

THE MASK  
OF  
THE BLACK DEATH

WRITTEN  
BY  
AKIRA KUROSAWA

Translated by  
Ian Hideo Levy

# CORRESPONDING LIST FOR RUSSIAN AND ENGLISH NAMES

|                    |   |                      |
|--------------------|---|----------------------|
| NIKOLAI DOBROVSKI  | = | DUKE NICHOLAS        |
| PAVEL DOBROVSKY    | = | SIR JOHN             |
| MARIA PETROVNA     | = | LADY MARY            |
| THE CLOWN PERETSKA | = | THE CLOWN BARTHOLEMW |
| THE POET KORSOKOV  | = | THE POET ASTON       |
| LUKA RYAMUSHIN     | = | OSCAR HAMILTON       |
| IGORI GARSHIN      | = | EVERETT PIERCE       |
| SERGEI NOVIKOV     | = | ROGER JAMISON        |
| YAN MAVRIKI        | = | PRESTON SHEFFIELD    |
| ILYA ERMASOV       | = | ARTHUR CLARK         |
| MENSHKOV           | = | LEWIS                |
| THE DOCTOR KIRILOV | = | THE DOCTOR CARLETON  |
| YARASLOV SHWISKI   | = | LORD DELMONT         |
| MIHAIL ORLOV       | = | LORD JACKSON         |
| IVAN DORGORKI      | = | LORD DUFFEY          |
| YURI YAROVORE      | = | VISCOUNT SPENCER     |
| SCOPIN RAZINCHEV   | = | BISHOP GATESLEY      |
| FYODOR CHARTOLSKY  | = | JVOLE BAKER          |
| DANIIL NESTEROV    | = | CROMWORTH            |
| VASILII MONOMAV    | = | TRUTHERS             |
| STEPAN KATOKOV     | = | WHITMORE             |
| GORITSIN           | = | HAINESWORTH          |
| RAKICHIN           | = | FONSENBY             |
| GODONOV            | = | SWIRE                |

|                |   |                         |
|----------------|---|-------------------------|
| PISAREV        | = | SIMMONS                 |
| KOMENSKI       | = | BENEDICT                |
| LYAPUNOV       | = | POWLER                  |
| KAROVAEV       | = | MORLAND                 |
| STEPAN MONOMAY | = | ARLOT THOMSON           |
| MARFA          | = | MOTHER SUPERIOR THERESA |
| BORIS VATONI   | = | BROTHER PAUL            |
| GERTSEV        | = | BROTHER GEORGE          |
| TANARA         | = | SISTER CATHERINE        |
| VARVARA        | = | SISTER BARBARA          |
| SERIOGA        | = | SEBASTIAN               |
| KISHYA         | = | NALCOLM                 |
| BOGOGIA        | = | BERNARD                 |
| TARAS          | = | THEODORE                |
| NIKITA         | = | JACOB                   |
| DORIS          | = | TON                     |
| VOROTOV        | = | PETER                   |
| CHAPKIN        | = | CHAPMAN                 |
| KURPSKI        | = | HARTSHORNE              |
| AVDORIN        | = | AVEDON                  |
| SOLOVIOV       | = | LAWRENCE                |
| ANNA ANDREVNA  | = | ANN GILBERT             |

LORD DELMONT ( CHAIRMAN OF THE COUNCIL OF  
NOBLES )

LORD JACKSON ( AN ARISTOCRAT )

LORD DUFFEY ( AN ARISTOCRAT )

VISCOUNT SPENCER ( AN ARISTOCRAT )

BISHOP GATESLEY

JUDGE BAKER

CROMWORTH ( A BANKER )

TRUTHERS ( A GREAT MERCHANT )

WHITMORE ( A GREAT LANDLORD )

HAINESWORTH ( A LANDLORD )

PONSENBY ( A FACTORY OWNER )

SWIRE ( A LANDLORD )

SIMMONS ( A LANDLORD )

BENEDICT

POWLER

MORLAND

ABBOT THOMSON OF THE MONASTERY

MOTHER SUPERIOR THERESA OF THE NUNNERY

BROTHER PAUL ( A MONK )

BROTHER GEORGE ( A MONK )

SISTER CATHERINE ( A NUN )

SISTER BARBARA ( A NUN )

( PRISONERS IN THE CELLAR JAIL )

BALLET DANCERS, MEN AND WOMEN

THE BANDLEADER

THE WOMAN IN THE BURNING HOUSE

THE JEWISH MAN

THE MEN WHO CHASE HIM

THE GROUP CARRYING A HOLY IMAGE

THE GROUP WITH WHIPS

This scenario should be read, not as a first draft, but rather as a story greatly expanding on an original work by E. A. Poe. It is a recreation of Poe's very short story "The Mask of the Red Death". Therefore I am thinking of developing the personalities of the characters and the unfolding of the story even further and in newer directions than in this initial draft. I would like the result of this further expansion to be considered the scenario.

-- THE CHARACTERS --

DUKE NICHOLAS

SIR JOHN

LADY MARY ( THE DUCHESS )

THE CLOWN BARTHOLEMEW

ASTON ( A POET )

OSCAR HAMILTON ( A YOUNG ARISTOCRAT )

EVERETT PIERCE ( A YOUNG ARISTOCRAT )

ROGER JAMISON ( CAPTAIN OF THE BODYGUARDS )

PRESTON SHEFFIELD ( CAPTAIN OF THE BODYGUARDS )

ARTHUR CLARK

LEWIS

JAMISON'S BRIGADE ( THIRTY-FIVE MEN )

SOLDIER A

SOLDIER B

SOLDIER C

SOLDIER D

SOLDIER E

THE SOLDIERS IN LEWIS' BRIGADE

CARLETON ( A DOCTOR; )

ANN GILBERT ( CHIEF LADY-IN-WAITING )

THE SOLDIER SEBASTIAN

THE SOLDIER MALCOLM

THE SOLDIER BERNARD

THE SOLDIER THEODORE

THE SOLDIER JACOB

THE SOLDIER TOM

PETER

SLAVE A

SLAVE B

SLAVE C

THE GUARD IN THE CELLAR JAIL

THE BEARDED MAN IN THE ROYAL ARMY

ARISTOCRATIC LADY A

ARISTOCRATIC LADY B

THE DUCHESS' LADIES-IN-WAITING

A

B

C

D

SENTRY"

CHAPMAN ( THE BALLET DIRECTOR )

HARTSHORNE ( THE COMPOSER )

AVEDON ( THE ART DIRECTOR )

LAWRENCE ( THE BALLET ASSISTANT )

( FADE IN )

○ A ROAD

The road is cut off by a crossboard on the abatis. The crossboard is roughly smeared with black and white paint.

Light from bonfires set it looming up in a macabre way from out of the darkness.

And below the crossboard are stationed a group of armed soldiers, their helmets and armor and weapons gleaming coldly.

The soldiers all have gloomy, frightened expressions on their faces as they gaze toward the darkness beyond the abatis.

Here and there in the darkness, the tips of furiously burning flames.

The soldiers simply shift their eyes slightly, toward several places where the flames are burning. They keep silent, and do not stir at all.

The roar of horses' hoofs.

The soldiers spring to their feet, and aim their weapons into the darkness.

A cavalry brigade appears looming from out of the darkness.

All the men in the brigade have their mouths and noses covered with various cloths.

There is something bizarre about them.

From among the soldiders defending the abatis, an older, bearded man takes one step out and shouts.

The bearded man: Halt! Who goes there?

The horseman at the front gallops over to him, leading a brigade in double file, and, snatching the cloth from his face,

- Roger Jamison, Captain of Duke Nicholas' Bodyguards. On orders of His Excellency, in order to cleanse his realms of the contagious disease, we have buried countless dead and burned towns and villages to the ground. Upon finishing these measures, we have received instructions to join the King's division and cooperate with it in surrounding and quarantining the pestilent areas. Let us through!

The bearded man: Stay where you are!

Jamison: We are not afflicted by the pestilence.

The bearded man: Contagious disease....pestilence.... why don't you call it by its real name? This is the black plague! If you get it, you turn black and die in an instant. That's why we're as determined as madmen to hold this defense line.

Jamison: Wait. When we left the castle we covered our mouths and noses with this cloth soaked in vinegar,

and our mouths have touched neither food nor water since. Furthermore, we're willing to burn everything we've got on, including these work gloves, right here! Surely, if we then soak our naked bodies in vinegar from head to toe and fumigate ourselves with ginger smoke, then you can't complain.

The bearded man: No! I don't care who you are or what you want to do, you can't come past this defense line! These are orders from the King!

Jamison(laughing): Listen! The Duke gave us a letter to the King in case this sort of thing should happen. Let me read it.

The bearded man: Stay away! Throw me the letter!

Jamison takes the letter in his hand and ties it to his spear handle, then hurls it.

The spear flies past the crossboard on the abatis, and pierces the ground by the feet of the guards as they leap aside. From among the guards who surround it, shrinking back from it, the bearded man steps forward and, catching it on the tip of his spear (as if he were touching something horrifying), places it on the ground.

On it is written,

Report to the Throne From Duke Nicholas

The bearded man orders one of the guards to hold the document down with his spear, then with the tip of his own spear he tears the seal open, pulls the letter out and peers at the paper.

The expression on his face changes to one of surprise. He then exchanges a glance with the similarly wide-eyed guards and, turning back to Jamison and his brigade, shouts,

- Hey, I can't read this.

Jamison: If you can't read it, then bring over one of your officers.

The bearded man: Nobody can read this.

The bearded man holds up the paper he has pierced with the tip of his spear for all to see.

A blank sheet of paper - there is nothing written on it.

Jamison and his brigade, as they stare at it dumbfounded.

The bearded man: You poor bastards! You've been discarded, after you've been used for all you're worth.

Jamison: .....

The bearded man: This makes those crests you carry a sad sight to see .....

Embossed on Jamison's shield is a crest combining a dog's head and a broom.

The bearded man: .....The dedication of a dog and the sweeping away of rebellion .....That the Bodyguards who have that for a symbol should be betrayed by

their master -

Jamison: This must be some kind of mistake. His Excellency is not the kind who would do such a thing.

The bearded man: His Excellency, in his fear of the black plague, left his suffering subjects to die of it and ran into his castle with his relatives and all the big important people in his realm, and refuses to open the castle gate ..... A splendid gentleman, really!

Jamison: Those measures were unavoidable, in order to deal with the black plague.

The bearded man: Yes, but look ..... When the great Duke sent you out of the castle, why, instead of telling you to come back, did he hand you a letter like this?

Jamison: .....

The bearded man: Just try and go back to the castle. Just try going up to the castle gate and stripping to the skin and burning all your clothes and ask them to let you in naked, like you asked us ..... There's no way they're going to let you in.

The bearded man holds the blank sheet of paper on the tip of his spear over the fire and burns it, then rolls Jamison's spear into the bonfire to burn.

Jamison and his brigade stand there rooted to the spot, speechlessly staring at the fire.

## THE CASTLE

The castle stands arrogantly on top of a hill. The castle walls that soar up in a severe perpendicular line from the ground, the cylindrical watch-tower rising on the corner of the winding castle walls, the enormous castle gate with watch towers topped by cylindrical roofs, the great cast iron door. All of these display power and its impermeability. And now the castle looks down coldly and indifferently through the watchfires on its walls, at the innumerable dead victims of the black plague who surround the castle.

A close look at the mass of the dead reveal that all of them - men and women, the young and the old, are clothed in rough cloth, and stamped with the black spots that are the seal of the black plague, their bodies strangely bent from the agony. Lined like a chain rudely tossed on the ground, they lie row upon row toward the castle.

And among the mass of corpses are ones still faintly moving, ones who are crawling, ones who stretch their hands toward the castle as if begging for help. Horses' hoofs make their way through the corpses, or come jumping over them.

Jamison, leading his brigade, brings his horse to a halt and, looking around,

- Three days ago we disposed of all the corpses around here. We didn't leave a single one.  
But now .....

His voice sounds gloomy as it comes through the cloth covering his mouth and nose. Then it is suddenly cut.

His men's eyes wander about, with a frightened gleam, from between their helmets and the cloth covering their faces.

#### ○ THE CASTLE GATE

The road that goes up to the castle gate is on a steep slope ( that makes an attack difficult ), to climb it to the top.

And none of those who have made it are moving.

Jamison and his brigade come galloping up.

Jamison shouts towards the coldly shut, great cast iron door.

Jamison: Guards! Open the gate! Captian Roger Jamison with thirty-five Bodyguards! We have returned.

#### ○ THE GREAT CAST IRON DOOR

It is gleaming coldly.

#### ○ THE CASTLE GATE

Jamison is shouting.

Jamison: Guards! Relay this to His Excellency! We absolutely will not bring the black plague into the castle. We will burn up everything we have on outside the castle.

His soldiers dismount, and quickly begin to discard the things they wear.

○ THE GREAT CAST IRON DOOR

It is gleaming coldly.

○ THE CASTLE GATE

A mountain of armor, helmets, weapons and clothes is burning.

Jamison, who stands beside it, removes his helmet and throws it in the fire, and shouts as he removes his armor.

Jamison: Guards! What're you doing! We have been working for three days with neither food nor water nor sleep, and we are exhausted.

Hurry up and open the gate!

The almost naked soldiers crouch in a group on the ground.

Now above their heads come tumbling a huge cloth sack stuffed with things.

The cloth splits, scattering bread. Jamison, looking up surprised. The soldiers run over to the scattered bread and eat greedily. Above the soldiers' heads, a bucket of water is dropped down to them in a thick net.

The soldiers give a cheer and dash over to the bucket of water before it has even reached the ground.

But the net that holds the bucket of water comes down with it and is discarded.

