of the
table. The other two stand to join
in the song.)

ROBBERS

A ROBBER'S WORLD, YES WE ARE THIEVES!
OH THE THINGS THAT WE'LL ACHIEVE!
IT'S A LIFESTYLE WE'LL NOT LEAVE AT ALL,
IT'S A LIFESTYLE WE COULD NEVER LEAVE AT ALL!

IN A ROBBER'S LIFE WE ARE ENGRAINED,
AND TREASURE IS SO EASILY GAINED
NOTHING NEEDS TO BE EXPLAINED AT ALL
NOTHING NEEDS TO BE EXPLAINED AT ALL

GUSTAV

NO ROBBER'S EVER POOR

JACQUES

NO BEGGING DOOR TO DOOR

NICHOLAS

AMBITIOUS? JUST STEAL MORE!

ROBBERS

A ROBBER'S WORLD IS FOR
THE ART OF STEALING MORE
THE SOULS OF MEN WITH GRANDEUR IN THEIR EYES!

A ROBBER'S WORLD, YES WE ARE THIEVES!
 OH THE THINGS THAT WE'LL ACHIEVE!
 IT'S A LIFESTYLE WE'LL NOT LEAVE AT ALL,
 IT'S A LIFESTYLE WE COULD NEVER LEAVE AT ALL!

IN A ROBBER'S LIFE WE ARE ENGRAINED,
 AND TREASURE IS SO EASILY GAINED
 NOTHING NEEDS TO BE EXPLAINED AT ALL
 NOTHING NEEDS TO BE EXPLAINED AT ALL

NICHOLAS

WHY BOTHER?

GUSTAV & JAQUES

WHY BOTHER?

(The three look at each other. The
 answer is obvious.)

ROBBERS

BAD DEEDS, YES, BRING SUCCESS
 A ROBBER'S WORLD! WE CAN'T COMPLAIN
 FOR ALL THE GOLD THAT WE MIGHT GAIN
 NEVER NEEDS TO BE ARRANGED
 IT NEVER NEEDS TO BE EXPLAINED!
 NOTHING VENTURED, NOTHING GAINED AT ALL!

NICHOLAS

This cottage, for example. What a most perfect hideout!

GUSTAV

And such an easy take.

NICHOLAS

I agree. It's amazing how frightened the weak can be.

GUSTAV

Like taking candy from a baby.

NICHOLAS

Let's leave politics out of it. We're not so bad as all
 that.

JACQUES

I never saw anyone run so fast in all my life.

NICHOLAS

What was the count, Gustav?

GUSTAV

Forty gold, thirty silver, food for the gods, and...
 (raising a lute)
 ... a group of musical instruments.

(Nicholas swipes the lute from
 Gustav's hands.)

NICHOLAS

My goodness! I haven't played in ages of yesterday. Not since...

GUSTAV

Mustn't let sentiment muddle up your thinking.

NICHOLAS

You are the only one who muddles up my thinking.

(Nicholas retreats to a corner, where he fondles the lute like a baby's blanket.)

JACQUES

I knew him back then.

GUSTAV

Did you now?

JACQUES

He would play the lute every evening, serenading this enchanting Princess over in Bremen.

GUSTAV

More sentiments. More muddled thinking.

JACQUES

He tried anything to win her over.

GUSTAV

I heard she was a sorceress.

JACQUES

That's how the story goes.

(Nicholas is returned. He drops the lute on the table.)

NICHOLAS

And that's where the story should end.

JACQUES

And when she had enchanted him and, well you know...

GUSTAV

Yes?

JACQUES

And then she dropped him.

NICHOLAS

Jacques...

JACQUES

He became a robber in his despair.

NICHOLAS

Jacques!

JACQUES

You loved her.

NICHOLAS

I still love her.

JACQUES

He tried to get her to overthrow the Bergermeister and take back what rightfully belonged to her family.

GUSTAV

And?

NICHOLAS

She refused.

MUSIC #11: "SHE DIDN'T NEED ANYTHING"

GUSTAV

Why?

NICHOLAS

(sings)

SHE DIDN'T NEED ANYTHING THAT POWER COULD GIVE
SHE DIDN'T NEED ANYTHING JUST IN ORDER TO LIVE
SHE DIDN'T NEED SUNSHINE, SHE DIDN'T NEED RAIN
SHE SAID SHE HAD MAGIC, SO WHAT GOOD TO COMPLAIN
SHE DIDN'T NEED FREEDOM, NOT A THING FROM ABOVE
THEN SHE DIDN'T NEED ME. SAID HER MAGIC WAS LOVE.

SO WHAT KIND OF MAGIC REPLACES WHAT HEARTS CAN ENDOW?
WHAT KIND OF TRAGIC IS WEAKER THAN MAGIC SOMEHOW?
AND WHAT KIND OF MAGIC CAN HOLD YOU IN ITS ARMS,
KISS YOU SO SWEETLY, AND EMBRACE YOU COMPLETELY,
AND KEEP YOU, AND KEEP YOU FROM HARM?

