

GRENADINE

a play
by
Neil Wechsler

Neil Wechsler
525 Lafayette Avenue
Buffalo, NY, 14222
(716) 392-7172
neil.wechsler@gmail.com

Cast of Characters

PRISMATIC

GROVE

SCONCE

PYX

OLD WOMAN ON A BENCH (Actress 1)

OLD WOMAN SELLING BERRIES (Actress 1)

OLD MAN SELLING WATERMELONS (Actor 1)

MASTER OF CEREMONIES (Actor 2)

ELDER DUCK (Actress 1)

YOUNGER DUCK (Actress 2)

TURTLE (Actor 1)

NESSA DOTSUN (Actress 2)

FERGUS DOTSUN (Actor 2)

OLD MAN SITTING ON THE SIDE OF THE ROAD (Actor 1)

OLD WOMAN SELLING TOMATOES (Actress 1)

OLD MAN SELLING TOMATOES (Actor 1)

GIRL (Actress 2)

BOY (Actor 2)

MOTHER (Actress 1)

FATHER (Actor 1)

SISTER OF THE BRIDE (Actress 2)

FATHER OF THE BRIDE (Actor 1)

MOTHER OF THE BRIDE (Actress 1)

OLD WOMAN PAINTING A LANDSCAPE (Actress 1)

BEEKEEPER (Actor 2)

TWO-LEGGED DACHSHUND (Actor 1)

COOK (Actor 2)

FISHERMAN (Actor 2)

GENTLEMAN (Actor 2)

YOUNG MOTHER (Actress 2)

A Note About the Staging: The main characters enter and exit many times throughout the play, and the transitions must be handled creatively to maintain the continuity of their journey. The passage of time should be represented by a change of lighting: sun breaking through fog, sunny skies becoming overcast, late afternoon becoming sunset. The colors should be intrinsic to the mood of the play and help create the abstract, pastoral world the play seeks to establish. The secondary characters ease the transitions by setting the stage with their props while the main characters are offstage. Much of the action is mimed by the actors, and some takes place offstage, as indicated in the stage directions. The staging should always seek to illuminate the main characters' bumbling perseverance.

SCENE 1

(PRISMATIC, GROVE, SCONCE, and PYX stand at a bus stop beside the OLD WOMAN ON A BENCH. PRISMATIC wears red, GROVE green, SCONCE yellow, and PYX blue. They each wear an item of the other three colors. GROVE holds a fiddle.)

PRISMATIC

I will soon be with you, Grenadine!

GROVE

We are going back for her?

PRISMATIC

Round as the sun, and I love her!

GROVE

We have been on a prison farm three years because of her.

PRISMATIC

Round, round, everywhere round!

GROVE

The engagement ring we stole.

PRISMATIC

My gossamer gay gosling with your glands aglow!

GROVE

Which she threw back at you.

PRISMATIC

Grenadine! Do you hear my cries and my shouts and my lamentations and my fears?

OLD WOMAN ON A BENCH

I hear them.

SCONCE

Be not afraid, Artemis, we are docile.

OLD WOMAN ON A BENCH

Why do you call me Artemis?

GROVE

He has been reading nothing but mythology and folklore on the prison farm.

SCONCE

Artemis, goddess of the hunt and of the chase and of our freedom.

PYX

I am this freedom.

OLD WOMAN ON A BENCH

What has he been reading?

GROVE

Religion. He equates himself with all things.

PRISMATIC

Grenadine!

OLD WOMAN ON A BENCH

What about him?

GROVE

Love poetry.

OLD WOMAN ON A BENCH

And you?

GROVE

Science.

OLD WOMAN ON A BENCH

What have you learned?

GROVE

The common ancestry of the animals: all of us evolving from algae, bacteria, sponges, and trilobites over thousands of years.

OLD WOMAN ON A BENCH

Is it not millions of years?

GROVE

It is possible. I have no conception of time and am bewildered by dates.

OLD WOMAN ON A BENCH

Perhaps it was not three years you were on the prison farm.

GROVE

(To PRISMATIC)

It was not three years?

SCONCE

It was not a prison farm, it was Demeter's garden, and we were its guardians.

