

WAITING FOR THE TRAGEDIE OF THE MINUTES REX, PRINCE OF THE DOLL HOUSE OF CRUELTY

or

ALL WHAT YOU WILL IS TRUE

Dramatis Personae

Claeripus Rex, King of Hitchcock
Robon, her well-meaning but hard-hearted counselor
Aurora the Unicorn, Claeripus's parent and spouse
Chorus
Prince Jeremet
Jasonius, the ludicrous courtier in charge of monitoring Jeremet
Dannycrantz and Annastern, Jeremet's childhood friends also sent to spy on him
Lia, a housewife repressed by her jealous spouse
Laurvald, the jealous spouse
Marymir and Shannogon, two vaudevillians in search of Rabot, their *deus absconditus*
Margarozzo, a cruel person whom Marymir and Shannogon encounter in their search
Chrissy, the intelligent man-animal whom Margarozzo leads on a leash
The Kitchen }
The Sections } three silent characters with no physical form
The Movies }
The Study Lounge Debate, an endless stream of death-masked personages passing before a
podium
Scav Hunt, a golden god eternally eating its children
Epilogue, the epilogue
The Heavens, the heavens

ACT I

[*The Green Room, circa 400 BCE*]

CLAERIPUS: All my people here before me sit
 Except for those that do stand and mill about.
 It is now 10:06 by the watch of the Fates,
 And our meeting should begin.
 Who of old remembers from last week
 When I proposed there to be Section Open Houses?
CHORUS: Verily we do, Claeripus, King of Hitchcock.
 Claeripus, King of Hitchcock, we remember it well.
 Tell us again of Section Open Houses,
 Tell us again of the visitating plans.
CLAERIPUS: As you all remember there were plans
 For each Section in its turn to host the others
 Rotating the hospitable duties like the goblets of wine at a Bacchanal.
 At regular intervals it will happen.
ROBON: Claeripus King, surely you cannot mean this proposal.
 Have you not considered that the middle sections are boring,
 And their fields as barren as Zeus's loins are fertile?
 You must mean to say something different.
CLAERIPUS: I speak in accordance with the words of the Oracle.

The Oracle said to me, "Some counselor of yours will object to your plans,
And suggest that you do Section Open Houses on a floor-by-floor basis,
In the outer sections only, at a date and time to be arranged.
Verily this suggestion has no more merit than the claim that you are at this moment groping the inside of
your own parent."

ROBON: But indeed that suggestion is the one I was just about to make.
How odd that the Oracle should show such prescience in predicting it,
But be so wrong in assessing its merit.
I always knew that Oracle was a piece of crap.

CLAERIPUS: Do not presume to insult the Oracle, of which you know so little, Robon.
Truly your suggestion must be without merit,
For in no way am I currently groping the inside of my own parent.
That is disgusting.

CHORUS: What is that on your hand, Claeripus King?
What is that creature with the single horn?
Why is your fist so deep inside it?
What the heck is it even doing there?

CLAERIPUS: I know what you are all thinking.
You might imagine that this unicorn on my hand is my parent,
And that my Section Open House plans are thus doomed to revision.

ROBON: I assure you it is only Aurora the Unicorn, whom you might remember from last week.
But is it not true that Aurora was briefly married to your mother's ex-second husband,
During the brief period in which he was divorced from your mother but still retained legal guardianship over
you on obscure grounds?
And are not those obscure grounds the same ones that would have technically made Aurora your legal parent
for that window of time?

AURORA: Ah yes, I remember that.
By the way, Claeripus, your hand is tickling my esophagus.

CLAERIPUS: No! It cannot be true! But it is! Alas!
I shall poke my eyes out with Aurora's own horn in atonement!

[*She does so.*]

Also, I will implement Robon's suggestion, in accordance with the Oracle's pronouncements.
Section Open Houses will be floor-by-floor in the outer sections only!

[*Exeunt all.*]

ACT II

[*Hitchinore, the royal palace of Chicago, about 1600 AD.*]

JEREMET: To print or not to print? That is no question.
Truly 'tis nobler in the house to print
The wit and whimsy of outrageous Minutes
Than to seek them in a sea of emails
And by much scrolling read them. To read: to laugh:
No more; lest by to read we say to end
The heart-ache and the thousand printing debts
That flesh is heir to; 'tis a consummation
Devoutly to be wished. To read, to post,
To post perchance the Minutes: ay, there's the rub.
But by next week I'm sure our funds may come,
When we have printed off immortal Minutes,
Clicked "Job Unpause."