Both the soldiers and Jamison look up shocked. A voice is heard from the distant top of the castle gate,

- That's all we can do for you!

Both Jamison and his soldiers stand there rooted to the spot, looking up.

#### THE GREAT CAST IRON DOOR

It is gleaming coldly.

#### THE CASTLE GATE

Jamison sits on the ground shocked. He is motionless, his eyes staring into space.

The almost naked soldiers crouch absently on the ground, their heads drooping motionless.

They are like a symbolic group sculpture expressing despair.

One of the soldiers leaps up madly and runs up to the cast iron door. Pounding on it with his fist, he screams

- You bastards, are you our comrades?

The other soldiers leap up, and, gathering in front of the great door, pound on it and shout

- Open it!!

- Please open it!!

- Please help us!!

- Brothers!!

Their screams suddenly change from intimidation to pleading. Jamison remains motionless, apart from his soldiers' frenzy and anger. No, he cannot move - his loyalty so terribly betrayed, he is deeply hurt, and sunk in the depth of despair. When the soldiers realize that there is no reaction from inside the great door they cling to, they turn to despair, and smash the bucket of water and grind the bread into the ground with their feet.

At this time the great door creaks with a heavy sound, and there is an indication from inside that it is opening.

The sound of a key turning in the lock, and the creak of a bolt being unlatched.

The faces of both the frenzied soldiers and the despondent Jamison brighten with expectation, and they watch the great door.

The great door opens with a heavy sound, and the armed figures of the Bodyguards opening it can be discerned.

Jamison stands up - Jamison's men give a cheer and start to run over to it - the Bodyguards inside the castle who have opened the great door start to say something as if in answer - then a volley of rifle fire roars, and the soldiers inside the gate are shot and fall - in the next moment, the great door is shut again with a cold echo of iron.

Jamison and his men, standing frozen to the spot as they watch this.

#### THE GREAT CAST IRON DOOR

It is gleaming coldly.

#### THE CASTLE GATE

Jamison and his men collapse crouching on the ground. Jamison tosses the spear he had laid beside him into the burning remains of the clothes.

The remains have turned into a mountain of helmets and armor burning bright red.

The crest of the spear thrown into the burning heap looms in the red hot light.

The crest - two brooms combined with the head of a dog.

Jamison looking at it, his eyes bursting with emotion.

A hurried noise.

Jamison turns around.

It sounds like something is being done to the great door from inside.

Jamison's men also watch the great door.

The sound of something being thrown against the great door.

It is not a light sound like that of water - the sound of some heavy liquid - and the sound of something red hot touching something freezing cold.

The soldiers, frightened by this strange noise, cluster together and gaze at the great door.

Smoke pours out from the joint in the center of the great door, and from the opening at the base of the door bright red molten iron comes pouring out over the stone pavement like mud.

- What is that?

- It's molten iron!

- What are they doing with it!

Jamison groans,

- They're welding the door shut!!

---

Then begins the despondent wanderings of Jamison and his brigade.

---

○ AN OPEN GRAVE

This is a huge hole.

The hole overflows with the dead.

Jamison and his cavalry brigade ride beside it.

Jamison wears armor, but his soldiers are almost naked.

The summer sun is shining brightly and clearly on their bodies.

The scene is like the bizarre vision in a painting by Bosch or Brueghel.

Jamison, who has been looking down at the dead, turns his face away and urges his horse on.

○ IN A VILLAGE

Jamison and his brigade are riding through.

Their empty eyes wander over the houses burned down.

### A BURNING HOUSE

The windows are enveloped in flames and smoke. From inside a woman with the black plague screams in a frenzy, and with her gaunt arms holds up a bawling baby.

### OUTSIDE THE VILLAGE

Jamison and his brigade gallop out as if in a stampede.

### THE DOMAINS OF DUKE NICHOLAS ( a sythetic image )

If Brueghel had described a district ravaged by the black plague, the picture would probably look like this.

Distant mountains, a castle proudly commanding a distant hill; the gently rolling earth is abundantly festooned with forests, woods, fields and farms, but the villages that dot the landscape are almost all burned black to the ground. As one draws near, one can see the dead, fallen like spots of filth upon the ground, row upon row of these figures growing gradually larger and more vivid. And men who stagger among them, and people who wander about in groups can be seen, along with crows flying ominously above them. And the nearest close-up reveals a half-burned town. The road through that town is filled with the dead from the black plague, and victims, yet unable

to die, who writhe.

Onto that road come Jamison and his bizarre brigade.

### THE TOWN

Jamison and his brigade come upon a macabre procession. It is a group covered from head to toe in pure white cloth, with only two holes slit open for them to see through. They turn into a cluster of pure white, taking their children and their old by the hand, clinging to each other as if to protect themselves from something fearful.

Above their shoulders sways a large holy image that they seem to have taken from a church. The ones on the outside wave torches as if to drive someone or something away. All of them chant words of prayer in a groaning voice.

Because this procession carries a large, heavy holy image, and because they cling to each other unnaturally, they describe a strange staggering line as they approach. As they come upon Jamison and his group, they cluster even closer together and draw away from them, in an arc, as they pass.

As Jamison and his brigade march on, they come upon another strange procession. It is a group of blood-smeared, naked and half-naked men and women.

Each of them carries a crucifix in one hand, and in the other a leather strap tied to sharpened iron. They walk with disheveled hair, singing hymns as

if intoxicated, whipping their bared flesh. Even after coming upon Jamison and his men, they keep on walking in a straight line.

Their faces shine with the religious ecstasy of fanatic ascetics; they pass Jamison and his men, who get out of the way for them, without casting them a single glance.

An abnormal disaster drives men into an abnormal state of mind.

From in front of Jamison and his men as they march comes running a man with his eyes popping out in horror and his hair standing on end.

The man throws himself in front of Jamison.

- Help me! We've all been killed! We haven't done anything!

But before Jamison can say anything, the man, looking behind, dashes away.

Strong and robust men come running, chasing this man. Blood-soaked prey in their hands, their faces are drawn with madness.

Jamison: Wait! What did that man do to you?

- He's a Jew!

- He put poison in the wells.

- All of this is a plot by the Jews!

The men go running off, all of them shouting. Jamison and his men watching them.

Soldier A: They've all gone crazy!

Soldier B: Tomorrow it'll be our turn!

### THE NIGHT SKY

The red ominous moon.

### BY A MARSH

Jamison, at the extreme limits of exhaustion, sleeping like a log.

He suddenly awakens, looks around, and leaps up.

His soldiers and their horses are gone.

Only one horse, Jamison's own, is standing there, its muzzle and mouth tied with the reins.

### A ROAD

The abatis, where stands a crossboard smeared with black and white paint, cutting off the road.

Jamison and his men dash towards it.

They are naked, stripped of their helmets and armor.

Their only weapons are farm implements and blacksmith's tools.

They are half mad - struck with the fear of the plague, they are obsessed with escaping from the pestilential land, to the refuge the plague has yet to penetrate.

The results of their desperate, imprudent actions are pitiful, appalling.

Most of them are shot at once from their horses.

One after another the others try to jump the abatis by urging their horses up onto it. The horses'

hoof are caught and they are thrown only to be prey to the ready spears and swords of the surrounding army.

#### BY THE SWAMP

Dawn - Mist rising from the surface of the swamp. Jamison's soldiers are returning through the mist. There are only a few of them left. Their shoulders are drooping, their heads hung despondently. One look at them as they ride shows that they are defeated.

Jamison as he sees them - he says nothing. As the soldiers dismount, they run staggering to the edge of the water and drink at it greedily. Slightly apart from them at the water's edge are many dead rats.

#### THE SKY

The mid-summer sun.

#### A FOREST

Jamison comes leading his men, reduced to less than ten.

Above them, the leaves in the forest drop intense shadows. These black spots stream over them, licking their emaciated faces and bodies. Jamison and his men suddenly halt.

In front of them are discarded carts piled with the corpses from the black plague.

The leaves drop shadows like black spots that overlap the black seals of death on the corpses.

The soldiers see their hands and their comrades' naked bodies covered with black spots from the leaves' shadows, and, struck with horror, race their horses madly.

Jamison chases after them.

○ A PLAIN

Scorching weather.

Jamison and his men come.

Soldier A: Goddamn it! Where the Hell are we going?

Where the Hell can we go?

Soldier B: How do I know! Ask the Captain.

Jamison's face is distorted with agony.

Soldier C: We're dogs that have been thrown away. All we can do is wander around till we die!

Soldier D: Shit! I'd like to gnaw the bastards in the castle to death!

Soldier E: Yeah, Duke Nicholas first!

The soldiers: Yeah!

Jamison is gloomy, he shrinks into himself.

A GRASSY PLAIN

A windy day.

Jamison and his men wandering this way and that.

Soldier A: What's the idea, dancing like that? What  
are you so happy about?

Soldier B: What?

Soldier A: Look at you, you're shaking your neck and  
your hands, and dancing in your saddle.

Soldier B: My neck and my armpit hurt. Let's dismount.  
My groin is all swollen.

The soldiers, one after another,

-Yeah, me too.

-Me too.

Jamison turns around and looks at the soldiers  
uneasily.

Soldier A: Me too. And I know why. We may be cavalrymen,  
but we've been riding too long.

THE WOODS

Jamison and his men dismount and cluster together  
under a tree to get out of the rain.

All of the soldiers seem to have fever, though  
in different degrees; the ones with a high temperature  
are shaking violently with chill.

Soldier B: Who's that?

Soldier A: What? Where?

Soldier B: Who's that standing over there?

Soldier A: That's a white ash tree!

Soldier C: Shh. Someone's calling us!

Soldier A: It's the wind!

Soldier ( suddenly standing up ):

Let's get out of here. There are all those rats!  
We can't be near rats! It's the rats that bring  
the black death!

Soldier A: There're no rats around here.

Soldier D: Look! There's a huge rat!

Soldier A: That's our horse.

Soldier D: ( starts to march off )

Soldier A: Where the Hell are you going?

Soldier D: I'm going back to the castle.

Soldier A: .....

Soldier B: I'm going back to the castle too!

Soldier C: Me too.

→ soldiers B, C and D run off madly.

Soldier A: Wait! What are you doing?

Soldiers B, C and D running off. One after another  
they fall in the swamp and writhe in agony.

Soldier A stops, and shudders as he watches them.

The soldiers who had stayed behind under the tree and Jamison all stand up rigid and stare at them in horror.

○ THE SKY

The mid-summer sky.

○ A FIELD

Scorching weather. .

Jamison and three of his men are wandering about like demonic ghosts.

And a flock of great crows flutter over their heads, like messengers from the god of death.

Black spots have already appeared on the soldiers' faces and bodies. Their fevered eyes shine with a frenzied light, and their breasts undulate wildly with painful breathing.

One of the soldiers suddenly falls from his horse. But the other three no longer have the strength to even look back at them.

But they grip their reins as if clinging to life itself, and continue their aimless procession. Again one of the soldiers tumbles from his saddle. The other two continue their procession towards death.

### A HILL

Jamison and one of his soldiers A come.  
The castle can be seen far in the distance.  
When soldier A sees it with his fevered and empty eyes, he suddenly kicks at his horse and urges it on in a rush to the castle.

- There!

Then he is thrown from his horse, and lies there motionless, curled on the ground.

### THE HORIZON

The moon rises.

### THE CASTLE

On the castle walls the watchfires shoot red flames.  
This light and the light of the moon envelop the awesome numbers of the plague dead in colors of red and blue.

### THE CASTLE GATE

Jamison comes galloping up the steep slope.  
Jamison dismounts, and straining his legs not to trying stagger, he stares for a moment up at the parapets above the castle gate. Then, catching his breath, he shouts.

- Guards! It's Jamison!

His voice bounces off of the great door and is sucked

into the surrounding silence.

- Guard! All my soldiers are dead! They're all dead of the black plague! I'm the only one left! Guards! Are you listening!?

After a pause, Jamison gathers all his remaining strength and shouts,

- I have a request! Shoot me!

Jamison tears off his armor and exposes his breast.

- Shoot me! If you have any mercy, don't let me die of the black plague! Shoot me! I, your Captain, order you! Shoot me!

A second passes, then rifle fire.

Jamison is shot and falls into the burned heap of helmets and armor. His dead face lies above the shields scorched and pocked with red burns, and the crests combining the dog's head and the brooms. From inside the castle can be faintly heard the sound of colorful dance music.

#### INSIDE THE CASTLE. THE BANQUET HALL

----- Grand, resounding, colorful dance music. On one side there is a platform higher than the rest of the room, and on it a gorgeous chair symbolic of power ----- In the box next to it is the band ----- On the floor before it, polished like a huge mirror, a whirl of dancing-----

----- Dancing are the aristocrats, their officials, landlords, merchants and their families and relatives

----- Their gorgeous clothes and the brilliant colors of their jewels whirl about, dazzling one's eyes.

One feels a tremendous gap between this world and the world one has seen so far outside the castle.

But in this colorful, merry dancing is something unnatural. There is no intoxication from the heart here, but rather one sees a strained effort at intoxication. This effort is revealed in their behavior, in the exaggerated way they go through their steps, in the deliberate smiles on their faces and in their affected expressions of intoxication.

An officer threads his way through this whirl of dancing, and goes into the next room.

( note..... normally the great hall in a castle manor is built so that one can look directly into the adjoining rooms, but the construction here is of a considerably different intent.

There are six rooms joined together in a strangely labyrinthine rectangle. One of the narrow wall spaces in each of the rooms is hung with a heavy curtain from the ceiling that separates it from the next room, and one cannot pass into the next room without going through the curtain.

In this drastic plan can be felt the extreme character of the master of this castle, a personality the strangeness of which becomes even more astonishing

when one passes through the six adjoining rooms. )  
An officer of the Bodyguards is presently passing  
through these rooms.