PYX

I am this guardian.

PRISMATIC

When will this bus arrive?

OLD WOMAN ON A BENCH

There is no bus. It stopped running years ago.

PRISMATIC

Then why are you waiting for it?

OLD WOMAN ON A BENCH

I am waiting for nothing. I enjoy the scene and the conversations of the men who congregate here, released from the prison farm, filled with dreams.

PYX

I am these dreams.

PRISMATIC

Can you point the way to the coast?

OLD WOMAN ON A BENCH

I have never been to the coast, but this road will take you away from here and might lead to a road to the coast.

PRISMATIC

I will soon be with you, Grenadine!

(PRISMATIC exits. SCONCE, PYX, and GROVE follow.
The OLD WOMAN remains. The lights fade.)

SCENE 2

(The OLD WOMAN SELLING BERRIES is standing at a fruit stand on the side of the road. She is wearing a shawl. PRISMATIC, SCONCE, GROVE, and PYX enter. PRISMATIC picks out four baskets of berries and hands the OLD WOMAN money. The OLD WOMAN reaches under the table and sets out some jars of jam. PRISMATIC turns to the others.)

PRISMATIC

Do we like jam?

SCONCE

There are few things finer than jam.

(PRISMATIC hands the OLD WOMAN more money. She reaches under the table and sets out some pie. PRISMATIC turns to the others.)

PRISMATIC

Do we like pie?

SCONCE

Pie is one of those things.

PRISMATIC

One of what things?

SCONCE

Finer than jam.

(PRISMATIC hands the OLD WOMAN more money. She sweeps the rest of the berries into the center of the table. PRISMATIC turns to the others, who nod. PRISMATIC hands the OLD WOMAN more money, and picks up the rest of the berries. The OLD WOMAN folds up her table and exits. The men stack the food in their arms and, trying to keep their stacks steady, exit. While offstage, the men are heard dropping, squashing, and splattering their berries, pies, and jams. They reenter with nothing.)

PRISMATIC

We are not having the best of success eating, and we are running out of money.

SCONCE

Money is not of consequence.

PRISMATIC

We will not be able to buy anything.

SCONCE

What good have our purchases done us so far?

PRISMATIC

Can we blame the purchases?

SCONCE

I am not blaming them. I am merely not crediting them.

GROVE

We ate well on the prison farm.

SCONCE

Demeter's garden, you mean.

PRISMATIC

Demeter! Greek goddess of vegetation!

SCONCE

Mother of Persephone, whom Hades abducted and made queen of the underworld.

GROVE

She did not wish to marry him?

SCONCE

She starved herself beside him until Zeus decreed that she only had to spend six months a year there; the rest she could spend in the garden.

PYX

I am this renewal.

GROVE

Explain it to me, then.

PRISMATIC

Play your fiddle.

(GROVE plays his fiddle.)

PYX

I am this music.

(The OLD MAN SELLING WATERMELONS enters, pushing a wheelbarrow. PRISMATIC gives him money. PRISMATIC and the others each pick out a watermelon. The OLD MAN exits.)

PRISMATIC

We have no knife.

SCONCE

Can we not simply throw them against the ground?

PRISMATIC

They will explode in all directions.

SCONCE

Then we will find one.

PRISMATIC

They are heavy.

SCONCE

You must have fortitude.

GROVE

They were easier to eat in Demeter's garden.

PRISMATIC

It was a prison farm!

PYX

I am this ambiguity.

(They exit. The lights fade.)

SCENE 3

(An inclined plane spans the stage. PRISMATIC, SCONCE, GROVE, and PYX enter with watermelons, struggling to ascend the hill, breathing heavily.)

PRISMATIC

Do the rest of you perceive this incline, too?

SCONCE

It is the weight.

PRISMATIC

I am certain it is a hill.

SCONCE

Try not to complain.

PYX

I am this hill.

GROVE

Flatten out, then.

PRISMATIC

We have been on a plain for days. Now, with these watermelons, we have a hill.

SCONCE

Without the watermelon, you would still think it a plain, and since the watermelon has nothing to do with the slope, it is still a plain.