SHE DIDN'T NEED ANYTHING, THAT'S WHAT SHE CLAIMED
SHE DIDN'T NEED ANYTHING, OR WHAT I MIGHT HAVE BLAMED
SHE DIDN'T NEED HAPPINESS, SHE DIDN'T NEED CHEER
SHE SAID, SHE HAD EVERYTHING THAT MOST HEARTS HOLD DEAR
SHE DIDN'T NEED COURAGE RIDING UP ON A HORSE
THEN SHE DIDN'T NEED ME. SO EXPECTED, OF COURSE

AND WHAT KIND OF WITCHCRAFT CAN MAKE A MAN SIMPLY WEEP?
WHAT KIND OF ILLUSION HOLDS CONFOUNDING CONFUSION SO DEEP
AND WHAT KIND OF MAGIC CAN REPLACE A GRAND HEART
LOVE YOU FOREVER, KEEP TWO HEARTS TOGETHER
RIGHT FROM THE START?

WHY IS LOVE NEVER TRUSTED BY UPPERCRUSTED AND VAIN
LIKE A LOCK BADLY RUSTED AND MISSING THE KEY,
WHY HAS SHE THRUSTED THIS SORROW ON ME?
SHE SAID THAT HER MAGIC COULD SET MY HEART FREE!

YES, WHAT KIND OF MAGIC COULD RETURN MY GREAT LOVE?
WHAT INCANTATION COULD RETURN CELEBRATION
AND SAVE ME RIGHT NOW?

AND WHAT CAN I SAY?
COULD I FIND A WAY TO RETURN
BACK TO HER AFFECTION?
WHAT PATH'S THE DIRECTION
BACK TO HER HEART?

(Nicholas breaks down.)

JACQUES

Let's get him to bed.

GUSTAV

Now I am ashamed I found those instruments.

JACQUES

Let's get rid of them in the morning.

GUSTAV

Yes. We don't need more sentiment and muddled thinking on
his part.

(Gustav and Jacques help Nicholas
into a bedroom. The lights inside
fade.)

MUSIC #11A: "PLAYOFF"

ACT ONESCENE FIVE

(The back door of the cabin. The Musicians have been eavesdropping.)

JOHANN

They have our instruments.

MATTHIAS

Worse. They're going to destroy our instruments.

JOHANN

But why?

CHRISTOFER

Too many memories. Of her.

JOHANN

Too many memories of that same dreadful Princess who imposed this spell on us?

CHRISTOFER

You only know her through this spell, Johann. You've never been the one who... Well...

MUSIC #12: "SOMEBODY'S FOOL"

CHRISTOFER (CONT'D)

(sings)

SOMEBODY'S FOOL HAD TO LOVE HER
IN HER LIFETIME TO REALLY DISCOVER.
YES SOMEBODY HAD TO LOVE HER SOMETIME
REPLACING ALL OF THE MAGIC
SUBSTITUTION FOR ALL OF THE RHYME
COMMANDING ALL OF HER LOVE
THAT SIMPLY COULDN'T BE MINE
WHAT SHE RELIES UPON NOW
MAKES UP FOR MY LOVE SOMEHOW.
A LOVE THAT WAS FINE, BUT CAN'T BE NOW.

(And from Christofer's own growing sentiment, we know for certain the past he and Princess Marta share.)

CHRISTOFER (CONT'D)

FATE'S LITTLE TRICK MADE HIM LOVE HER
WITH BOTH HEART AND MIND TO DISCOVER
THAT HE WOULD LOSE ALL CONTROL
AND SO MUCH MORE

VERY BAD LUCK MADE HIM LOVE HER
WAS THE STARRY NIGHT ALL ABOVE HER
SOMEBODY FOOLISH HELD HER TIGHT EACH NIGHT
ONE LUCKY SOUL WAS THEN GIVEN

THE CHANCE FOR HER LOVE AND WAS DRIVEN
 BY A HEART THAT SHE'S NEVER FORGIVEN
 SOMEBODY HAD TO LOVE HER, LOVE HER, EACH NIGHT

(Either Franz doesn't get it, or he
 is just playing coy in his
 mischievous way.)

FRANZ

(sings)

IF WHAT YOU ARE SAYING IS TRUE AND PORTRAYING
 THIS TALE THAT YOU TELL TO US NOW,
 IF THIS ISN'T DELUSION, ROMANTIC CONFUSION,
 AND SOME WORK OF FICTION SOMEHOW
 NOT TO BE CRUEL, BUT ONLY A FOOL
 WOULD NOT LOOK INTO HER EYES

FRANZ & JOHANN

AND SEE
 THAT HER HEART HAD ON ITS DISGUISE
 OF THAT, WE CAN ALWAYS BE CERTAIN
 AND BEHIND ITS MYSTERIOUS CURTAIN IS
 HIDING THE SECRET OF WHO LOVED HER BEFORE

MATTHIAS, FRANZ, JOHANN
 LOVED HER BEFORE, LOVED HER BEFORE!