JASONIUS: There's one respect
That'll make calamity and printing strife:
For who would use the network all the time,
Th' Internet, the proud man's connectivity,
Should run a firewall without delay,
The insolence of office and the spurns

Of NSIT 's wrath to well avoid.
DANNYCRANTZ: And also, Jeremet, have not you news
Relating and pertaining to our state,
In truth, or Resident Assistantship?
ANNASTERN: Yes, have you some important thing to say
That third and second-years should well attend?
JEREMET: Why, look you now, how unworthy a thing you make of
me! You would play upon me; you would seem to know
my stops; you would pluck out the heart of my
mystery; you would sound me from my lowest note to
the top of my compass: and there is much music,
excellent voice, in this little organ; yet cannot
you make it speak. 'Sblood, do you think I am
easier to be played on than a pipe? Call me what
instrument you will, though you can fret me, yet you
cannot play upon me.
JASONIUS: More matter with less art, Jeremet. Forth with it, forthwith!
JEREMET: Well, well, you'll have your news: apply right now,
I say to third and second-years alike,
To be an RA in another house.
You might enjoy it, though I'd miss you all.
In other news, fill out the Housing Survey
For fabulous prizes, but also so that
Robelia may with me learn much from them.
ANNASTERN: Full well and good all that great spiel may be,
But there are more things in heaven and earth, good Jeremet,
Than are dreamt of in your Eurocentricity.
For Kuvia-Kangeiko cometh full soon,
And we will all do yoga: meet at ten
Of six A.M. each day next week, and get
A Kuvia t-shirt. Regular attendance
Required.
JEREMET: The rest is silence.

[Jasonius dies. Exeunt Dannycrantz and Annastern; offstage, they die. Jeremet dies.]

ACT III

[The Masters' kitchen. Lia, wearing pigtails and an apron, is pottering about.]

LIA: Oh, I must hide the Masters' goodies! They're so delicious, and everyone should want to eat them, because
Elise and I spend so much time making them each week. But if Laurvald sees how I've been splurging on
ingredients, she'll be furious!

[Enter Laurvald.]

LAURVALD: Hello Lia, my squirrel. How long has my squirrel been home?
LIA: Oh, not too long. I've been out.
LAURVALD: My squirrel out? But what would my squirrel be doing outside? Outside is no place
for my little squirrel! There's all kinds of dangerous arboreal mammalian wildlife out there!
LIA: Oh, nothing, Laurvald. Nothing at all.
LAURVALD: I hope my little squirrel has not been squandering our money on frivolous things. Isn't that
beluga caviar spread on saffron crackers for Masters'?
LIA: But Laurvald, you've been so successful, with all your plans for the Service Project. I thought we could
afford to be a little frivolous.
LAURVALD: Don't tell me about my own Service Project, Lia! How like a woman you are! You think I don't know about
my own plans to possibly take the House to a food shelter, which may or may not be faith-based depending
on people's feelings on the matter, and which may either involve both serving and preparing food or only
involve serving it, depending on what happens, which is largely unknown?
LIA: You see? It is all set, and will certainly work out for the best. No need to worry.
LAURVALD: Oh my little squirrel! I did not mean to upset you! Never would I upset my squirrel!

LIA: That's exactly it, Laurvald. You are stifling me with your overbearing desire to possess me and use me like your little squirrel-doll-wife. But, big surprise here, I have agency of my own, and a greater understanding of the world than you, so I'm gonna blow this fascist popsicle stand. This marriage is pitiful and you are a loser. In conclusion: freeeeeeeeeeeeedom!

[She leaves, slamming the door behind her.]

LAURVALD: I am chastened.

[Fade to black.]

ACT IV

[A Chicago street. Evening.]