----- Cf. Room Arrangement Chart -----

#### THE FIRST ROOM

This is the yellow room.  
The stained glass on the window is purple.  
A violent contrast between yellow and purple.  
On the dining table set by the purple window is  
the food left over from a gorgeous meal, on dishes  
that are the epitome of luxury; these and the wine  
bottles lined there are in an after-dinner disorder.  
And seated lim and sloppy in three of the many chairs  
around the table are the merchant Hainesworth, the  
factory owner Ponsenby and the landlord Swire. .  
The officer of the Bodyguards opens the yellow  
curtain to the next room and goes in, not even  
glancing at these menus as he passes.

#### THE SECOND ROOM

This is the blue room.  
The stained glass on the window is red.  
A violent contrast between blue and red.  
By the window, as in the yellow room, a gorgeous  
dining table in after-dinner disorder.

And sipping wine in one of the chairs there is  
the poet Aston.

The doctor Carleton walking irritated between the  
dining table and the window.

Carleton ( to Aston ): I can swear to you, as a doctor,  
that your liver -

Aston: Rather than turning black and dying, I'd rather  
turn red and die. Don't you agree, General?

The officer of the Bodyguards does not answer him,  
but pushes apart the blue curtain to the next room  
and goes in.

### THE THIRD ROOM

This is the red room.

The stained glass on the window is blue.

The violent contrast between red and blue.

The appearance of the dining table by the window is,  
unlike those in the yellow room and the blue room,  
not that disordered.

For this is the clergy's room.

But the appearance of the Abbot of the Monastery, of  
the Mother Superior of the Nunnery, of the monks and  
the nuns is extremely chaotic.

Sister Catherine: We've got to leave here as soon as we  
can.

Abbot Thomson: The Duke has forbidden anyone to leave.

Brother Paul: Are we servants of the Duke, or are  
we servants of God?

Mother Superior Theresa: There's a church in this castle  
too.

Sister Barbara: Is it enough just to pray in church?

Brother Gerge: I'm ashamed. I can't forgive myself.

Sister Catherine: Me neither. We gave in to the fear  
and ran away, even though our duty was to save  
the souls of the dead and lead the hearts of the  
living to peace .....

Brother Paul: Words don't mean a thing. The only thing  
that matters is whether we leave or we don't!

There are other monks and nuns just sitting there  
immersed in gloom.

The officer crosses beside them and, diving under  
the red curtain, goes into the next room.

#### THE FOURTH ROOM

This is the green room.

The stained glass here is crimson.

The violent contrast between green and crimson.

The appearance of the dining table by the window  
is the same as in the rooms come through so far.

The aristocratic youths seated in the chairs there,  
Oscar Hamilton and Everett Pierce, draw over to the  
green curtain separating this and the next room,  
and intently watch Sir John ( Duke Nicholas' younger  
brother ) who is listening in on the conversation  
in the next room.

The three of them see the officer who has come into  
the room and stands erect saluting them, and they  
quickly assume normal postures.

Everette: What's he got planned for tonight? This midnight presentation - what exactly are they going to do?

John: I don't know. But since its my brother who's doing it, I have a feeling it'll be, as always, something that will give them the shock of their lives.

The officer, standing at attention in front of the green curtain that John has pulled away from,

- Captain Preston Sheffield of the Bodyguards!

A voice: What is it?

- Roger Jamison, former Captain of the Bodyguards, has been shot and killed!

The voice: Enter!

The officer pushes apart the green curtain and goes into the next room.

#### THE FIFTH ROOM

This is the purple room.

The stained glass on the window is yellow.

The violent contrast between purple and yellow.

This room is a degree larger than the others, the dining table and chairs are also larger and the dishes on the table are a notch higher in their total luxury.

Seated at the head of this table is the master of this castle, Duke Nicholas, and ranged to the left

and right of him are his close followers, the aristocrats Lord Delmont, Lord Jackson, Lord Duffey, Viscount Spencer and Bishop Gatesley, Judge Baker, The banker Cromworth, the greatest merchant Truthers and the great landlord Whitmore. Altogether nine of them. In addition, two escorts.

Duke Nicholas is a handsome man, but there is something in his appearance that puts fear in people. With his somewhat strange face, reminding one of a mask, Duke Nicholas watches intently as Captain Sheffield of the Bodyguards enters and stands at attention.

The Duke: You did say you shot and killed Jamison.

Sheffield: Yes Sir!

The Duke: Why did you shoot him!

Sheffield: The Captain ordered it, Sir.

The Duke: The Captain? Aren't you the Captain? .

Sheffield: Let me correct myself. It was an order from the former Captain. With my own eyes I saw the Captain, who was the only one who had come back alive, and with his own lips he ordered me saying, "I don't want to die of the plague!! Shoot me!" I had no choice but to obey him, Sir.

The Duke: Is that a report? Or is it disobedience to me?

Sheffield: .....

The Duke: Do you know what happens to a dog that bites  
its master?

Sheffield: .....

The Duke: In addition you have mouthed the word that  
I have forbidden to be spoken in this castle!  
The plague!

Sheffield: .....

The Duke: You are to be hung!

#### THE GREEN ROOM

Sir John, Oscar and Everett are standing by the  
curtain, listening in on the voices in the next room.  
They look at each other.

John: ( whispering to Oscar and Everett ): He's doing  
it again.....

Oscar: His Excellency has put his own neck in the  
noose again!

Everett: There is a limit to the loyalty of even the  
Bodyguards.

The voice: Take him to the cellar jail!

#### THE PURPLE ROOM

Sheffield stands at attention staring at Duke Nicholas,  
the color drained from his face and his lips drawn

tight and tense. Suddenly he turns around and leave the room by himself. The guards rush to follow him. All the others, who have been watching Duke Nicholas' mask-like face, with frightened stares and not an eyebrow moving, relax as if relieved.

At this time - a strange sound echoes - it is a large lucid, deep and extremely musical sound, but also a sound somehow not of this world, heard as if from the bottom of the earth.

Everyone except for Duke Nicholas freezes when they hear this sound.

On their faces all at once rise shadows of uneasiness, an expression of panic, as if the sound were strangling them.

Duke Nicholas glances around the table coldly and indifferently, then opens the purple curtain.

#### THE SIX ROOM

This is the black room.

The stained glass on the windows is colored a blood-like red.

This red color comes streaming into the black room by the light of the watchfires burning outside the windows, and envelops the grand clock standing deep

in the room in red.

The quietly swaying pendulum also shines redly.

The grand clock shows ten o'clock.

Now the great music box in the grand clock plays and echoes a bizarre melody announcing the time with each second.

#### THE PURPLE ROOM

Duke Nicholas watches with a cold smile as his followers listen tremblingly to the sounds played by the grand clock.

#### THE GREEN ROOM

Sir John, Everett Pierce and Oscar Hamilton also stand rooted to the spot as they listen to the sound of the grand clock.

#### THE RED ROOM

Mother Superior Theresa of the Nunnery, Sister Barbara, Abbot Thomson of the Monastery and Sister Catherine stand frightened as they listen to the sound of the grand clock.

#### THE BLUE ROOM

The same -

The poet Aston and Doctor Carleton.

THE YELLOW ROOM

The same -

The merchant Hainesworth, the factory owner Ponsenby,  
and the landlord Swire.

THE BANQUET HALL

No matter how the castle manor is built, the sound  
of the grand clock echoes here too, and it drowns out  
all other sounds.

The people dancing and the players in the band have  
stopped moving their hands and feet.

All the deliberate laughter is gone.

Slightly ashen faces, depressed faces, frightened  
faces, panicked faces - all their faces suddenly look  
bewitched by fear.

Then finally the music box in the grand clock ends  
its tune and strikes ten o'clock.

When this sound disappears, leaving behind a final  
echo, everyone looks at each other, as if each has  
recovered his senses.

They laugh at themselves disagreeably and derisively, and  
bustle and noise returns to the banquet  
hall.

The bandleader shakes his baton, and the dance music  
begins. The people begin to dance with exaggerated  
gestures, as if to shake off the dark conceptions  
that have bewitched them.

But many of them start to leave, deep in uncomfortable  
thought.

INSIDE THE CASTLE. THE SQUARE

This square is surrounded by high castle walls and the huge castle gate, the magnificent manor, the church with golden spires, the bleak barracks of the soldiers, and other buildings.

Sheffield walks over the empty square paved with stones, escorted by the guards.

Here and there on the walls are stone steps leading up to the parapets. Below each of them stands a sentry. The sentries watch Sheffield dubiously. One of them comes running over.

- Captain, what happened?

Since Sheffield does not answer, the sentry asks the guard.

- What happened?

The guard neither stops nor answers.

He just looks to the side with gloom in his eyes. There is the gallows.

The sentry stands at attention.

Right in front of the castle gate, several guards and an officer ( Arthur Clark ) come running out of the guardroom.

Clark: Preston! What's going on!

Escorted by the guards, Sheffield descends the steps down into the cellar jail, a black hole next to the gallows.

Sentry: What is this! Another Captain is to be killed!  
This time by hanging!

Clark: !?

Behind him, the great cast iron door.  
Traces of the welding, like keloid scars.  
A shout is heard.

- Wait!

- Stop!

Clark and the others turn around.  
There are some people who have just run up the stone  
steps by where the sentry is stationed. They wear  
black cloaks over their heads.  
And the sentries who run chasing after them are  
shouting.

- Come back!

- It's forbidden to look outside!

- It's the Duke's orders!

- Offenders will be shot!

The ones running up the stone steps stop frozen in  
their tracks.

Bright colors can be seen from out of the sleeves of  
their cloaks.

- Women!

The sentries who have chased them shrink back for an  
instant.

But there is still one figure running up the steps.

The sentries ready their rifles.

- Stop!

- We'll shoot!

#### ON TOP OF THE CASTLE WALLS

It is lined with watchfires. The castle parapets loom in the night sky, dyed in the red of the flames. One of the women in the black cloaks comes running up, and looks down at the scene below the castle with horror.

Then she trembles and raises a scream.

Her cloak slips down, and from under it, emblazoned in the light of the flames, can be seen the elegant face of a woman, a face drained of all color, her gorgeous evening dress festooned with jewels.

#### AT THE FOOT OF THE STONE STEPS

The sentries about to pull the triggers of their rifles.

Clark runs over, and shouts.

- Don't shoot! It's the Duchess!

#### ON TOP OF THE CASTLE WALLS

The Duchess, Lady Mary, stands there as if frozen at the sight, her eyes gaze upon from the parapet. She faints.

AT THE FOOT OF THE STONE STEPS

Clark ( to the women standing petrified half way up the steps ): You're the Duchess' ladies-in waiting, aren't you?

The women nod.

Clark: Quickly take her to her room,

The women run up the steps.

Clark ( to the sentries ) : You're not to breathe a word of this to anyone. Understand? It'll be blamed on us.

The women carry the unconscious Duchess down the steps.

Clark ( to the women ): Listen! You're to pretend this didn't happen! You'll be in real trouble if the Duke finds out about this! You understand, don't you!

The women nod, trembling.

Clark: Hurry up!

The women hurry toward the manor, carrying the Duchess.

Clark and the sentries as they watch them go.

Sentry A: But you know the Duchess may tell the Duke about this.

Sentry B: That's right! And what'll happen to us if she does?

Clark: If she does then I'll be standing up there! The gallows.

The Duchess' waxlike face swaying in the women's arms.

THE BANQUET HALL

A whirl of dancing.

THE YELLOW ROOM

Everyone is talking in fevered tones.

But in both their expressions and their words as they talk is a cynical, reckless tone of self-abandonment.

Hainesworth: Anyway, if we had formed a Parliamentary Congress, we would have been able to deal with this disaster.

Simmons: In order to clean up mud you've got to get smeared in mud. But these aristocratic lords won't dirty their hands at such a filthy job. And all the big important priests do is cross themselves, and everyone's just hushing up the stinking mess.

Hainesworth: But not Sir John. He's very enthusiastic about the idea of forming a Parliamentary Congress. He says we should form a Congress and let it choose the Duke.

Benedict: Yes, and he wants to be the Duke. There's something sneaky about what he's doing, the younger brother trying to take the older one's place.

Fowler: The last time they held a Parliamentary Congress, all the great aristocrats controlled it from behind the scenes. That's what Sir John want to do.

Morland: By the way, when are they going to pay us for all the food and wine we brought into the castle? I think it only appropriate that we be paid twice the normal price under these circumstances.

- There's nothing to get fussed up about.

They all turn at this voice and look.

The poet Aston is sticking his head through the curtain separating this room from the next.

Aston: ..... You'll soon be getting your fill of jewels and money. Because it's not going to be long before this castle runs out of food.

#### THE PURPLE ROOM

The great landlord Whitmore is speaking to the Duke, watching the expression on his face.

- I ..... from my position as the one responsible for food provisions within the castle..... the..... I must tell you ..... that ..... we only have enough to continue these luxurious banquets for another two months ..... that .....

The Duke: Don't mince your words .....

Are we out of food?

Whitmore (intimidated): No ..... we're not ..... there's enough .....

The Duke: Tell me the truth. Don't lie because

You're afraid of me.

Whitmore: No.... I am not lying.... This .....

pestilence....should wane, I think, eventually,  
and .... if we cut down on the subordinates'  
provisions until then, then somehow.....

The Duke: Why don't we put restrictions on the bread  
used in church instead? Holy Communion is of  
no help at this point.

Saying this, he glances at Bishop Gatesby with a  
cynical eye.

The Bishop ( suppressing his anger ): Your Excellency,  
please do be discreet with your words, even if  
you are only joking. This is a blasphemy.

The Duke: A blasphemy, you say, but where's that god now?  
What's he doing?