MUSICIANS

SOMEBODY JUST HAD TO TREASURE
 SOMEBODY JUST HAD TO TELL HER
 HOW MUCH HE HAD REALLY LOVED HER BEFORE

CHRISTOFER

THE FOOLISH, BUT BRAVE, HAD TO LOVE HER
 TOO BAD THAT HE NEVER DISCOVERED
 THAT SHE NEVER LOVED HIM AT ALL IN RETURN
 BUT OH, HOW HIS HEART BURNED!

MUSICIANS

TOO BAD LOVING HEARTS NEVER LEARN

CHRISTOFER

BROKE HIS POOR HEART TO DISCOVER
 SOMEBODY'S FOOL HAD TO LOVE HER

CHRISTOFER & FRANZ

AND SOMEBODY'S FOOL WILL SOON LOVE HER
 SHE'LL MAKE IT SO EASY TO LOVE HER
 AND THEN LOSE HER ALL OVER AGAIN

MUSICIANS

OH GOD, SPARE THE WHERE AND WHEN.

(By now, Christofer has tears in his
 eyes.)

CHRISTOFER

Let's not talk about this anymore.

MATTHIAS

Christofer... Why do you do this to yourself? You know there is no room in Princess Marta's heart for anyone except Princess Marta.

CHRISTOFER

Just leave me alone. Please.

(Christofer sits on the ground away from the others.)

JOHANN

So what's the mission, guys?

FRANZ

Okay. First, we need food.

MATTHIAS

Those robbers have more food than a horn of plenty.

FRANZ

I agree. And what about shelter?

JOHANN

This cottage seems big enough for us all. Even in our present... conditions.

FRANZ

The instruments?

MATTHIAS

We can't have them without chasing away the robbers.

JOHANN

We can't have any of the above without chasing away the robbers.

MATTHIAS

Noted.

FRANZ

And how do we chase away the robbers?

MATTHIAS

You could bite them.

FRANZ

Until one of them kicks me in the head.

JOHANN

I could kick them harder.

MATTHIAS

Might delay them but not frighten them away.

JOHANN

Wait a minute! What frightens men the most?

MATTHIAS

Women.

JOHANN

Besides that.

MATTHIAS

Soldiers.

JOHANN

(looking around)

I think we're pretty much fresh out of those.

MATTHIAS

The tax man.

JOHANN

Only if he's accompanied by the soldiers.

MATTHIAS

The unexplained?

JOHANN

Bingo. And what can four animals do that is strange enough to frighten these robbers?

(Christofer has taken interest in all of this and wandered back over.)

CHRISTOFER

Do something only humans can do.

JOHANN

And that would be...?

CHRISTOFER

Would you stop beating around the bush? You know politics drive me crazy!

FRANZ

Singing and playing instruments!

JOHANN

Of course! Wouldn't a singing donkey frighten you away?

MATTHIAS

There are lots of jackasses who sing.

JOHANN

Not looking like the real article. Besides, if we fail, we may still get food and a place to sleep! Not to mention, perhaps learning a lesson this spell is supposed to teach us!

CHRISTOFER

And once the robbers run away, they stay away! Thieves are mostly cowards, and, being cowards, they'll probably leave all their booty behind in their fright!

FRANZ

We don't have to stay long. Just long enough to grab the food, the treasure, and our instruments!

CHRISTOFER

So, boys, do we adopt Johann's brilliant plan?

FRANZ

I say, we do!

MATTHIAS

And we really turn the tide!

CHRISTOFER

Then, boys, let's go to it!

MUSIC #13: "ALL FOR ONE"

CHRISTOFER (CONT'D)

(sings)

ALL FOR ONE, ONE FOR ALL
JOINING FORCES, HEAR THE CALL
TAKE WHAT'S OURS, AND MAKE THEM RUN
WE'LL DEFEAT THEM EVERY ONE

ALL FOR ONE IS SOMETHING WE MUST LEARN
ONE FOR ALL IS SOMETHING YOU MUST EARN

WE MUST BE BRAVE, OUR HONOR SAVE
REVENGE IS SWEET! TIME TO COMPLETE
THE CALL OF DUTY
THE DUTY OF THE CALL!

MATTHIAS, FRANZ, JOHANN

ALL FOR ONE, ONE FOR ALL
JOINING FORCES, HEAR THE CALL
TAKE WHAT'S OURS, AND MAKE THEM RUN
WE'LL DEFEAT THEM EVERY ONE

CHRISTOFER

ALL FOR ONE IS SOMETHING WE MUST LEARN
ONE FOR ALL IS SOMETHING YOU MUST EARN

WE MUST BE BRAVE, OUR HONOR SAVE
REVENGE IS SWEET! TIME TO COMPLETE

THE CALL OF DUTY
THE DUTY OF THE CALL!