PRISMATIC

It looks like a hill to me.

(They struggle on, hardly advancing.)

PRISMATIC

We will rest here for a minute.

(He sets the watermelon down. The others do the same. The watermelons start to roll down the hill. The men do not notice at first, then turn and run after them. The lights fade, then rise on an empty stage. The men enter, panting, without the watermelons, put their hands on their knees.)

PRISMATIC

(To SCONCE)

Do you deny it is a hill now?

SCONCE

It is a plain, at a different angle.

PRISMATIC

The different angle is why it is not a plain!

SCONCE

Only from your perspective.

PRISMATIC

I speak from my perspective!

SCONCE

That is your shortcoming.

PRISMATIC

From what perspective do you speak?

The one of objectivity.

SCONCE

Demeter's garden!

PRISMATIC

Goddess of the soil and of the grain and of the pure.

SCONCE

I do not know why I contend.

PRISMATIC

Nor I.

SCONCE

I do not recall a Demeter or a Persephone in the garden.

GROVE

Demeter and her daughter always wear disguises. Persephone was dressed as a maiden when Hades captured her.

SCONCE

I do not recall any maiden.

GROVE

She had strayed too far from her companions.

SCONCE

I am this loss.

PYX

Her mother looked for her with a pair of torches and set fire to the fields so that there was famine throughout the kingdom.

SCONCE

For three years?

GROVE

We shall not mention this matter again until we have eaten.

PRISMATIC

I am this silence. **PYX**

We can fish in the stream. **SCONCE**

Have you tackle in your trousers? **PRISMATIC**

We will sharpen some sticks. **SCONCE**

Had we a knife we would be eating the watermelons. **PRISMATIC**

We will use rocks. **SCONCE**

On the fish? **PRISMATIC**

On the sticks. **SCONCE**

Have you done this before, then? **PRISMATIC**

(SCONCE picks up sticks, hands them out.)

PRISMATIC
(Indicating his stick)

I could not kill an ant with this.

SCONCE
(He picks up rocks, hands them out.)

PRISMATIC

How am I to sharpen my stick if the rock itself is not sharp?

SCONCE

How are you to do anything if you keep complaining?

(SCONCE, GROVE, and PYX sharpen their sticks with their rocks; PRISMATIC, grumbling, sharpens his. They approach the front of the stage.)

PRISMATIC

All we need now is for a fish to jump out of the stream and lie still for us while we poke it to death with our twigs.

SCONCE

You scoff at the truth.

PRISMATIC

(Raising his stick)

This is the truth?

SCONCE

And you scoff at it. Now be quiet, or you will scare the fish.

PRISMATIC

On the contrary. When the fish see us standing here with these twigs they will swim over to laugh at us.

(SCONCE raises his stick to strike. The others do the same.)

PRISMATIC

I am an idiot!

SCONCE

Silence!

PYX

I am this fish.

GROVE

Stop swimming so quickly.

(PRISMATIC strikes at a fish, and his stick breaks.)

PRISMATIC

Grenadine!

SCONCE

You were too hasty, and now you have driven him away.

PRISMATIC

Grenadine!

SCONCE

Shhh!

PRISMATIC

(Indicating the stream)

Look, he has brought a friend to share in this farce.

(SCONCE surveys the fish. With a vigorous movement he drives his stick into the water. GROVE and PYX do the same. SCONCE puts a foot in the stream and makes another foray. He hurls his stick at the fish. He dives in. GROVE, PYX, and PRISMATIC plunge in after him; the four of them attack the fish simultaneously. The lights dim. The men get out of the water and sit on the bank, shivering, as the lights continue to dim and finally fade to darkness.)

PRISMATIC

Grenadine!

(A wolf howls.)

PRISMATIC

Here I am!

SCONCE

Wolves do not attack humans.

PRISMATIC

To hell with you!

GROVE

He is right about the wolves.

To hell with you, too! **PRISMATIC**

I am this hell. **PYX**

The sun will be up soon. **SCONCE**

Soon! Soon! **PRISMATIC**

Whereupon our clothes will begin to dry. **SCONCE**

If we had not gone swimming! **PRISMATIC**

I did not force you. **SCONCE**

You gave me a twig! **PRISMATIC**

We will talk in the morning. **SCONCE**

(The lights rise slowly on the four men, shivering.)