The Bishop: Your Excellency, 'just because you see the  
pestilence rampant in your domains you must not  
doubt the existence of the Lord. This is God's  
judgement. We have been living in defiance of  
God's wishes for too long. How much blood we  
have spilled in our wars! Such indulgence in  
idleness in times of peace! This calamity fallen  
upon us now is a just retribution. This is a  
punishment that God in his wisdom has give us  
to bring us to our senses.

The Duke laughs.

The Duke: You are a Bishop. How well you make excuses with your logic. But, Bishop, who are the ones who suffer the most from this disease? It's the poor. The ones who were hunted out against their will in the war and spilled their own blood. The ones who returned from the war to their devastated towns and villages and plodded away at their work, the ones who have almost nothing to do with indulgence. Why are they the ones who have to suffer the most? What are they being punished for?

The Bishop: .....

The Duke: Bishop. It's always we the aristocrats who plan the wars. And the ones whose bellies fatten on war are the merchants and the factory owners and the landlords. And they're the same ones who indulge in idleness in times of peace. And this group is the same one that now has run into the castle to escape the pestilent disaster and are immersing themselves in pleasure.

If this is Go's judgement, God is an ass!

The Bishop ( quickly crossing himself ): What a horrifying thing to say!

The Duke: I have no use for an ass like that. No, if this disaster is the will of God, then I bow to the Devil, who opposes God in everything. I'll depend on the Devil's power to defend this castle from the disaster!

The Bishop: Your Excellency!

The Duke: If you disapprove, then get out. The gospel  
of your gracious God awaits you outside the castle!

All present turn their eyes from the Bishop as he is  
made an object of ridicule.

Even as they feel offended by the Duke's merciless  
cynicism, they are intimidated by his arrogance, and  
merely steal a glance at him from time to time.

The Duke: Bishop. Why don't you leave? You can't, can  
you? It was you clerymen who scurried into the  
castle before anyone else in your fear of your  
God's gospel. I see devil's tails under your  
priests' frocks!

The Bishop turns white.

A voice: The Chief Lady-in-Waiting, Ann Gilbert.

The Duke: Enter!

Ann Gilbert, the Chief Lady-in-Waiting, opens the purple  
curtain and comes in.

There is a perplexed expression on her aged face.

The Duke: What is it?

Ann: The Duchess is indisposed. .

The Duke: She's weak. She always keeps indoors. There's  
no reason to make a special report of it.

Ann:.....However, this ...is a very high fever, and we think  
it may not be a trivial matter....And so.....

The Duke: And the doctor?

Ann:.... We haven't yet..... We thought we should  
first report to you...

The Duke smacks his lips in annoyance and, giving  
Ann a contemptuous glance, leaves the room.

Ann hurries after him.

#### THE GREEN ROOM

The Duke and Ann rush across the room.

Sir John, Oscar Hamilton and Everett Pierce, who  
have been sitting and consulting in a corner of the  
room, stand up. John wants to ask his brother what is  
going on, but there is no time.

#### THE RED ROOM

The Duke and Ann rush across the room. The Abbot  
of the Monastery, the Mother Superior of the  
Nunnery, and the monks and nuns bow respectfully  
to the hurrying figures, and exchange inquiring  
looks.

#### THE BLUE ROOM

The Duke and Ann cross the room.

The Duke: Carleton, come with me. Mary has a fever.

The doctor Carleton follows him.

The poet Aston rises and, unsteady on his feet,  
watches them go.

THE YELLOW ROOM

The Duke, Ann and Carleton cross the room.

Hainesworth, Simmons, Benedict, Fowler and Morland  
jump to their feet and bow.

Hainesworth: What a hurry they're in.... Wonder what  
happened?

Simmons: With a doctor!

THE BANQUET HALL

The Duke, Ann and Carleton rushing across the  
hall through the whirl of dancers.

The dancing is interrupted and the people watch  
the Duke and the others go.

The music comes to a halt.

The performers stop playing and watch the Duke  
and the others go, and look at each other.

THE GARDEN

The garden in the back of the castle manor.

The Duke, Ann and Carleton, who have come out of the  
manor, rush over the path that threads through the  
flowerbed decorated with summer flowers, brilliant  
in the night. Then they enter the simple building  
that stands in a corner of the garden.

THE YELLOW ROOM

Everyone stands uneasily.

Fowler: The doctor Carleton is with them....

It must be an emergency case.

Benedict: An emergency? But the way the Duke rushed  
like that - I wonder who it is?

- It's not his name that matters.....

Everyone looks up at this voice.

The poet Aston is again sticking his head through  
the yellow curtain and grinning.

Aston: .....but the name of his disease!

.....Gentlemen! Let us pray that the name is  
not the one forbidden to be spoken in this castle  
..... To your health!

#### THE GREEN ROOM

The Bishop comes in, his face white with rage.

Chasing after the Bishop as he tries to cross the room,

John: Bishop, I heard. Please forgive my brother.

My brother sometimes has a way of hurting people  
cruelly. He's been like that since he was a  
boy. It was our father's fault, for having  
spoiled him and handing him power like a toy.  
My brother takes joy in hurting people by  
vaunting that power. And I, his younger  
brother, have always had to sacrifice because  
of it. I understand your feelings of humiliation  
at being made the object of his ridicule.

The Bishop: ( crossing himself, with a martyred face)

John: Recently my brother's disposition has become more and more extreme, and there are times when I wonder if he isn't crazy.

The Bishop: It's a fearful thing.

John: No, my brother may actually be mad now. This disaster that has struck my brother's domains has been a terrible shock to him. And then he's been locked up in this castle for the past three months, with the Prince doing nothing to save him. No, it's hopeless to even expect him to help. For my brother opposed all of the Prince's policies and has the Prince convinced that he's a traitor. My brother is doubly surounded at present, by this fearful pestilence and the Prince's hostility, and he can't make a move. Think of it, it's a terrifying position to be in. Perhaps it's only natural that my brother would fall into such an unstable mental condition.

The Bishop: However, my position leaves me no choice but to report your brother's blasphemy to the Archbishop. And I'm afraid it will have to reach the Prince's ears.

John: Then my brother's position will become more and more difficult. Bishop, somehow please find a way to forgive him.

Bishop: All I can do now is go to the church and pray for His Excellency and beg the Lord's forgiveness for him. I am fearful that already the Lord's hand of remonstrance is upon your brother. Could it be that the innocent Duchess is bearing the guilt for His Excellency's sin and suffering because of it?

John: !?..... Did something happen to Lady Mary?

The Bishop: She suddenly got a fever and is suffering  
..... It's fearful!

John:!!?

Oscar and Everett look at each other.

#### THE DUCHESS' ROOM

The Duchess, laid to sleep in her bed with its gorgeous canopy, opens her fevered, empty eyes and painfully shakes her head.

The doctor Carleton is holding her head down and examining her.

The Duke, gazing down intently at this.

Behind him, Ann, the Chief Lady-in-Waiting.

A cluster of ladies-in-waiting in a corner of the room.

Carleton ( finishing his examination, to the Duke ):

First I think I should tell you clearly as a doctor, this is not ..... that contagious disease.

The Duke: I wasn't worried about that. This castle  
is impenetrable to that disease.

The Duke glares at the relieved Chief Lady-in-Waiting,  
and with his hand waves away the smoke that is  
filling the room.

-What's this smoke?

-Ann: It is mirale, Your Excellency.

The Duke: Did you burn it for a magic charm?

Ann: Y...yes.

Carleton: Mirale is a stimulant. All it does is  
make it more painful for the patient.

The Duke: Open the windows, and get this smoke out!

The clustered ladies-in-waiting scatter and open the  
windows.

The Duke, laying his hand on the Duchess' forehead,

-Yes, but what is this fever?

Carleton ( thinking ): I'm not sure.... I can't  
find anything wrong with her internal organs.

The Duchess gives a delirious scream.

-Noel!..... James!

Staring at the Duchess as she cries out are the  
Duke, Ann and Carleton.

Ann: She's calling her children's names.....

This fever was probably brought about by her concern for her children. All Lady Mary ever talked about were her children. No, all the ladies are always worried about that.

The Duke: That's idiotic. Compared to the fear she would have keeping her children here and trying to protect them from the disease, having the children sent like this to a place where the disease can't reach them should bring her peace of mind. It shouldn't be a cause for worry. .

Ann: But the children sent to the Prince's palace are the same as hostages.

The Duke: If you want to talk about hostages, Mary's one right here. She's the Prince's daughter.

Ann: Yes, but the mothers' hearts do not stop worrying. She said that when she thinks about her children, every single day is like Hell.

The Duke: Hell!? But every day they manage to smear their faces with make-up and drink and stuff themselves and dance!

Ann ( hysterically ): It's because they have nothing else to do! Really, it's enough to make one suffocate, the way we're living!!

Suddenly the Duchess rises from her bed and steps down to the floor, then starts walking towards the door.

Everyone stares at her, astonished.

The Duke: Mary!

Mary opens the door and goes out, her motions like that of a sleepwalker.

The Duke chases after her.

#### THE CORRIDOR

The Duke grabs and embraces the staggering Mary.

- Mary, where are you going?

Mary: I'm going to the castle gate..... to make them open it.....

The Duke: !?

Mary shakes his hands away and starts to run.

#### THE DUCHESS, IN FRONT OF THE MANOR

The front door of the manor opens, and the Duchess comes running out.

-Noel!..... James!

In the front garden are gathered John, Oscar and Everett. They look uneasy.

Mary ( running, with her hands stretched out ): .....

Hurry..... Come back, now..... I'm going to open the gate for you.....

Shouting this, Mary collapses on the path in the flowerbed.

The Duke runs over to her and, picking her up in his arms, turns back inside.

Carleton and Ann standing at the entrance.

Carleton is about to join Ann and follow behind the Duke, but he stops and turns around. There he sees a gathering of people.

They stand there looking terribly shocked.

There is something tense about John, Oscar and Everette as they push these people aside and hurriedly turn back.

Carleton sees them, then rushes into Lady Mary's room.

#### THE DUCHESS' ROOM

The Duke and Ann laying Mary to sleep on her bed.

Carleton, rushing over to the Duke,

-Your Excellency, did you see the faces of the people outside?

The Duke: What about them?

Carleton ( to Ann ): You saw them, didn't you?

Their faces..... They were all terrified!

Ann:.... Now that you mention it -

Carleton: They think the Duchess'.... Her illness  
..... they think it's.... the disease, and  
they're terribly disturbed.

The Duke: To Hell with them! If they're going to get upset, let them get upset!..... I'm worried about Mary.... Carleton, what're you going to do?

Carleton: Let's give her a sedative and let her sleep for a while. Then we can watch her condition ..... But, your Excellency, everyone in this castle needs a sedative! If you don't do something about it it'll grow out of control..... Right now the rumor about the Duchess is spreading all through the castle.... The way the Duchess looked.... her giddiness, the way she talked in delirium.... It was just like the early symptoms of ..... that disease!

#### THE BANQUET HALL

( The following scenes will proceed for a while without real sounds. And the characters will move like puppets pulled this way and that by the low, menacing sounds of percussion instruments, similar to the sounds of a clock striking the hour ).

People gathered in several clusters whispering. John, Oscar and Everett cutting through them as they rush through the room.

People following them.

The people who had been in the corridor return.

People gathering around them as they see them.

THE YELLOW ROOM

John, Oscar and Everett cross the room.  
Townspeople and landlords rise and watch them go,  
and whisper to each other.

THE BLUE ROOM

John, Oscar and Everett cross the room.  
The drunken Aston staggers after them.

THE RED ROOM

There is no one here.  
John, Oscar and Everett cross the room, and are about  
to enter the purple room. Noticing Aston following  
them, Everett shoves him away.

THE BLUE ROOM

The townspeople and the landlords enter, and see Aston  
caught in the curtain. They hesitate for a moment,  
glances, then proceed in a rush into the red room.

THE RED ROOM

The townspeople and the landlords proceed with fear  
into the next room.-----

THE GREEN ROOM

The townspeople and landlords come in.  
 And, unable to bring themselves to go into the  
 purple room, they hang about in this room restlessly.  
 From the purple room come the Duke's close followers,  
 with John, Oscar and Everett at the lead.  
 Their faces all show tension as they head into the  
 blue room. -----

THE BLUE ROOM

John, Oscar, Everett and the other retainers, along  
 with the townspeople and the landlords, cross this  
 room and head for the yellow room -----

Only Aston, who is caught in the curtain, is left  
 behind.

( At this point real sounds return )

Aston, like an insect caught in a spider's web,  
 writhes in the folds of the curtain and shouts with  
 his tongue hanging out,

-Where are you all going?..... Take me with  
 you! ..... Hey.... What's going on?.....  
 Goddamn it!....

Help!..... This looks like Heaven, but it's  
 really Hell!

The echo of a strange noise resounds.-----

When Aston hears this sound, his writhing body

stops as it is in this odd position.

#### THE BLACK ROOM

The grand clock ----- it is eleven o'clock.

Its great music box echoes with a sound like a voice from the bottom of the earth.

#### THE BANQUET HALL

There is no one here.

Duke Nicholas crosses the room alone, through the strange echo of the grand clock, looking around him as he goes.

#### THE YELLOW ROOM

There is no one here.

The Duke crosses the room.

#### THE BLUE ROOM

~~Aston is twisted in the curtain, as if crucified.~~

The Duke, ~~glancing at this,~~ heads for the red room.

#### THE RED ROOM

There is no one here.

The Duke crosses the room.

The Duke's pace quickens as he passes through each room.

THE GREEN ROOM

The Duke runs for the next room.

THE PURPLE ROOM

The Duke comes dashing in, and looks around.

There is no one here.

The Duke opens the curtain to the next room.

THE BLACK ROOM

The grand clock finishes striking eleven o'clock.