MUSICIANS
ALL FOR ONE IS PRECIOUS, DON'T YOU KNOW?
ONE FOR ALL IS NEVER JUST FOR SHOW,
NOT FOR SHOW, ALL FOR ONE
ONE FOR ALL UNTIL ITS DONE

ONE FOR ALL, ALL FOR ONE
'TILL WE'VE WON, REVENGE IS DONE
ONE FOR ALL, ALL FOR ONE
ONE FOR ALL, ALL FOR ONE!

(The Musicians begin their
preparations as the LIGHTS fade.)

MUSIC #13A: "PLAYOFF"

Perusal
Only
NOT FOR
PRODUCTION

ACT ONESCENE SIX

(Back inside the cottage. The Robbers' SNORING offstage. The Musicians find their instruments.)

CHRISTOFER

Hello, old friend.

MATTHIAS

They seem good as new...

CHRISTOFER

So what's the plan?

JOHANN

I'd say a rousing song ought to do the trick...

MATTHIAS

Which song?

CHRISTOFER

Why, "The Musicians Four," of course.

FRANZ

Good enough...

CHRISTOFER

So, Johann. On with it.

JOHANN

On with what?

CHRISTOFER

The song. It's your solo.

JOHANN

You've never allowed me a solo before.

CHRISTOFER

First time for everything. It's your plan. You deserve it.

JOHANN

I see.

CHRISTOFER

Oh, and Johann...

JOHANN

Yes?

CHRISTOFER

Don't disappoint me.

MUSIC #14: "THE MUSICIANS FOUR"

JOHANN

(sings)

OFF IN THE CLOUDS, WE WILL MAKE OUR PROMENADE
OFF IN THE SKY, WE'LL SOAR
OFF TO THE KINGDOMS THAT SING SO VERY ODD
AND STILL WE WILL BE WANTING MORE

THE WORLD CANNOT IGNORE WHAT WE PROCLAIM
FOR WHEN WE SING, WE SEEM TO FLY
OVER ALL THE CLOUDS NEARBY
NEVER ASKING HOW OR WHAT OR WHY

OPEN FAST THE DOOR
THE MUSICIANS FOUR IMPLORE
THE MUSICIANS OF RENOWN
OF BREMEN TOWN, OF BREMEN TOWN

(Gustav enters. He is half asleep,
but still, he is frantically
searching for the source of the
singing which woke him.)

MUSICIANS

(sing)

BREMEN TOWN, BREMEN TOWN
DEAR SWEET AND LOVELY BREMEN TOWN
THE MUSICIANS FOUR OF BREMEN TOWN
ARE HERE, ARE HERE, HERE, HERE!

(Gustav notices the source of the
singing. He does not scream, but
emits a high, frightened, soft
squeak.)

MUSICIANS (CONT'D)

BREMEN TOWN, BREMEN TOWN
DEAR SWEET AND LOVELY BREMEN TOWN

(Nicholas and Jacques burst in from
the other room.)

NICHOLAS

(spoken)

What is that confounded singing?

(Gustav can only point. The other
Robbers' eyes grow wide.)

MUSICIANS

(sing)

THE MUSICIANS FOUR OF BREMEN TOWN ARE HERE!

FRANZ

(sings)

DOWN FROM THE CLOUDS COME WE
THE MUSICIANS FOUR, YOU WILL SEE
AND HEAR RIGHT NOW

JOHANN

(sings)

OFF IN THE CLOUDS, WE WILL MAKE OUR PROMENADE

JACQUES

(spoken)

It can't be. No, it can't be.

FRANZ

(sings)

OFF IN THE SKY, WE'LL SOAR

NICHOLAS

(spoken)

What did we drink last night?

JOHANN

(sings)

OFF TO THE KINGDOMS THAT SEEM SO VERY ODD

GUSTAV

(spoken)

Whatever it was, we're tee-totalers from now on.

FRANZ

(sings)

AND STILL WE WILL BE WANTING MORE!

NICHOLAS

(spoken)

This is got to be an illusion!

FRANZ & JOHANN

(sing)

THE WORLD CANNOT IGNORE WHAT WE PROCLAIM
FOR WHEN WE SING, WE SEEM TO FLY
OVER ALL THE CLOUDS NEARBY
NEVER ASKING HOW OR WHAT OR WHY

GUSTAV

(spoken)

Whatever it is, I'm out of here!

(And Gustav is out the door.)

JACQUES

(spoken)

Wait for me!

(Jacques almost runs into the door frame on his way out.)

FRANZ & JOHANN

(sing)

OPEN FAST THE DOOR
THE MUSICIANS FOUR IMPLORE
THE MUSICIANS OF RENOWN
OF BREMEN TOWN, OF BREMEN TOWN

NICHOLAS

(spoken)

Cowards! It's only a... What am I saying?