MARYMIR: Nothing to be done.
SHANNOGON: Yes, I couldn't agree more. I didn't use to think so, but lately I've come round to that opinion. It's just that...
MARYMIR: Yes?
SHANNOGON: Yes.
MARYMIR: I suppose you're right.
SHANNOGON: It's not that I'm right; there's simply nothing to be done.
MARYMIR: But what about sledding?
SHANNOGON: In Chicago?
MARYMIR: There are no hills of any kind.
SHANNOGON: No hills. None at all.
MARYMIR: There is the one. By Soldier Field.
SHANNOGON: Yes, yes, you're right! I knew it.
MARYMIR: Oh happy day! But...
SHANNOGON: But...? But what? Have you lost all your faith in the universe again, along with your will to live?
MARYMIR: Don't be absurd.
SHANNOGON: Sorry. I suppose it can't be helped... In any case. You were saying.
MARYMIR: Ah yes. But I think to use that hill for sledding for a House trip, we would all need to provide our own sleds. Which of course is quite impossible.
SHANNOGON: Is that what we were talking about all this time? I think I may cry.
MARYMIR: Don't do that. Help me think.

[Shannogon takes off her hat and puts it on Marymir's head.]

MARYMIR: How is this supposed to help?
SHANNOGON: Don't be cruel... Maybe we'll finally find Rabot and he'll help us.

[Margarozzo approaches, leading a silently slobbering Chrissy on a rope. Margarozzo carries a whip, Chrissy a bulging suitcase full of cash.]

MARGAROZZO: Yah! On, Chrissy! On!
SHANNOGON: It's you!
MARGAROZZO: It's you!
SHANNOGON: Is that... Rabot?
MARYMIR: I don't know.
SHANNOGON: Are you Mr. Rabot, the Secretary?
MARGAROZZO: I am Margarozzo! Margarozzo! The Treasurer! Does that mean nothing to you?
SHANNOGON: *[downcast]* Oh.
MARGAROZZO: Chrissy, sit!

[Chrissy sits, dropping the suitcase and scattering cash everywhere.]

MARGAROZZO: Oh for crying out loud! Pick it up! Count it!

[Chrissy begins to pick it up.]

MARGAROZZO: But keep sitting! Anyhow, I already know how much is there. It's however much we had last week minus

twenty dollars and plus two hundred and forty-one dollars.

[A blast wind abruptly blows all the money away.]

MARGAROZZO: Blast.

SHANNOGON: Yes it was. Of wind, you see. [She laughs uproariously for four minutes.]

MARGAROZZO: Are you done?

SHANNOGON: Yes, after a fashion.

MARYMIR: But Shannogon, what shall we do for a House trip?

SHANNOGON: Don't complain to me, Marymir. You are after all a cretin. And I have problems of my own. My boots don't fit. And also, our House team lost basketball.

MARYMIR: Lost it? Is there no chance of ever finding it again? Or is it as our ashes in the cold, uncaring universe?

SHANNOGON: No, it can be found again. Men's basketball on Mondays, co-ed on Thursdays. Also broomball can be found on Tuesdays, and Walleyball at some as-yet-undisclosed time.

MARGAROZZO: Walleyball?

SHANNOGON: Why yes. It's volleyball in a racquetball court.

MARYMIR: Don't be absurd.

SHANNOGON: It's a real sport.

MARYMIR: Enough absurdity is enough.

SHANNOGON: But it's real! Real, I say, real as our ever-living souls!

MARYMIR: That real, eh?

SHANNOGON: Oh you know what I mean. Stop being difficult. Stop trying to bog and in-run me.

MARYMIR: What did you say?

SHANNOGON: Stop trying to bog and in-run me.

MARYMIR: Why, that's it! That's just the thing!

SHANNOGON: What are you talking about? There is no thing. Unless you mean that. [Pointing at Chrissy.]

MARYMIR: Tobogganing run me! You said it.

SHANNOGON: I did not. That's a vile and unequanimitous slander.

MARYMIR: That will be our House trip. We'll go to the tobogganing run!

MARGAROZZO: Very impressive. But even Chrissy could come up with a more impressive show of intellection.

MARYMIR: But... he can't even speak. Can he?

MARGAROZZO: Chrissy, speak!

[Chrissy struggles to stand on two legs, then gasps out the following.]

CHRISSY: At IHC this week a variety of business was discussed. Besides preparing for the RA application process and the upcoming IHC Quiz Bowl event on January 29th, we also treated some issues pertaining to the Housing Lottery. It was resolved that we recommend to the Housing Office that the lottery numbers be released a few weeks earlier than they currently are, primarily for the purpose of allowing Palevsky residents to resolve the complicated political imbroglios that inevitably arise there due to the relatively small number of rooms available to returning students. The date of the lottery itself will not move. Furthermore, it is now the case, as a result of our actions, that students returning from a leave of absence, including non-University study abroad programs, will not lose all of their standing in the Housing Lottery; they will lose only one quarter of house standing, and no quarters of college standing.