And all that is left is the sound of time being etched out to the quiet sway of the pendulum.

THE PURPLE ROOM

The Duke ----- he stands there glaring into space.

INSIDE THE CASTLE, THE SQUARE

Bootsteps are echoing over the pavingstones in the ravine-like square closed in upon by the castle manor and the walls.

The changing of the sentry guards, conducted by Clark.

As Clark and his soldiers execute this disciplined, hourly ritual they are looking to the side with an expression of incredulity.

With John, Oscar and Everett at the lead, a group

of people dressed up in evening wear comes pouring out of the manor and hurries towards the church.

### THE CHURCH

The radiant altar gleaming in candlelight.  
The gem-studded bronze crucifix and the portraits, one of Mary holding the dying Christ and one of the Saints, that decorate the altar tell, in their ancient forms, of the long tradition of this church. The Bishop is presently standing in the pulpit with a troubled face.

Brother Paul stands among the clergy surrounding the pulpit and shouts.

- Bishop, it is we who have discarded the faith! Just as you have spoken, now, in this time of disaster, is when we should be defending the majesty of God and the dignity of the Church. But now we have discarded the ones who suffer from the disaster, and indulge ourselves in this castle!

Sister Catherine: We must place ourselves in the disaster.

The Bishop: I do not have the authority to open the castle gate.

Brother George: Bishop, didn't you just say that it is wrong to place the authority of the church under

the authority of the state?.... The castle gate  
must be opened by the authority of the church!

Sister Barbara: Even if we have to leap down from the  
castle walls, we shall .....

Mother Superior Theresa: Panaticism is the faith of  
heretics.

Brother Paul: Faith without action is nothing but  
the sophistry of the immoral!

One after another they shout in argument. Their  
voices bounce from the ceiling and echo across the  
church in a strange moan.

-Quiet! Quiet!

Sir John shouts and rushes up to the pulpit.  
The church is filled to capacity with the group  
in evening clothes that has poured in in an avalache.

John: Gentlemen! Now is the time when we must think  
seriously! The situation has turned urgent!

- Oh God!

A woman's voice screams.

-What are we going to do about..... that .....  
disease!

A man's angry shout: Say it clearly! It's the plague!  
The plague has come into the castle!

Another man's voice: It's too early to say for sure!  
Maybe the Duchess just has a fever!

Another voice: Everybody wants to think so .....

However ..... that kind of thinking is dangerous!

A man's angry shout: That's right! It's because we  
reassured ourselves like that and stood about  
hesitating that we're now surrounded by the  
plague and can't even get out and run away from  
it!

John: Yes! Exactly! Now we've got to discard our  
naive optimism. We've got to look straight at  
reality and come up with a strategy. That's  
why we asked you to gather here before the Lord!

A woman's hysterical voice.

-It's all over, that's all!

John: There is a strategy. We've got to leave this  
castle. And then .....

Brother Paul: I agree!

- That's stupid!

- What'll happen to us after we leave!

- Outside the castle the plague is waiting!

Sister Catherine: We must not give in to fear.

We .....

John: Quiet! ..... It's true that just leaving here won't do any good. However, there still remains the possibility of leaving here and then breaking out of the plague-infested areas and seeking refuge in the Prince's dominions!

For an instant, all is silent.

Brother Paul and Brother George, along with Sister Catherine and Sister Barbara, consult together.

Brother Paul starts to say something.

But it is swallowed up in the roar of shouting voices.

- Your idea is naive!

- The Prince regards us as enemies!

- Even Jamison was turned back!

- It was because the Duke couldn't do that that he holed up in this castle! It's impossible!

John: It may be impossible for him, but not for me!

I pledge allegiance to the Prince!

Again all is silent.

John: Rather than surrender to the plague I would surrender to the Prince!

- The Duke won't let you!

- It's treason, that!

John: We have no choice! There's no other way to save everyone!

A woman's voice: That will save us mothers too.

We'll be able to see our children.

A man's voice: Shut up!

The woman's voice: I won't shut up! For the sake of the children's safety too, we should pledge allegiance to the Prince!

John: Exactly! If the Duchess has that ..... disease, then there is nothing to guarantee the safety of our children's lives!

- Be quiet! Be quiet! Sir John! This is rebellion!

John: There is but one way for us! Either we choose annihilation, or we rebel against my brother!

The church becomes quiet again.

John: Gentlemen! This is not merely to escape from our fear of the plague. It is to escape from my brother's curse! Unfortunately this disaster has wreaked havoc with my brother's mind. His words and actions leave no doubt that he is mad. He has even declared that he curses God and praises Satan. I cannot tolerate treason against this church, even if it be my own brother's!

The Bishop: Neither will God forgive him. The sign of his anger has appeared on the Duchess.

John: Gentlemen! Even the Lord has deserted my brother! There is no longer anything to fear from him! Gentlemen! Will you choose me, and go with the Lord? Or will you choose my brother, and go with Satan?

Hainesworth: But..... Sir John..... It's doubtful

whether the Prince will accept us just because we  
pledge him loyalty .....

John: We'll present him a written oath that makes our  
allegiance an obligation!

Simmons: That will probably not guarantee our lands and  
property.

- That's right!

- The Prince is very suspicious!

- Words and scraps of paper won't mean a thing  
to him.

John: We'll arrest my brother, and send him as a prisoner!

All is quiet again in the church.

This fearful silence is broken by the sound of hands  
clapping.

This sound, of a single person's applause, bounces  
off the domed ceiling and echoes down onto the faces  
of the crowd filling the church as they turn around  
in astonishment. Then every turned face freezes  
in shock.

Duke Nicholas is standing at the entrance of the  
church applauding.

Behind him is Carleton.

The Duke ( finishing his applause, and turning to John ):

John, that's an excellent idea! However, simply  
taking me prisoner would be too lenient. Chop  
off my head and send it as a present to the Prince!

John: ( turns white )

The Duke: That would be more pleasing to the Duke.

And I too would be more grateful. It would be better to be killed than to live in humiliation. But I suppose it would be too much to expect such mercy from you.

John: .....

The Duke, motioning Carleton to follow him, goes up to the pulpit through the crowd that splits in two to open a way for him, and climbs the steps. John and the Bishop, losing courage, let the Duke have the pulpit.

The Duke stands in the pulpit and, surveying the crowd that has filled the church,

- A splendid view! How did you manage to collect all these ashen faces! Carleton, you'd better give them all a stimulant!

Carleton climbs up to the pulpit, and stands beside the Duke.

Carleton: The Duchess' illness is not ..... that..... disease. At first glance the symptoms are similar, but as a result of the examination, I could find no signs at all of that .....disease. As a doctor, I can take responsibility in assuring you she does not have that .....disease.

The people overflowing the church give a sigh of relief. John shrinks back as if about to run away.

The Duke ( seeing him ): Someone, arrest that agitator!

The crowd stirs, but no one steps forth to arrest John.

The Duke: What are you hesitating about? Those who cannot bring themselves to arrest the traitor will be judged as his cohorts!

Hainesworth, Simmons, Fowler, Ponsenby and the other landlords and townspeople rush around John and grab him by the arms and shoulders.

#### THE SQUARE

Clark stands in front of the guardhouse by the castle gate, looking suspiciously towards the church.

Aston comes up to Clark and clings to him.

Aston: Everybody's gone! Where did they all retreat to? General!

Clark shoves him away.

Aston, tottering, looking at the sky,

- What is this! There're three moons out tonight!

~~Beyond is a brightly-lit window -- the sound of a piano.~~

#### ~~THE BALLET REHEARSAL HALL~~

~~The ballet rehearsal.~~

~~( Assembled here are the composer Hartshorne, the art director Avedon, the ballet director Chapman, his assistant Lawrence, and men and women dancers.~~

And the rehearsal in progress here is a final check for the presentation the Duke is holding this evening. It is presently being done in rehearsal clothes, but this is only to ensure that when it is finally performed with costumes, sets and props, those who see it will be shocked by the Duke's conceptions. Further the intention behind the insertion of this scene during the scene in the church, is one of stressing by counterpoint, the drama in the church. Therefore, this has to be fully thought out and appropriate music and choreography decided upon. )

Chapman: Where's His Excellency? I've got to have him see it one more time .....

The ballet rehearsal continues.

#### THE CHURCH

Marched by Hainesworth, Simmons, Fowler and Ponsenby, John makes his way through the crowd.

John ( yelling desperately ): Take me to the cellar jail, I don't care! We're all doomed in this castle anyway! Even if the plague doesn't get us, famine is waiting! Ask Whitmore!

Hainesworth and the others stop and look at each other. The crowd, with agitation in its eyes, searches for Whitmore. Whitmore, the eyes of the entire crowd on him at once, is left alone in a circle opened around him

and is thrown into confusion.

And with frightened eyes he looks up at the Duke who stands at the pulpit.

John: Whitmore, you don't have to carry my brother's favor! Tell us the truth! How much food is left?

Whitmore ( hesitating, then in a small voice ):

Another ..... two weeks .....

John: Say it loud and clear!

Whitmore: Another ..... two weeks!

The crowd's alarm does not turn into screams, but into a deep, low groan that spreads. Hainesworth and the others, struck with astonishment, let go of John.

John ( running up to the pulpit and shouting to the crowd ): Gentlemen! This is my brother's doing!

Are you willing to follow my irresponsible brother?

#### THE REHEARSAL HALL

The ballet rehearsal.

The composer Hartshorne is grumbling as he plays the piano.

- What kind of piece is this?

Avedon: The Duke's got more talent than you .....

Hartshorne: I used to be a genius, you know.

Avedon: We all used to be geniuses. But we've had to swallow our genius.

The ballet rehearsal continues.

### THE CHURCH

Lord Delmont, Chairman of the Council of Nobles, is straining his voice in the crowd.

- Gentlemen! It's a mistake to blame His Excellency alone. The first one to blame is Whitmore, who gave His Excellency a spurious report. No, we, the Council of Nobles, are responsible for having overlooked this.

John: That's not the problem! Whitmore's lies, and the Council's overlooking them, are both a result of their fearing to tell my brother the truth. The problem is my brother's reign of fear! That's what has driven us into this state.

Lord Jackson: But there's nothing to panic about. If we stop our present wasteful consumption the provisions will last a good two months. No, considering what it was like during the siege in the war .....

Lord Duffey: If the worst happens we can eat the horses .....

Hainesworth: I know Whitmore! He's got more than enough provisions hidden away for himself somewhere!

A yelling voice: There's all the food you want!

Everyone looks back.

In the church entrance stands the tottering Aston.

Aston: Let's get everyone fat, let them all eat as much as they can! In the worst case we can eat each other, starting with the fattest!

Everyone is taken aback.

Aston: Beasts kill each other in order to eat.  
But men kill each other without eating that flesh! Men are stupid! The end of fighting always brings a famine. It's because men won't eat the men they've killed!

The church is in an uproar.

- You're drunk!

- Throw him out!

Several people grab Aston.

Aston: What're you doing! I'm too thin! I'm only good for soup!

The Bishop shouts.

~~ALL WHISPER~~ Everyone! Quiet, please! Let's listen to what Sir John has to say! Sir John has grasped the crux of the problem. It's the problem of the soul of the man who leads this castle. Our road will be a dark one while we are under the domination of this arrogant, heretical soul that fears not even God. Everyone, now is the time when we must open our eyes.

-Amen!

Aston has started yelling again.

Aston: In the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost, you all eat shit! Even if you open your eyes, all you can see in this castle is the disgusting conduct of men floundering madly trying to forget the plague! How could there be a soul in a place like this! All there is is man's rotten guts hanging out for all to see! Your Grace! When the Abbot of our Monastery gets hold of one of the nuns he seduces her by telling her God's blessings lie in pleasures of the flesh!

The Bishop stands bolt upright.

~~THE REHEARSAL ROOM~~

~~The ballet rehearsal.~~

Chapman: I can't understand what His Excellency is doing. Anyway this ballet is just too grotesque.

Hartshorne: The Duke's personality is grotesque, that's why.

Avedon: Everything human beings do is grotesque.

The ballet rehearsal continues.

#### THE CHURCH

Sister Catharine is shouting.

-This is a church. Let's refrain from obscene talk here!

Brother Paul: No. Now is the time for repentance, for each of us to get down on our knees and confess our sins.

Aston: That won't work. Ladies and gentlemen! Can you confess that you sleep with someone different every night!

The church is quiet for a moment, then turns into an uproar as everyone begins to shout.

John ( shouting frantically ): Quiet! Quiet! This is no time to pay attention to the rantings of

a drunkard. We are in an urgent situation! The need for decision is pressing upon us! Shall we stay in this castle and wait for death? Or shall we leave this castle and seek life? We are facing a famine - even Whitmore's words make this clear. And we can't believe Carleton's words that the Duchess doesn't have the plague. Because Whitmore has hidden the truth in his fear of my brother. And Carleton too may be hiding the truth, either because he is afraid of my brother or because he was forced to!

The church is quiet again.

John: I am going to leave here right now. Gentlemen! Are you going to come with me, or are you going to stay with my brother? The choice is yours!

John comes down from the pulpit, and heads for the door with an air of resolve.

Oscar and Everett follow him.

The congregation stirs and begin to move as if pulled by John's spell.

The Duke: The castle gate won't open! I shall not permit disorder within the castle! I shall order the Bodyguards to shoot anyone who follows John.

The crowd halts. Seeing this, John, Oscar and Everett stand rooted to the spot.

Ann, the Chief Lady-in-Waiting, comes running in from the entrance, her face ashen.

Ann: Your Excellency! Your Excellency!

The Duke: What is it?

Ann: On Lady Mary's face..... the black spots....

The Duke: !? ( looks at Carleton's face )

A shiver of fear goes through the crowd.