(Nicholas also rushes out.)

MUSICIANS

(sing)

OF BREMEN TOWN, BREMEN TOWN
DEAR SWEET AND LOVELY BREMEN TOWN
THE MUSICIANS FOUR OF BREMEN TOWN
ARE HERE, ARE HERE, HERE, HERE!
THE MUSICIANS FOUR OF BREMEN TOWN ARE HERE!

(The Musicians cannot contain their laughter at these bumbling robbers any longer.)

CHRISTOFER

How wonderful was that?

MATTHIAS

Grand! Absolutely grand!

CHRISTOFER

Perhaps we can put the Princess's curse to good use!

JOHANN

As long as we don't get too used to this lifestyle.

FRANZ

Well, I'm learning things as a dog.

CHRISTOFER

Perhaps. There may be a lesson awaiting each of us in this situation...

MUSIC #15: "GAINING WISDOM"

MATTHIAS

(sings)

GAINING WISDOM, MIGHT THAT BE A HIDDEN BLESSING?
GAINING WISDOM, MIGHT THAT BE A GIFT ADDRESSING
ALL OF MANKIND? ALL OF US WHEN IT ARRIVES?

GAINING WISDOM FOR THE FUTURE THAT IS COMING

PRECIOUS WISDOM, LIKE A DRUM THAT'S LOUDLY DRUMMING
 HEAR HER VOICE NOW, FOR WHEN THAT GREAT UNKNOWN
 FINALLY ARRIVES...

PRECIOUS WISDOM, WHERE IS IT ALWAYS HIDING?
 LOVELY WISDOM, IT'S NOT SURE ABOUT CONFIDING
 TO ALL OF MANKIND, ALL OF US WHEN IT ARRIVES

CHERISHED WISDOM, FOR THE FURY THAT'S ENTICING
 DARING WISDOM, LIKE A CAKE WITH RAINBOW ICING
 WONDEROUS WISDOM REMAINS TODAY OUR MOST PRECIOUS PRIZE

LIKE DISCOVERING A SUNRISE THAT IS WISDOM
 JUST BEFORE, IT WAS DARKNESS IN THE DREAD
 A SURPRISE THAT YOU ARE SIMPLY NOT EXPECTING
 FINDING THE SUN AS THE LIGHTHOUSE JUST AHEAD

GAINING WISDOM WHEN YOUR LIFE'S THE GRANDEST TEACHER
 GAINING WISDOM, THOUGH AT TIMES, YOU'LL NEVER REACH HER
 LIFE'S GREAT CHALLENGE, LIKE A MERRY GO ROUND RING, SIR,

WILL YOU EVER TRY TO BRING HER TO YOUR FINGER?
 THOUGH SHE SEEMS SO FROM YOU,
 THERE IS NOTHING LEFT TO DO BUT TAKE A CHANCE.

FRANZ

I think the Princess has done us a great favor.

MATTHIAS

Let us sleep, gentlemen. We have been blessed in more ways
 than one.

CHRISTOFER

But keep an ear out. Those robbers might come to their
 senses.

MATTHIAS

Not because they're intelligent!

CHRISTOFER

Because they are what... what we were. Greedy.

MUSIC #16: "GO AWAY GREED"

MATTHIAS

(sings)

NOWHERE AT ALL IN ALL OF THE WORLD
 IS THERE ROOM FOR THE GREAT DOOM OF GREED
 NOWHERE AT ALL IN SPACE OF THIS UNIVERSE
 CAN IT EVER SUCCEED

NOWHERE AT ALL THAT MAN CAN RECALL
 IS THERE ROOM IN THE SOUL FOR ITS SEED
 NOWHERE AT ALL IS THERE ROOM FOR ITS BREED

GO AWAY GREED!

MUSICIANS
(sing)
GREED! GREED!

MATTHIAS
GO AWAY GREED!

MUSICIANS
GREED! GREED!

MATTHIAS
WE WILL NOT NEED...

MUSICIANS
NEED! NEED!

MATTHIAS
YOU ANYMORE!

MUSICIANS
NOT ANYMORE!

MATTHIAS
STOMP OUT ITS SEED

MUSICIANS
SEED! SEED!

MATTHIAS
OF OLD GREED!

MUSICIANS
GREED! GREED!

MATTHIAS
WE WILL NOT NEED

MUSICIANS
NEED! NEED!

MATTHIAS
NEED YOU ANYMORE, MORE, MORE!
GO AWAY GREED!

MUSICIANS
GREED! GREED!

MATTHIAS
WE WILL NOT NEED

MUSICIANS
NEED! NEED!

MATTHIAS
YOU ANYMORE!
NOT ANYMORE!

NO ROOM AT ALL
NO PLACE TO DWELL

MUSICIANS
MAYBE TO HELL!

MATTHIAS
SO, GREED..

MUSICIANS
GREED! GREED!
PLEASE GO TO HELL!