[Chrissy collapses from the effort.]

MARGAROZZO: I'll just be moving on then.

[Exeunt Margarozzo, dragging an insensate Chrissy.]

SHANNOGON: Well, let's be moving on. We're still trying to find Rabot.

MARYMIR: If he even exists.

SHANNOGON: Don't say such things. Let's go.

MARYMIR: Yes, let's go.

[They do not move. Fade to black.]

ACT V

[The endless torus of Time, Paris. Theater in the round.]

[Onstage are *The Sections*, *The Kitchen*, and *The Movies*, three immortal but silent characters with no physical manifestation. Their energy circulates. It seems to say, "In the kitchen there are new thermometers with fuzzy settings. Kitchen Co-op members should retrieve their deposits from Julia after they have done their cleanings." The energy escalates: "The Bad Movie of the week will be *The Mountain of the Cannibal God*, Sunday at 10:00. The Decologue will be at 8:30 on Sunday. Alfred Hitchcock movies will follow in the Blue Room, because they are on VHS." Now it is a howling, invisible, inaudible crescendo. The audience quivers with petrified anticipation. The energy seems to suggest, in a kind of rhythmic chant, "Tori has moved in with Daniela. Now Liz has no roommate. Tori has moved in with Daniela. Now Liz has no roommate." This chant repeats until it is over. Exeunt the three immortal characters.]

[Enter *The Study Lounge Debate*, an endless stream of death-masked personages passing before a podium, stage left.]

THE STUDY LOUNGE DEBATE: [Each sentence spoken by a different personage.] The Study Lounges should be used for studying; that is why they are called the Study Lounges. The Study Lounges should be used for public activities; that is why they are public. The Study Lounges should be quiet. The Study Lounges should be loud. The loudness should be quiet. The loudness should be loud, unless the quietness was there first. Loudness should not be aloud. On the contrary, loudness should not be a loud. Some people do not enjoy loudness. I just want to say one thing. I think we can all agree. People should post notices. Notices should be posted on the Study Lounge doors. That way we will know. Nobody works on weekend nights. In my personal experience it is possible to achieve densities of up to three gamers per square foot in private rooms, thus obviating the need for Study Lounge gaming. It is better to annoy your neighbors than your strangers, as Poor Richard says. Imagine if you were trying to sleep. How do we know that the Study Lounges are not really red and we are all just colorblind? Can the rights of gamers to the Study Lounges be demonstrated from a priori first principles? What if the Study Lounges were kept behind the front desk and had to be signed out, like the vacuum cleaner?

[This prattle continues. Eventually, when about half of the personages have spoken, Scav Hunt appears, stage right. Scav Hunt is a golden god with a mouth so large that the turtle on whose back is the three-legged ass who supports all the nine cosmos is as a speck on its teeth. The stream of personages is drawn into its gaping golden maw.]

SCAV HUNT: [Speaking with open mouth.] I am coming! I am coming! *SCAV HUNT* is coming! There will be Manly Construction! There will be Girly Construction! There will be a road trip. There will be Page Captains! Soon your name too will be engraved on the heart of God!

[Scav Hunt devours the entire theater.]

EPILOGUE

EPILOGUE: [Addressing the heavens.] Jesse, don't you think these Minutes are too long? Especially in light of our printing fund shortage?

THE HEAVENS: Well, that's why they're in 9 point font. Also, please address me as "The Heavens."

EPILOGUE: Very well. But still, couldn't you have restrained yourself?

THE HEAVENS: Couldn't *you* have restrained *yourselves*?

EPILOGUE: Selves? Plural?

THE HEAVENS: I mean the entire House. The meeting took an hour and four minutes. Some of us have soccer to play, you know, and other important things to do, too.

EPILOGUE: Oh, I'm sorry. When you put it that way, the size of the Minutes seems quite understandable. After all, so much was said that it is no wonder it takes so long to write it all down.

[Exit Epilogue, stroking his chin, and *The Heavens*, frantically pulling on sweatpants.]