Soon! Soon! **PRISMATIC**

The sun is here, is it not? **SCONCE**

Our skin is blue, and we have not eaten since the prison farm. **PRISMATIC**

I thought we were not to speak of it until we had eaten. **GROVE**

We are not speaking of it. **PRISMATIC**

Of Demeter's garden, rather. **SCONCE**

I am these contradictions. **PYX**

We can go into the woods. I can lure a rabbit with my fiddle. **GROVE**

Like Pan? **PRISMATIC**

Pan played a reed pipe, not a fiddle. **SCONCE**

I have studied rabbits. Their flesh is tender, and with the fur we can make mittens for Grenadine. **GROVE**

SCONCE
(To **PRISMATIC**)
I did not know you were giving her mittens.

I am not giving her mittens! **PRISMATIC**

It is a loving gift and will not lead to the place of which we cannot speak. **GROVE**

I am this past. **PYX**

(**GROVE** exits. The others follow. The lights dim to overcast skies. The men reenter.)

GROVE
Crouch behind those trees. When the rabbit comes, pounce on him.

PRISMATIC

There is no saving us.

SCONCE

We will try it. If it does not work, and you are still hungry, we will look for food elsewhere.

PRISMATIC

How would I not still be hungry if it does not work?

SCONCE

Sometimes hunger passes.

PRISMATIC

It passes when you eat.

SCONCE

Sometimes it just passes.

GROVE

Continue your discussion later. For now, crouch behind those trees.

(PRISMATIC, SCONCE, and PYX crouch. GROVE plays.
A few seconds pass. The skies continue to darken.)

SCONCE

(Pointing)

A pair of squirrels.

(Pause)

In love.

PRISMATIC

(Indicating GROVE)

Pan he *is*. Or Bacchus.

SCONCE

You mean Cupid.

PRISMATIC

I mean Pan. Or Bacchus.

But Cupid is the god of love.

SCONCE

This does not look like love.

PRISMATIC
(Indicating the squirrels)

You are concentrating on the surface.

SCONCE

So are they.

PRISMATIC

I am this Bacchus.

PYX

Pounce!

GROVE

You wish us to interrupt them?

SCONCE

While they are preoccupied.

GROVE

It does not seem humane.

SCONCE

I thought you were hungry.

GROVE

Not this hungry.

PRISMATIC

(He exits. The others follow. The lights continue to dim, the sky almost black with clouds. The men reenter.)

We have lost the road.

PRISMATIC

GROVE

The road to the coast?

PRISMATIC

The road that might lead to the road to the coast.

SCONCE

Let us retrace our steps.

PRISMATIC

We have been retracing them.

SCONCE

We will come upon it soon.

PRISMATIC

Is that right?

SCONCE

It is.

(They exit and reenter. The wind picks up.)

SCONCE

I do not recall this fork in the path.

GROVE

Perhaps it was not here before.

SCONCE

We will each set out in a different direction, then return to confer.

GROVE

One of us might walk for days, the others be kept waiting.

SCONCE

If you do not find it after a couple of hours, you may turn around.

GROVE

I have no conception of time.

I am these paths.

PYX

Grenadine!

PRISMATIC

Perhaps you could play your fiddle, and we could see from which path the squirrels come running.

SCONCE

They will have separated by now.

GROVE

So you, too, maintain it was not love.

SCONCE

Love or not, they will have separated by now.

GROVE

(They exit. The wind continues to rise, howling now. The sound of rain. The men reenter.)

I nearly walked into that tree.

GROVE

Single file.

SCONCE

That is the ruin of the lemmings.

GROVE

We are not lemmings.

SCONCE

Not yet.

PRISMATIC

(They exit. The rain stops, twilight comes. They reenter.)

Is this not the fork again?

GROVE

SCONCE

Are we sure it is the same one?

PRISMATIC

What does it matter if it is the same one!

SCONCE

How else will we know if we have made progress?

PRISMATIC

Our progress does not depend on the total number of forks but on the particular prong that leads to the road.