(The Bergermeister enters,
applauding.)

BERGERMEISTER
And that's Act One!

(JACOB and WILHELM GRIMM race from
backstage!)

WILHELM GRIMM
We're not ending Act One with that!

BERGERMEISTER
You haven't written any further.

WILHELM GRIMM
And the critics will hate it!

BERGERMEISTER
Why?

WILHELM GRIMM
Why? This is the song bashing greed! Critics wallow in
greed like pigs in slop!

BERGERMEISTER
Now, now. We mustn't attack what can never be. It would be
like your wicked Queen trying to be Snow White.

WILHELM GRIMM
I wouldn't be a critic if I were the last poisoned apple on
Earth!

JACOB GRIMM
Critics are the last poisoned apples on Earth.

WILHELM GRIMM
Except Bernard Shaw. He was the last poisoned lemon on
Earth. Imagine calling Shakespeare a waste of good English
paper!

BERGERMEISTER

Who or what, might I ask, is a Bernard Shaw?

JACOB GRIMM

Another fairy tale in search of reality.

BERGERMEISTER

My dear brothers Grimm, critics aside, you've written a wonderful story.

(The Herald enters.)

HERALD

But it's not their story!

BERGERMEISTER

Didn't I lock you in a closet somewhere?

HERALD

It's not their story, Uncle, and you know it! They don't write stories!

JACOB GRIMM

We don't?

BERGERMEISTER

But of course, they do!

HERALD

But of course, they don't! Mostly, they adapt! And some of their adaptions are dreadful adoptions!

BERGERMEISTER

Speaking of dreadful adoptions, Nephew...

HERALD

You got the tax breaks on my dead parents' money, didn't you? Isn't that how you're funding this production?

WILHELM GRIMM

We're dead, they're dead, and we wish the Producer and his nephew were dead.

JACOB GRIMM

We write wonderful stories!

BERGERMEISTER

Don't look now, Grimms, but I think he's ignoring you.

HERALD

You write wonderful fairy tales. There's a difference!

BERGERMEISTER

And why don't you enlighten us, dear Nephew.

HERALD

A fairy tale is just one event piled upon another on the way to some big knock-you-over-the-head moral at the end. Dreadful! A story has a beginning, a middle, and an end.

WILHELM GRIMM

Ours don't?

HERALD

Take Snow White. Now I realize the Queen was a big nasty, but you never end her story! She just keeps coming back to be punished over and over again!

BERGERMEISTER

You did go a little heavy on her, boys.

JACOB GRIMM

Perhaps.

HERALD

Perhaps? If she were a meal, she'd have fourteen courses and three desserts!

WILHELM GRIMM

So you're not going to present our story?

HERALD

Fairy tale.

BERGERMEISTER

I guess not. I mean, this audience is visiting from their own modern lives.

JACOB GRIMM

We have rights as authors!

BERGERMEISTER

I have two words for you.

JACOB GRIMM

What?

BERGERMEISTER

Public Domain.

JACOB GRIMM

Oh dear.

BERGERMEISTER

Three more.

WILHELM GRIMM

Yes?

BERGERMEISTER

This is Germany.

JACOB GRIMM

Sneaky.

BERGERMEISTER

But I already do have so much invested in this... I tell you what. I'll give you a greater opportunity.

JACOB GRIMM

What opportunity is that, Mister Producer?

BERGERMEISTER

Let me think...

HERALD

I know! The Grimms can come up with a thoroughly original Act Two! Just as long as they don't give us that nowhere drivel that ends the original story.

WILHELM GRIMM

We can do that.

BERGERMEISTER

Perhaps.

MUSIC # 17: "GIVE US A CHANCE"

JACOB GRIMM

(sings)

WE CAN GIVE YOU CONFLICT AND MOTIVATION
WE CAN MAKE A BETTER SITUATION
JUST GIVE US A CHANCE!

HERALD

(sings)

JUST GIVE THEM A CHANCE

JACOB GRIMM

YOU HAVE TO REMEMBER, WE DIDN'T REALLY WRITE THESE
FROM A GROUP OF TALES, THESE
WERE GATHERED BY US AND PUT IN SOME BOOKS.
AND THEN WITH LUCK, WE MADE A FEW BUCKS,
AND WE DID IT AGAIN AND AGAIN!

HERALD

THEY CAN MAKE A BETTER STORY IN ANOTHER CATEGORY
FOR SOME HONOR AND A LITTLE BIT OF GLORY!

JACOB & WILHELM GRIMM

(sing)

GLORY! GLORY!
WE CAN MAKE A BETTER STORY!

JACOB, WILHELM & HERALD

GIVE US (THEM) A CHANCE!

BERGERMEISTER

(spoken)

Just Act Two. If you don't mind.

HERALD

ACT TWO! ACT TWO!
THINK OF WHAT THOSE TWO CAN DO
WITH THE REST OF THE STORY!
GIVE THEM A CHANCE!