#### THE DUCHESS' ROOM

The Duchess' face as she sleeps.

Black spots on her pale, white face.

The ladies-in-waiting clustered in a corner of the room are watching her, terrified.

Lady-in-waiting A: I'm scared..... that... disease...  
you can catch it just be looking at someone who  
has it.

Lady-in-waiting B: That's ridiculous....

Lady-in-waiting A: But Lady Mary looked outside  
the castle... that's why she.....

Lady-in-waiting B: Certainly she got sick because she  
looked outside the castle. But it's because what  
she saw outside the castle was so horrifying.  
It made her faint and gave her a fever.

Lady-in-waiting C: Shh! That's secret..... If the  
Duke gets word of it we'll be in big trouble.

Suddenly one of them begins to laugh in a high-pitched voice.

The others stare at her astonished, and pull back in fright.

Lady-in-waiting A: It is the disease....

She's got it too....

Lady-in-waiting D: No, stupid.....take a good look...  
at those....

Black spots are swaying over the Duchess' face as she sleeps.

The moonlight streaming through the lace curtains on the window is casting shadows on the Duchess.

#### THE WINDOW

The curtain sways in the wind.

Far in the distance are the shrill notes of a bugle.

#### THE CASTLE WALLS

The bugle notes are bouncing off the walls.

#### THE BARRACKS

Officers and soldiers straightening their armor as they rush out ----- their footsteps, sounds of steel implements clanking together, voices shouting orders.

IN FRONT OF THE CASTLE GATE

A guard playing the bugle in front of the guard-  
room.

Guards hurrying into formation in front of Clark,  
who stands beside him.

Clark glares to the side as he waits impatiently  
for the guards to fall into rank.

IN FRONT OF THE CHURCH

With the crowd behind them, John, Oscar and Everett  
stand in front of the Duke and Carleton, blocking  
their way.

The Duke: Get out of my way! Let us through!

John: Don't let them through! Enough of their  
arbitrary action!

The Duke: I'm going to Mary's room, to have Carleton  
diagnose her.

John: We have no more use for Carleton's diagnoses!

The Duke: Guards! Guards!

THE SQUARE

Clark comes running with a column of guards  
behind him, their footsteps echoing on the  
pavingstones.

IN FRONT OF THE CHURCH

John (pointing to the Duke and Carleton): Arrest  
these two! These two plotted together to expose

us to the danger of the plague!

Fear of the plague is about to turn the crowd into a violent mob.

They begin to stir at John's words, and several of the men push to the front of the crowd as if in a spasm of anger.

Standing between the two opposing groups and watching this development is Aston.

With sobriety completely restored to his face, he shouts in a tone of command.

Aston: Stop! You're making a mistake! Gentlemen!  
Wait! With my intuition as a poet I can feel a  
dirty, sordid undertone in Sir John's words!  
He's dangerous! Sir John is the plague!

In the next moment John lunges at Aston and his sword pierces Aston's breast.

Aston collapses without a sound onto the stone pavement. His blood spurts over the pavement and gathers in a spreading stream.

The Chief Lady-in-Waiting, Ann, who has been standing beside Aston, gives a blood-curdling scream.

The other women in the crowd, frightened by Ann's voice and sensing that something has happened, begin screaming strangely, even the ones who cannot see.

And the men who have seen blood with their own eyes

lose control of themselves and impulsively draw their swords.

Panic ----- crowd psychology plunges into a spasm of fury.

John shouts something to the crowd, but ~~one~~ cannot hear what he is saying.

People begin to scream something all at once. Screams drown out other screams, and one cannot tell what they are saying ----- only a strange whirl of screaming voices ----- only faces, faces and more faces bewitched with the madness.

Into this confusion rush the Bodyguards led by Clark, and the officers and soldiers who have come running from the barracks.

They wedge their way in between the Duke and the crowd and form a wall to protect him.

But this merely intensifies the crowd's frenzy. Their violent strength strains against the wall of Bodyguards and sets it swaying.

The soldiers, overwhelmed by this strength, are terrified and fire their rifles into the air defensively.

Rifle fire echoing from the castle walls.

For a moment the awesome sound silences the crowd.

Clark ( threading his way through the crowd ): What's going on, Your Excellency?

The Duke ( not answering him, surveying the crowd ):

I've had enough! I'm disgusted with all of you!  
I have nothing more to say!

The Duke points to Aston, who lies at his feet.

-Everything I have to say has been said by this man!

Cries of dissatisfaction rise from the entire crowd.

The Duke, surveying them coldly,

-No, there is one more thing I have to say. I didn't bring you here. You came running into this castle seeking my help. I closed the castle gate for you. But you're free to leave! That's all!

There is a cold truth in the Duke's words. But they have the effect of making the humiliated crowd's emotions cool toward him and alienating them from him. This effect starts as an uncomfortable silence, then gradually turns into dissatisfied grumbling, then finally explodes as anger.

-This is an insult!

-No, it's a threat!

-Now we can see what was in the Duke's mind!

-If you're telling us to get out, then we'll go!

-Let's go! To the Prince's!

Encouraged, Oscar shouts,

-We support Sir John!

Everett promptly shouts,

-We demand that the Bodyguards swear allegiance  
to Sir John!

Cheering voices!

The Bodyguards do not move.

-Have the Bodyguards forgotten? Have they  
forgotten that the Duke betrayed them!?

-That's right! Who was it who left Captain  
Jamison to die?

-That's right! And what about his men!

And what about Captain Sheffield!

The Bodyguards remain still.

But in their restrained silence there is no longer  
any resolve, but now a shadow of dejection and  
defear. Seeing this, Oscar and Everett give a wild  
cheer and raise John up onto their shoulders.  
The crowd rushes toward them.

-Long live Sir John!

Cheering voices!

John swaying up on the crowd's shoulders, amidst  
the resounding cheers.

Rather than intoxicating himself on the spectacular turn of events that has brought him victory, he watches the Duke with a pale, intimidated look on his face.

The Duke stands there glaring back at John. On his mask-like face, that shows no hint of agitation, there is a cold, self-derisive smile. Aston's blood crawls toward the Duke's feet.

#### THE REHEARSAL ROOM

Everyone crowds around the window and is looking outside.

-What is it?

-What happened?

-There're a lot of people gathered in front of the church, and there's some kind of commotion going on.

-Someone's fallen!

-It must be someone who was shot trying to look outside the castle again.

-Just looking isn't going to do a damn thing.

-Come on, back to rehearsal!

The ballet rehearsal.

THE GALLOWES

The moon is caught inside the noose.

THE CELLAR JAIL

It is unexpectedly bright here.

Of course, since it is a cellar jail, the building itself is dark and gloomy.

A few candles flicker, but mostly there are shadows; the black stripes of the iron bars stream through and shadow what brightness there is, and the stone walls gleam moist and cold. But the prisoners' spirits are unexpectedly high. They talk to each other in defiant tones. The guard looks on tolerantly, saying nothing. Here is a line of cells facing the corridor, with iron bars on one side. But, other than the door of iron bars that leads to the corridor, all the doors to the cells are left open. The prisoners use this space freely, just as if the entire area were one common cell.

There are twelve prisoners in here - Captain Sheffield of the Bodyguards, six soldiers, three slaves who had probably been used as servants in the castle, a clown who wears a hood of alternating black and red colors and a little devil's costume with a tail, and one other prisoner, a somehow

fearful man with hair down to his shoulders, a mustache and beard, and a sharp gleam in his eyes. Six soldiers and Sheffield emerge from one of the cells.

The soldier Sebastian ( to Sheffield ): This talk about hanging - it's an empty threat.

The soldier Malcolm: Even if it's true, we don't know when they'll actually do it. So you might as well sit back and relax.

The soldier Bernard: There's a guy here who was ordered to be hung fifteen years ago. They just forgot about him, and he's been here ever since.

Saying this, he turns up his nose.

The bearded man with the long hair ( Peter ) who has been crouching in a corner of the corridor gazing into space, now staring with piercing eyes,

-Fifteen years, fifteen years and seventy-one days!

The soldier Bernard: This guy gets mad no matter what you says.

The soldier Theodore: I'm not surprised. You'd get mad too if you were made to wait so long.

The soldier Jacob ( to Peter ): Then why don't you just neatly hang yourself?

Peter: If I could bring myself to commit suicide, I'd  
kill somebody else first.

The soldier Jacob: Who're you going to kill?

Peter: That's a tough question. There're too many I'd  
like to kill.

The soldier Jacob (to Sheffield, who shrugs his shoulders  
as he stares at Peter's bearded face): This guy's  
a runaway slave, but he's interesting, he says  
ridiculous things..... soldiers, kill the aristocrats,  
farmers, kill the landlords, poor people,  
kill the merchants, thieves, kill the officials!  
Smash the castles and the churches and the mansions!.....

The soldier Tom: He's crazy!

- Sometimes it's the crazy ones who tell the truth.

Sheffield looks in the direction of the voice. The  
clown wearing the devil's costume (Bartholemew) is  
mumbling, as if speaking to himself, in one of the  
cells as he sews something that looks like a garment.

The clown: No. When you tell the truth they say you're  
crazy!

The soldier Sebastian (to Sheffield): This guy was thrown  
in here just for telling the truth.

Sheffield: I know... He called Sir John Sir Plague.

The soldier Sebastian: He's got a way with words. Really...  
The Duke may be cruel, but there's something  
honest about him. But Sir John sneaks around

just like a rat.... And they say it's the rats  
that bring the plague.

Tom teases the three slave servants who are standing  
together.

- Hey you, tell us something to kill our boredom.

Slave A: We've told you everything we have to tell.

The soldier Tom: Then tell us about what you saw outside  
the castle.

Slave B: What do you mean! You're the ones who grabbed  
us before we could get a look outside the castle.

The soldier Tom: Ha ha ha.... In a moment I would have  
killed you....

- Why did you do such a reckless thing?

The soldier Bernard: If you're told not to look,  
it just makes you want to look.

- No.

The clown Bartholemew cuts in.

- They didn't want to look but they couldn't  
keep from looking.... Poor bastards.... They've  
got wives and children outside the castle!

Slave B: (to the soldiers): It's you who have something  
to tell us.... The soldiers get up on the castle  
walls, they have to look outside even if they  
don't want to, don't they?..... What's going on  
outside?

The soldier Malcolm (turning his face away from the slaves):

It's a beautiful sight ..... Flowers blooming all over!

The soldier Jacob ( suddenly, in a bellow ): Hey, guard!

It's dark in here! Light some candles!

Guard: Don't ask for the impossible! There're only a few candles left in the castle.

The soldier Jacob: What! And in spite of that they're using candles like bathwater in the manor and the church!

Peter: Smash the castles and the churches and the manors!

The soldier Theodore: That's right! Let it be pitch black in the castle! Hey, guard! It doesn't matter. Light all the candles!

Guard: No, I can't. I can't light any more candles than this. It's orders.

The soldier Theodore: You cowards! You're a bunch of disgusting worms! We'll never forget how you shot at us when we tried to open the castle gate to get out and save the Captain. And then you throw us into a hole like this! Just wait, you bastards! The first thing we do when we get out of here will be to beat you to death!

Guard: Wait. I'll go get some candles.

The soldiers cheer.

- I told you so!

The clown: While you're up, get us the moon too!

The soldiers burst into laughter.

- That's a good one!

Suddenly, however, the soldiers stop laughing, and stand rooted to the spot. The Duke, stripped of his sidesword, is standing on the other side of the bars, escorted by two of the Bodyguards. Beside him, as if in attendance on him, is Clark. Behind him, Oscar is holding Carleton by his arms.

The guard shows astonishment on his face. The prisoners, leaving Sheffield behind, hurry back into their cells and slam the doors.

Clark: (to the guard): Unlock the door!

The guard, his heart pounding, unlocks the door. Led in by Clark, the Duke enters the cell corridor flanked by Bodyguards and followed by Carleton whose arms are held by Oscar.

Sheffield steps aside, and looks at Clark with a questioning glance. Clark, showing no sign of response, goes to the entrance of the cell that Sheffield shortly before came out of and, standing beside it, clicks his heels and salutes the Duke.

The Duke enters the cell.

Clark, to the guard as he shuts the door,

- The key!

The guard rushes over to Clark and holds out the bunch of keys to him.

Clark ( not touching it ): Lock it!

The sound of the door being locked by the confused guard echoes strangely in the once again approaches Sheffield who is standing there stupefied.

- Captain, you are released.

Sheffield: !?

Oscar shoves Carleton at the guard.

- Throw this one in an empty cell and lock the door!

Then, throwing out his chest, he shouts,

- All the others are released! Gentlemen!  
You are released! Each of you return to  
your station! This is by the decision of  
Sir John! Long live Sir John!

#### THE BANQUET HALL

As the band plays an inspiring march and the people who have filled the banquet hall clap in booming applause, John rises from his chair at the foot of the curtain on the dais.

John: Gentlemen! It is too early to be drunk with  
victory. If we are to celebrate our victory,  
let us do it at the Prince's!

Cherring voices.

Lord Delmont, Chairman of the Council of Nobles,  
restraining him,

- But Sir John, you can't usurp us of even  
the right to toast the new Duke of this Duchy!

Hainesworth: Exactly as you say! And furthermore,  
Sir John, we must raise a toast to celebrate  
our departure tomorrow.

Aristocratic lady A: How true! Tonight is our last  
night in this castle! It will be farewell  
to this Hell! How cruel it would be not to  
let us celebrate. Sir John!

Aristocratic lady B: We shall be seeing our children  
again soon. Isn't that right, Sir John?

John ( nodding deeply ): Of course.

Woman's cheering voices.

A woman's voice: Everyone, let us dance this night  
through to dawn!

John: The way the ladies badger me I have no choice.