BERGERMEISTER

(spoken)

Well, I really don't know.

WILHELM GRIMM

(sings)

TAKE AWAY THE SO-SO ENDING, BROTHER,
CAUSE NO PRETENDING IS WORKING HERE
TAKE AWAY THE NON-REALITY,
FOR NO BANALITY...

JACOB, WILHELM & HERALD

WILL MAKE IT TODAY
ON OLD BROADWAY!

SO GIVE US (THEM) A CHANCE,
WE'LL (THEY'LL) GIVE YOU ACT TWO!
GIVE US (THEM) A CHANCE,
WE (THEY) KNOW WHAT TO DO!

JACOB GRIMM

WE KNOW A LITTLE THEATRE,

JACOB, WILHELM & HERALD

AND YES, WE (THEY) CAN RHYME.

JACOB & WILHELM GRIMM

WE KNOW DEAR OLD STEPHEN SONDHEIM.
WHEN HE NEEDED THE GOODS
TO GET HIM OUT OF THE WOODS!

(playing to the audience)

YES WE CAN DO IT, SO GIVE US A CHANCE!
WE KNOW WHAT TO DO, WE HAVE A STORY FOR YOU!

JACOB, WILHELM & HERALD

GO FOR SOME COFFEE, AND THEN
COME BACK ALL OVER AGAIN!
COME BACK, YOU'VE PAID ENOUGH,
THOUGH IT MIGHT SEEM A LITTLE ROUGH!

TO OUR OWN SELVES, WE'LL BE TRUE!
GIVE US A CHANCE AND COME BACK!
IT ISN'T TALENT WE LACK!
GIVE US A CHANCE AND COME BACK...

HERALD
(total diva)
AFTER INTERMISSION!

JACOB & WILHELM GRIMM
ACT TWO IS COMING RIGHT UP...

HERALD
YES, IT'S COMING RIGHT UP!

JACOB & WILHELM GRIMM
IT'S COMING RIGHT UP...

HERALD
COMING RIGHT UP!

JACOB, WILHELM & HERALD
ACT TWO IS COMING RIGHT UP
FOR YOU
AND YOU
AND YOU, AND YOU AND YOU,
AND YOU, AND YOU,
FOR YOU, AND YOU AND YOU!
ACT TWO IS COMING RIGHT UP
FOR YOU!

(The CURTAIN swings shut.)

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWOSCENE ONEMUSIC #18: "ENTR'ACTE"

(The Black Forest, miles away from the cottage. The Robbers are trying to warm themselves by a makeshift fire. Nicholas paces.)

NICHOLAS

I can't believe it! I just can't believe it!

GUSTAV

I did the best I could making this fire!

JACQUES

I helped.

NICHOLAS

I'm not talking about the fire, meager though it is!

GUSTAV

Hey, you were just as spooked as we were!

JACQUES

And you ran away just as fast!

GUSTAV

If not faster.

NICHOLAS

That's... beside the point.

(The Herald appears, dressed as an archer. He shoots a flaming arrow into a tree.)

GUSTAV

What the Devil was that?

(Nicholas will pull the arrow from the tree.)

NICHOLAS

Obviously a message. Perhaps an omen...

GUSTAV

What's an omen?

NICHOLAS

A warning, stupid.

GUSTAV

Who are you calling stupid?

NICHOLAS

You, you half-witted moron.

GUSTAV

I have all the brains I was born with.

NICHOLAS

Spoon fed by a weary God and most dropped along the way.

JACQUES

Excuse me, are you two going to fight, or are you going to read that message before the flame on that arrow reaches your hand?

(It already has. Nicholas drops the arrow with a painful wince.)

NICHOLAS

See what you've made me do? You better get that message before it burns up.

GUSTAV

I'm afraid of flaming things.

NICHOLAS

I'll just bet you are. The audience will eat that one up.
(retrieving the message)
Some thief you make.

GUSTAV

I don't tell the world what you're afraid of.

NICHOLAS

(unrolling the scroll)
With the fourth wall gone, the audience is going to know everything anyway.

JACQUES

What does it say?

NICHOLAS

"Do what you were going to do in the first place. You now have motivation."

GUSTAV

What the Devil is motivation.

NICHOLAS

It's a term actors use. They won't move from one side of the stage to the other without it. Hmmm, the note is signed, "The Brothers Grimm."

JACQUES

And who are the Brothers Grimm?

(The Herald shoots another arrow into a tree. Nicholas retrieves the message.)

JACQUES (CONT'D)

Well?

NICHOLAS

(reading)

"We're writing the Second Act. Some thieves stole the first from our original story."

JACQUES

What's a Second Act?

NICHOLAS

It's the thing that always plagues the Book writers.

JACQUES

Hey! The note said, "thieves!" Just like us! Maybe we can join forces and...

NICHOLAS

Will you please shut up? Their kind of thieves are Producers!