Cheering voices.

- A feast!

- Wine!

Whitmore: Open the warehouse! Bring everything out!  
It would be a waste to leave it behind!

The bandleader shakes his baton.

Cheerful music begins to play.

People going this way and that in preparations for  
the banquet.

People starting to dance.

In a corner of the hall, the monks, Brother Paul and Brother George, and the nuns, Sister Catherine and Sister Barbara, look at each other and leave.

#### THE SQUARE

The freed prisoner Peter stands looking up at the gallows.

#### THE CELLAR JAIL

The Duke and the clown in the devil's costume, with iron bars between them.

The clown: .....And then I shouted at him to go  
and get the moon ..... Then instead of the  
moon he caught Your Excellency.

The Duke: Were you surprised?

The clown: I'm a clown. If you tell me to be  
surprised, I can act as surprised as you  
want me to.

The Duke: Are you telling me it's no surprise that  
this should happen to me?

The clown: Lately with your Excellency its been either  
stringing them up or being strung up. To put it  
simply, you should have had him dangling long  
ago.

The Duke: You mean John?

The clown: That's right. ( looks at his clothes )  
He's the one who should be wearing these, he'd  
look perfect in them.

The Duke (staring at the clown): By the way, they released you so how come you haven't left?

The clown: I refuse to go! Right now the guys in this castle are in a state that's no laughing matter. So they want to laugh. So they work me, the clown, to the bones. Well, making people laugh may be my business, but even a clown is a human being too ..... with a wife and children ..... heh heh heh. There is no smile on the clown's face, ..... They're all outside the castle .....

The clown suddenly starts to whistle, and crouches down to continue his sewing.

#### THE BANQUET HALL

The banquet is at its height.

- Cheers!

The glass is thrown behind.

Glasses flying and scattering.

A mountain of broken glasses.

A whirl of dancing.

The dancers are all possessed with a strange excitement, and dance madly.

The Chief Lady-in-Waiting, Ann, hurries through the crowd and approaches John. But ~~now~~ no one either notices or pays any attention to her.

Ann makes a quiet sign to John who is on the dais,

surrounded by many people, calls him over and whispers something in his ear. In the din of the music and the loud voices talking and noisily laughing, Ann's whispering voice cannot be heard at all. But Oscar, who is joking with someone slightly to John's side, is astonished by the expression of shock on John's face as he listens to Ann.

Oscar casually disengages from his conversation and approaches John.

John, with Ann, hurries into the yellow room. When Oscar sees this, he takes Everett, who, unaware of anything has been raising his wine glass to his lips, by the arm and together they follow John into the yellow room.

#### THE YELLOW ROOM

Oscar and Everett enter.

They go up to John, who is standing in a corner facing Ann.

Oscar: Sir John, what's going on?

John ( his face pale ): Nothing, nothing at all. Lady Mary does not have the plague!

Oscar: What! ( to Ann ) You saw her, didn't you?

Her .....

Ann: I was too shocked to ..... I hurried out ..... But the black spots on Lady Mary's face were shadows from the curtain.

Oscar and Everett ( almost simultaneously ): Goddamn it!

Ann: But it's all right, really.....

John: ( glares at Ann, snarling ).

Ann: !?

John ( to Oscar and Everett ): It'll be a hell of a problem if this gets out.

Everett: It's all right. They've come with you this far ( motions with his chin towards the banquet hall ), so they'll stay behind you. It doesn't matter whether Lady Mary's got the plague or not.

John: No, it was the plague that got them to rebel in the first place. It was because they thought that my brother was hiding it with his power, and exposing them to the plague, that they blew up and finally rebelled. What if they find out now that Mary doesn't have the plague, just like my brother said! What will happen to me, who used the plague as a means to condemn my brother?

Everett: But it's too late for them to discard you and go with the Duke. Do you think the crowd's emotions are going to flip around at some slight whim after they've been stirred up so greatly?

Oscar: Wait! What's got them stirred up so greatly now is the Duchess' plague. The fear that the plague has gotten into the castle too! It's gotten them so worked up that it's made them forget both their fear of the Duke and their fear of the plague

outside the castle! Do you see! It's this blind movement of the crowd that's essential to our plans! We've got to use this power calmly and coolly.

But the three of them have lost their calm as they face this serious turns of events, and have forgotten Ann's existence. Ann is dumbfounded at the words the three have exchanged.

John: All right! Mary's got the plague! If we say she's got the plague then she's got it!

Ann tries to slip out.

The three of them notice her, give a start, and rush over to block her way.

Ann, her lips trembling, tries to scream something but her voice fails her, and she dashes away.

Oscar chases her.

#### THE BLUE ROOM

Ann, running.

Oscar chasing her.

#### THE RED ROOM

Ann runs across the room, followed by Oscar in chase. The monks, Brother Paul and Brother George, and the nuns, Sister Catherine and Sister Barbara, who are

gathered at a table in the corner, raise their eyes, and watch Ann and Oscar. John and Everett, chasing Ann and Oscar, cross in front of them.

#### THE GREEN ROOM

John and Everett cross the room.

#### THE PURPLE ROOM

John and Everett come rushing in.

There is no one in the room.

But the curtain separating this room from the black room is swaying.

A scream!

John and Everett stand rooted to the spot, staring at the curtain. Oscar comes from behind the curtain, holding a bloody sword.

Oscar: Let's go. There's no time to stand around hesitating.

John ( looking towards the curtain ): Is it safe to leave her there?

Oscar: Nobody's going to go into that ghastly room.

The three of them, turning back, open the curtain to the green room. and stop with shock.

THE GREEN ROOM

The monks Brother Paul and Brother George, and the nuns, Sister Catherine and Sister Barbara, are standing there. They tremble as they see the bloody sword Oscar holds. The three men and the four monks and nuns, pale as they stare at each other. The boisterous noise from the banquet hall, and the music -----

THE BANQUET HALL

The frenzied party.

THE PURPLE ROOM

John, Oscar and Everett dragging the four monks and nuns into the Black Room.

THE BLACK ROOM

The grand clock shows twelve o'clock.

THE PURPLE ROOM

The music from the clock resounds.  
Having come out of the Black Room, John, Oscar and Everett react to the strange sound by looking at each other with faces full of tension.

THE BANQUET HALL

Here too, the sound of the grand clock dominates.  
The people show the same reaction as they did when

they heard it sound ten o'clock. In their appearance is a sense of fear, the fear of people who have peered into the abyss of death, and from that abyss have had their own hearts peered into. And when the grand clock finishes sounding twelve o'clock, the people, just as they did at ten o'clock, look at each other with chilled expressions on their faces, and raise their voices in deliberate laughter and begin to stir and squirm as at the lifting of a curse. The ballet director Chapman comes in.

Chapman: Everyone, quiet please!

We will now give a performance for his Excellency.

Excuse me, but could you please give us some space in the hall and take your seats? Your Excellency,.... may we begin?

Everyone bursts into laughter. The chairs on the dais

----- John returns, sits down and quickly sips some wine.

John ( to Chapman ): Begin!

Chapman: Certainly..... But, where is the Duke?

John: I am the Duke!

Cheering voices.

THE CELLAR JAIL

The Duke inside his cell.

- Carleton...Carleton.... Can you hear me?

Carleton in another cell.

- Yes your Excellency.

The Duke: Do you think it's true what Ann said?

Carleton: I am convinced that it is some kind of mistake  
..... As a doctor I can assure you.....

Your Excellency, there is nothing to worry about.

The clown: When a doctor says don't worry, it means you  
can start building your coffin.

The Duke looks at the clown with a bitter smile.

The clown sits in the corridor, and is sewing something,  
as always.

The Duke: What the Hell are you sewing?

The clown: My death suit. There's no way they're going  
to let me into Heaven, the way I look now.

He shakes the tail of his costume with his other hand  
as he says this.

The red pointed devil's tail.

THE BANQUET HALL

The ballet begins.

The dance of the bewitched.

The head of a horse and the body of a bird.

The head of bird and the body of a horse.

The head of a pig and the body of a lion. The head of a fish and the body of a rat. Etc., etc.

These costume with their bizarre combinations of heads and bodies, and their movements are not in the least humorous, but strangely vivid, with the feeling that they are exposing the grotesque aspects of humanity. Everyone stares at this bizarre dance as if struck with fright.

John watching from his chair on the dais, his eyes glaring. He nervously sips some wine again.

#### THE DUCHESS' ROOM

The curtain throws shadows on the Duchess' face as she sleeps on her bed.

A hurried noise. .

The sound of a window being shut.

The sound of something being nailed down.

The sound of footsteps running around.

A scream.

Mary, about to awaken, makes a motion.

The shadows on her face faintly sway - they waver like the simmering of hot air, and gradually become enveloped in pink.

Mary opens her eyes.

Smoke is trailing faintly over Mary's bed.

The sound of something exploding.

The pink that has enveloped Mary turns for a moment

into scarlet.

The curtain by the window burns up, and the flames lick the ceiling.

Mary raises herself to a sitting position, and looks around as if she is still in a dream.

One of her ladies-in-waiting comes rushing in.

-Madam.....Hurry!.....

As she says this, she takes Mary by the hand and pulls her out of the bed.

-Hurry....This way....

Mary, as she shakes the hand away,

-Where are Noel? And James?

-Madam!

#### THE GARDEN

The Duchess' manor, in flames.

Soldiers running around it with torches.

The entrance door, boarded up with planks of wood, is knocked at from inside; it grates as it is furiously pushed at.

#### THE BARRACKS

Clark and Sheffield rush out, with the other officers and soldiers.

Seeing the flames shooting up behind the castle manor, they begin to run.

Sheffield, looking around the square as he runs,

- What's going on!? There isn't a single bodyguard  
anywhere!

Clark: !?

#### ON TOP OF THE CASTLE WALL

In the dark shadows of the watchfires, Peter looks  
down, with a glimmer in his eyes.

He watches Sheffield and the others as they run off,  
then stands up and from the parapet looks outside the  
castle.

#### OUTSIDE THE CASTLE, THE VIEW FROM ABOVE

Mountains and rivers of corpses as far as the eye  
can see. This landscape, with its revolting stench,  
spreads in the moonlight.

#### THE BANQUET HALL

The ballet - the dance of the bewitched continues.

A woman's scream.

The window facing the rear courtyard is enveloped in  
bright red by the color of the flames.

Everyone rises at once.

John rises from his chair and shouts.

- Quiet! ..... Gentlemen! There's nothing to get  
upset about. The Bodyguards are working in order ..

to protect you all from the plague....Continue!

Everyone sits down, their eyes on the windows enveloped in red.

John: Continue!

The dance of the bewitched.

#### THE DUCHESS' MANOR

The children's room.

In a whirl of flames and smoke, the Duchess writhes like a butterfly bewitched by the fire.

Then she falls.

#### THE GARDEN

In the flowerbed where the light from the flames reflects, soldiers with torches stand surrounding the Duchess' manor from a distance, as it rises in flames. Clark, Sheffield and the others come running over, trampling the flowerbed.

Clark, to the officer in charge of the soldiers,

- Lewis. What the Hell are you doing!?

The officer Lewis: It's orders, Sir.

Sheffield: What do you mean, orders? I'm the Captain, I give the orders!

A hand touches Sheffield on the shoulder.

Sheffield turns around.

Oscar is standing there.

Oscar: I gave the orders. No, these are orders from Sir John. Houses that the plague has struck must be burned.

Sheffield: But, this is the Duchess'.....

Oscar: The Duchess has the plague. The plague is the plague, even if it's the Duchess who has it.

Clark: (is about to say something)

The entrance door collapses as if burst open and the Duchess' ladies-in-waiting come rushing out madly.

Lady-in-waiting A: .... Hurry!... Get Lady Mary...Hurry!

Lady-in-waiting B: ....Lady Mary doesn't have the plague  
.... It's a mistake... Those black spots were...

Oscar (hurriedly shouts): Shoot them! Shoot them!

They've all got the plague! Don't let them get any closer!

Clark tries to shout something.

But the frightened soldiers open fire on the ladies-in-waiting.

#### THE BANQUET HALL

Everyone rising again, at once.

John: Gentlemen! Calm down! The Bodyguards know how to take care of the plague! All right, continue!

The ballet.

The head of a dog, and brooms for feet-  
Bodyguard Crests come dancing out in a line to a  
macabre rhythm.

John: This is amusing! The dance of the Bodyguards!

#### THE GARDEN

The Duchess' manor is an inferno of flames.  
Clark and Oscar glaring at each other, with the  
burning manor in the background.  
Behind Clark, Sheffield and the soldiers.

Clark: Is the Duchess in there?

Oscar: Is this an interrogation? I am acting for Sir John  
now. A subordinate officer does not have the  
right to interrogate me.

Sheffield takes a step forward.

- Then I, the Commander of the Bodyguards, will  
ask you. Is the Duchess in there?

Oscar: I repeat, the plague is the plague. Furthermore,  
the Duchess no longer has consciousness.

Clark: There's no mistake about what you say?

Oscar: Of couse not!

Clark: Then you are a murderer!

Oscar: What!?

Clark: I saw the Duchess approximately an hour ago.

Oscar: !?

Clark: Not only I, but also the sentries on duty between ten and eleven o'clock were also there and saw her.

Oscar: .....

Clark: The Duchess came with her ladies-in-waiting to look outside the castle.

Oscar: What! That is forbidden! Offenders will be punished! And the sentries who overlooked it are guilty of the same crime!

Clark: The sentries have committed no crime. I'm the one responsible for their overlooking it.

Oscar: Then you are to be hung!

Clark: That's right. But you are to be hung too.

Oscar: !?

Clark: You stated that the Duchess had already lost consciousness. But an hour ago we saw the Duchess with our own eyes as she climbed the castle walls in order to look outside the castle. A person who had lost consciousness could not have done that.