JACQUES

What are...

NICHOLAS

(interrupts)

The ones who close shows because of faulty Second Acts.

GUSTAV

The Second Act of what?

(The Herald shoots another arrow. Nicholas retrieves it.)

JACQUES

(to himself)

I don't think that tree can take much more...

NICHOLAS

It says, "the libretto you live in. You wouldn't want to be in any other story. Trust us, this will work."

GUSTAV

Trust thieves, brothers, or Producers?

(Another flaming ARROW shoots across the sky. The Robbers all look up.)

JACQUES

What does that one say?

NICHOLAS
(as Max Bialystock might)
Never, never, never trust a Producer.

BERGERMEISTER
(offstage)
I heard that!

JACQUES
Small question.

NICHOLAS
What, now?

JACQUES
(pointing to the sky)
Just who is Mel Brooks?

NICHOLAS
Forget Producers. That leaves brothers and thieves.

JACQUES
So what were we going to do before? Now that we have this,
"motivation?"

GUSTAV
Let's not repeat ourselves.

NICHOLAS
Okay, we all know a group of animals can neither sing nor
play musical instruments.

GUSTAV
But does that group of animals know that?

NICHOLAS
Fools. We were tricked.

GUSTAV
I haven't had a good trick in a long, long time.

NICHOLAS
So I say we three make a little return visit.

GUSTAV
Is there wisdom in that?

NICHOLAS
Well, you know what they say in the theatre. "Pump money
into a dead horse, and..."

JACQUES
And you still have a dead horse. But what is our...
"motivation?"

NICHOLAS

Our motivation, gentlemen, is that a large rock just crashed into our skulls and opened our eyes! Those weren't animals; those were just other thieves! Or Producers dressed up to fool us, but that's our discovery.

JACQUES

You mean, like Columbus?

NICHOLAS

I hope not. The Indians probably wish the Earth was flat.

(beat)

Look, gents, we were all exhausted. Perhaps it was some kind of common dream or something...

JACQUES

I was dreaming of a redhead, myself...

GUSTAV

Sounds like authors' justification, if you ask me...

JACQUES

As long as she's female, an author can justify anything he wants to give me.

NICHOLAS

Well, justification or no justification, my stomach is growling for food or for revenge. I don't care which.

GUSTAV

So we're headed back to the cottage?

MUSIC #19: "TAKE A SECOND LOOK"

JACQUES

And then what?

NICHOLAS

(sings)

TAKE A SECOND LOOK, TAKE A SECOND CHANCE
WE CAN'T SIMPLY WALK AWAY WITH SOME KICK IN THE PANTS
TAKE AN OPPORTUNITY TO SEE THINGS AS THEY ARE
TAKE A SECOND LOOK, AND GET A SECOND CHANCE

TAKE ANOTHER TIME IN A DIFFERENT LIGHT
IF WE SNEAK UPON THEM IN THE MIDDLE OF THE NIGHT
WE MAY FIND THE VERY RUSE THAT THEY HAVE USED, ALL RIGHT
BECAUSE WE HAVE BEEN BURNED, WE'LL GET OUR LOOT RETURNED

TAKE WHAT WE HAVE LOST
INTO SOMETHING WE WILL GAIN
COULD NEVER TELL THE OTHER THIEVES
THERE'S NOTHING TO EXPLAIN
TAKE THE OPPORTUNITY TO SEE THINGS AS THEY ARE
TAKE ANOTHER LOOK, GET A SECOND CHANCE

FEAR IS SOMETHING MEN HAVE RUN FROM
 SINCE HIS DEBUT ON EARTH
 WHERE THE HELL DOES THIS STUFF COME FROM
 THIS FEELING IS NOT WORTH THE PAIN

ROBBERS

(sing)

THE PAIN, THE PAIN, THE PAIN OF LOSS HERE
 SO LET US SNEAK BACK THERE
 RIGHT BACK TO THAT PLACE, WHERE
 WE WERE KINGS OF ALL THE THIEVES

NICHOLAS

WE MIGHT FIND THIS CRAZINESS...

ROBBERS

...IS SOMETHING IN OUR MINDS

NICHOLAS

ALL OF JUST MAKE BELIEVE...

ROBBERS

... IS WHAT WE'RE GOING TO FIND

FEAR IS SOMETHING MEN HAVE RUN FROM
 SINCE HIS DEBUT ON EARTH
 WHERE THE HELL DOES THIS STUFF COME FROM
 THIS FEELING IS NOT WORTH THE PAIN

NICHOLAS

THE PAIN!

ROBBERS

THE PAIN, THE EMBARRASSING DISDAIN
 WE CAN'T STAND THE PAIN!
 TAKE A SECOND LOOK, GET A SECOND CHANCE!

(The Robbers race offstage, ready
 for battle, as there is a BLACKOUT.)

MUSIC #19A: "PLAYOFF"