Oscar: .....

Clark: You are a murderer. You lied, and you murdered the Duchess. And then you ordered the Duchess' ladies-in-waiting to be shot even though you heard them shout that the Duchess didn't have the plague!

Oscar: .....

Clark, who has been glaring at Oscar, turns sharply away from him and walks off.

Sheffield (as he watches him): Where are you going?

Clark: I'm going to the cellar jail. I'm to be hung.

- Don't! Don't!

- You can't do that!

Shout arise from among the soldiers.

The ones shouting are the soldiers in Clark's brigade.

- If you're going to be hung, we're going to be hung too!

- This guy's the only one who's going to be hung!

Soldiers jump on Oscar.

Peter's face, watching them from between the flowers.

#### THE BANQUET HALL

The ballet.

The dancers with heads of dogs and brooms for legs withdraw, and a huge, ugly, bizarre fish appears.

And, splitting open its belly, dancers come out of it.

They are a grotesque company of pale naked bodies, wearing masks of various human desires.

The people frown at the sight.

A woman's voice: This is too disgusting! Sir John!

Please make them stop!

John (restraining her): Gentlemen! This is His Excellency

my brother! This cruel smile of derision and

malice is the proof of my brother's madness!

THE SQUARE

Oscar is escorted in by Lewis and his brigade.

Surrounding them are Clark's brigade and the soldiers who had been in the cellar jail ( Sebastian, Malcolm, Bernard, Theodore, Jacob and Tom).

They throng around them and throw out insults.

Sebastian: Really splendid, ain't he! He acts just like a worm!

Theodore: You really did a miserable thing! You coward!

The officer Lewis: Shut up! Be quiet!

Jacob: Hmn! Acting big like that! Some officer you are! Go report this to the Duke! Tell him you went and burned the Duchess to death!

The officer Lewis: .....

Peter comes running up, and points at Oscar.

Peter: What're you going to do with this guy?

Malcolm: Send him to the jail above ground!

Peter: String him up right now!

The soldiers look at each other.

Oscar turns white.

Peter runs over and stands below the gallows.

The officer Lewis (in a low voice, to his subordinates):

Hurry up!

Oscar's brigade quicken their pace as they escort him.

Seeing this, the faces of the soldiers surrounding them turn furious.

#### THE BANQUET HALL

The ballet.

Men, wearing priests' hoods and masks of oxen, and women, wearing nuns' hoods and masks of pigs, dance wildly in a ring around a fallen angel in the center, who wears an angel's costume on the upper half of his body and a devil's on the lower half of his body. The Bishop, the Abbot of the Monastery and the Mother Superior of the Nunnery wave their hands in furious protest.

But their voices are drowned out in the crescendo of music, and their behavior makes them look instead like the characters in this ballet.

No one can restrain from laughing; Hainesworth, Simmons, and the others hold their bellies in laughter.

John rises from his chair on the dais, and shouts something, but this also is lost in the laughter and music, and cannot be heard.

In a corner of the banquet hall, Sheffield and Clark, who had been intently watching John, look at each other and rush out.

#### THE SQUARE

Lewis comes running over, hatless, his hair dissheveled, his clothes ripped pitifully.

To Sheffield and Clark, who have come out of the manor,

- It's a rebellion! Captain!

Screaming, shouting voices.

Sheffield and Clark look.

The soldiers swarming near the guard-house by the castle gate are in an uproar.

Clark's brigade falls into a circle formation; in the center Lewis's brigade group together defensively as the group that was in the cellar jail shove at them, punch at them and swear at them.

Jacob: You bastards aren't soldiers! You're pigs!

Sebastian: You're not worth hanging!

Theodore (punching at someone): Shit! Maybe we ought to burn you the way you burned her!

Malcolm: You're trembling, you goddamned murderers!

Sheffield and Clark come running over, look to the side, and stop.

The gallows - Oscar is hanging there.

#### THE CHURCH

Peter stands up straight alone in front of the altar.

Snatching a candle from its stand, he looks around.

#### THE CELLAR JAIL

A guard peers into the corridor surprised.

Sheffield is in the corridor, unlocking the door to the Duke's cell.

Beside him, the clown, with his sewing spread over his knees, is staring intently into the cell.

The Duke inside the cell makes no move to leave even though Sheffield has unlocked the door, but stands there pale as death, his eyes fixed on the space before him.

Sheffield, after unlocking the door, straightens his posture and stands there erect.

The Duke's lips are drawn and twitching.

- .....What about Mary!?

Sheffield: I am responsible!

The Duke does not even glance at Sheffield, but remains motionless, staring into space.

Sheffield salutes the Duke, and heads for the exit.

The clown, watching him leave.

Sheffield hands the guard the keys at the exit, and, taking his rifle from him, leaves.

The guard, who has been looking at him suspiciously, takes a startled step forward.

The sound of a rifle shot!

The sound echoes off the stone wall, and thrusts through the cellar jail.

#### THE SQUARE

Clark and the group of soldiers, who have been facing each other hostilely, all look now in the direction of the cellar jail, and run over to it.

THE CELLAR JAIL. THE EXIT.

Sheffield fallen at the foot of the stone steps, with a rifle pointed at his breast.

Clark and the soldiers, who have come running down, through the steep and narrow stone steps, and stand there looking down at Sheffield.

THE CELLAR JAIL. THE CORRIDOR.

The Duke comes out from his cell.

The clown rises and dances for joy.

The clown: Beat them up! Beat them up! This time we're going to laugh!

THE CHURCH

The altar is burning.

THE BANQUET HALL

The ballet.

In an appropriate finale, all the characters who have appeared are dancing in a confused disorder.

But now each of them wears a bright red flame of cloth on his back, with arrows in their eyes, swords in their breasts, or with their necks strung together with rope, or their bellies skewered together with spears. They dance wildly in these bizarre costumes.

It is a macabre and Satanic scene, just like the painting on the altar of a secret heretical religious sect.

But each of the spectators raises a cry of indignation.

The scene becomes chaotic, and the banquet hall turns into a crucible of frenzy.

Everett makes his way running through the crowd, and whispers something to John, who stands straight as a stick as he looks around the hall.

John: What!? The Bodyguards have surrounded this manor!?

Everett: Yes, Sir. They are deployed, with rifles ready!

John: That can't be! Call Oscar, call Oscar!

Everett: He's not here!

John: What's he doing! Go find him!

#### THE GARDEN

The Duchess' manor is half burned down. In the flower garden around it are scattered the corpses of her ladies-in-waiting.

In this piteous scene are the shadows of two men standing, seen from the back.

Everett comes running in, and asks the two,

- Have you seen Oscar Hamilton?

A black shadow answers,

- He's in the square.

Everett: Where in the square?

- Hanging from the gallows.

Everett: !?

One of the black shadows turns around.

Everett: Carleton!?..... How the Hell did you get out?

The other black shadow turns around.

Everett: Your Excellency!?

Everett stares and recoils as if he has seen a ghost. The soldiers led by Clark come running over, surround the manor and fall into formation around it.

The Duke (still staring at Everett): Clark, lend me your sword!

#### THE BANQUET HALL

The ballet director Chapman stands in the center, in a barrage of dishes and food.

Chapman: ... All I did, was, I loyally.... followed His Excellency's instructions, and put on this ballet....

But Chapman's voice as he says this can only be heard intermittently as the furious insults of the crowd drown him out.

The angry crowd suddenly becomes quiet.

John, who has gotten up from his chair and is about to press in upon Chapman, looks over to the side with an expression of horror. From the entrance to the banquet hall, the ballet dancers who have just withdrawn rush back recoiling. From between the dancers, sending them retreating in two directions, a bizarre character

comes walking out.

Even among the bizarre costumes of the ballet dancers, this is an attire so macabre as to make one swallow one's breath in horror.

This character wears a mask and is clothed in death dress. Its mask, a face drawn tight in rigor mortis, is unbearably vivid, and the movements of this body clothed in death dress are unbearably ghastly.

His face and clothes are covered with black spots and, like a sick man struggling, delirious with fever, writhing on the verge of death, he comes out with his arms and feet in convulsions.

This is the death agony that comes from the black plague - it reminds one of that dance of death.

Everyone stares at this figure and they tremble with disgust.

John (to Chapman): Stop it! Make him stop!

But both the ballet director Chapman and the ballet dancers tremble as they stare at this ghostly character. John, noticing this, to "The Mask of the Black Death",

- Who are you!? .....Remove your mask!

The costumed figure silently crosses the banquet hall.

John: Catch him! Someone, catch him and take his mask off!

Everyone recoils as they stare at the costumed figure. No one steps forward.

"The Mask of the Black Death" heads into the Yellow Room.

John grips his sword and chases him.

Everyone follows.

Peter, holding a candle, looks into the banquet hall to see what is happening.

#### THE YELLOW ROOM

The costumed figure crosses the room.

John and the others, chasing him.

#### THE BLUE ROOM

The same -

#### THE RED ROOM

The same -

#### THE GREEN ROOM

The same -

#### THE PURPLE ROOM

The costumed figure crosses the room, and disappears into the black room.

John, who has chased him, stops in his tracks as he sees this.

All the people who have followed John press in, throwing open each of the curtains of the rooms they have come through.

A scream is heard from among the people.

- What happened!?
- Where'd he go!?
- Catch him!
- Catch him quickly!
- Catch the bastard who insulted us and hang him!
- Right!
- Hurry up and get him!

But John does not move.

Seeing this, Lord Delmont, Chairman of the Council of Nobles, takes out his sword and steps forward.

Taking out their swords and following him are the nobles Lord Jackson, Lord Duffey, and Viscount Spencer.

They push open the curtain to the black room.

#### THE BLACK ROOM

"The Mask of the Black Death" standing in front of the grand clock.

The nobles, who have taken one step in with swords drawn, shrink back at the sight.

"The Mask of the Black Death" stands looking down at the five corpses scattered around the room.

#### THE PURPLE ROOM

John standing there erect.

Pressed around him are Bishop Gatesley, Abbot Thomson of the Monastery, the merchant Hainesworth, the factory

owner Ponsenby, the landlord Swire, and others. Peering into the black room, they gasp.

### THE BLACK ROOM

On the window glass the watchfires in the outside corridor cast a red color like that of blood.

" The Mask of the Black Death " standing enveloped in the ghastly color.

He points to the five corpses enveloped in the same red color, and gives out a bizarre, sardonic laugh.

Hainesworth, set to trembling at this voice, screams,

- It's the plague!!

Cries and screams.

Fear shoots like an electric shock through the people who have been pressing in.

- The plague!?

- Look! It's the plague!

- They're dead of the plague! .

- They're all dead!

- It's all over!

The people rush out in an avalanche, every man for himself. .

John ( shouting ): Calm down! This isn't the plague!

This is not the plague!

But no one listens to his voice anymore.

PANIC

( In the following scene, all real sounds are again erased. And woodwinds begin to express in deep, submerged tones a tragic awareness of human folly. And all the other instruments graually join in with the same intent, rise on a solemn rhythm and are orchestrated into a grave and sublime elegy. It must be a quiet, lucid melody, like the light of the moon that, from its perch in mid-heaven, commands a view of the chaos in this castle, this vision of Hell.)

The gist of this scene -

Inside the castle, the long-supressed fear of the plague explodes all at once.

Peter's arson develops this fear into an awesome chaos. They rush in an avalanche, trying to get out of the castle.

Blocked by the Bodyguards, their chaotic rush becomes an even more awesome spectacle.

The castle gate, welded shut, does not open. It is cold, indifferent.

The only way to get out of the castle is by climbing over the walls.

The crowd rushes for the castle walls.

But outside the walls is the world of " the black death ". The ones who reach the top of the walls first see this world for the first time, and shrink back.

But the ones pushing from behind are pursued by the fear of the plague.

Pushed by the violent strength of the crowds that are rushing forward like a dark cloud, one after another is crushed to death or falls to death from the walls.

Madness fans greater madness, and the Bodyguards, who have already shown signs of internal struggle, instead of calming the crowd's frenzy, end up splitting into two groups that battle each other.

The finale of this scroll of Hell is the decisive duel between the Duke and John.

The elder brother slays the younger.

Unfolding among the flames that devour the church and the manor, the folly and the madness of humanity!

And then, the moon looking down on this spectacle from its perch in mid-heaven.

( Since this scene will involve considerable gravity, it will be written in a separate appendix ).

#### THE CASTLE. DISTANT VIEW.

The castle surrounded by a mass of corpses.

The flames from inside the castle scorch at the night sky.

The moon in the middle of that sky.

THE SQUARE

Scattered corpses.

The only ones still moving are a group of people who struggle in vain to open the great castle gate that has been welded shut.

THE BANQUET HALL

A whirl of flames.

The music echoes from the grand clock.

The Duke comes in, looks around, and goes into the yellow room.

THE YELLOW ROOM

A whirl of flames.

The Duke crosses the room.

THE BLUE ROOM

The same.

THE RED ROOM

The same.

THE GREEN ROOM

The same.

THE PURPLE ROOM

A whirl of flames.

The Duke comes in, glares to the side and stops.

In one of the chairs at the table is sitting "The Mask of the Black Death".

"The Mask of the Black Death" looks with his deathly visage at the Duke, and quietly removes his mask.

Under the mask is the laughing face of the clown.

The Duke: It's you? ..... Why aren't you running away?

The clown: I've had enough!

The Duke: Me too!

The Duke sits down in one of the chairs beside the clown.

THE BLACK ROOM

It is enveloped in flames.

The burning grand clock sounds its final hour.

The music plays to its finish, and the clock strikes one o'clock. The cogwheels grin to a halt, and the pendulum stops still in the flames.

( FADE OUT )

THE END