PYX

I am this progress.

(He begins to pile sticks for a fire.)

GROVE

What is Pyx doing?

SCONCE

He is building a fire.

GROVE

The sticks are wet.

SCONCE

It was only a light rain, and it has stopped. We will help him. It will give our minds some time to rest.

PRISMATIC

To rest from what?

SCONCE

From our choice of paths. Perhaps then, with our minds clear, we will remember the path to the road.

GROVE

How many sticks do we require?

SCONCE

His flame must soar to the firmament.

PYX

I am this center.

PRISMATIC

Have you done this before? You have not forgotten our precedent of failure?

SCONCE

We may take from his light.

PRISMATIC

What may we take from it?

SCONCE

Its eternal flame.

PYX

I am this unfolding.

SCONCE

Where would we be without the wisdom of Pyx?

PRISMATIC

We could be doing worse?

SCONCE

He is clarity itself, always of one mind.

PRISMATIC

He says he is all things.

SCONCE

Hence, of one mind.

PRISMATIC

I am going to sleep.

(PRISMATIC lies down. The lights dim to total darkness.
Pause.)

Shall I keep gathering sticks? **GROVE**

I am this upheaval. **PYX**

(The sound of sticks scraping against one another.)

Does this really work? **GROVE**

You must have faith. **SCONCE**

My top stick keeps sliding off my bottom one. **GROVE**

You must be steadfast. **SCONCE**

It is my sticks that are sliding, not I. **GROVE**

Be quiet, all three of you. **PRISMATIC**

In fairness to Pyx, he has not spoken. **SCONCE**

He will speak soon. **PRISMATIC**

I am this fairness. **PYX**

Is that smoke near Pyx I see? **GROVE**

I am this smoke. **PYX**

I do not believe it. **GROVE**

It is spreading through the pile. **SCONCE**

Is that a flame? **GROVE**

I am that flame. **PYX**

He has done it! **GROVE**

(An orange glow begins to fill the stage. A crackling sound, growing louder.)

I am this fire! **PYX**

What is happening? **PRISMATIC**

Trust in Pyx, I tell you. **SCONCE**

Is that the road I see? **GROVE**

The road! **PRISMATIC**

I am this consummation! **PYX**

(PRISMATIC runs off. SCONCE, GROVE, and PYX follow. The orange light fades.)

SCENE 4

(The lights rise on the MASTER OF CEREMONIES, wearing top hat and tails, standing before a curtain at the edge of the stage. PRISMATIC, SCONCE, GROVE, and PYX enter.)

MASTER OF CEREMONIES

Welcome, gentlemen! One dollar per person. Food and entertainment included.

PRISMATIC

(Taking out his money)

Three dollars is all we have left.

SCONCE

You three go.

GROVE

No, I will stay.

PRISMATIC

(To the MASTER OF CEREMONIES)

Perhaps you could make an exception for us.

MASTER OF CEREMONIES

I must treat everyone the same.

(The ELDER DUCK, YOUNGER DUCK, and TURTLE enter. They carry their respective animal costumes.)

MASTER OF CEREMONIES

Welcome, my friends!

(He opens the curtain, and they walk in without paying.)

PRISMATIC

Why did you not treat them the same?

MASTER OF CEREMONIES

They are participants.

We are participants. **PRISMATIC**

What will you be doing? **MASTER OF CEREMONIES**

Whatever is being done. **PRISMATIC**

There are many things being done. **MASTER OF CEREMONIES**

We will do them. **PRISMATIC**

Which? **MASTER OF CEREMONIES**

Whichever. **PRISMATIC**

You must tell me your talent, or I will not be able to introduce you. That is how a talent show works. **MASTER OF CEREMONIES**

Is this a talent show, then? **GROVE**

He plays the fiddle, we are his dancing accompaniment. **PRISMATIC**

You do not look like dancers to me. **MASTER OF CEREMONIES**

The judges will decide. **PRISMATIC**

Why did you not tell me when you arrived that you were participants? **MASTER OF CEREMONIES**

PRISMATIC

Why did you not ask us when we arrived?

MASTER OF CEREMONIES

It seems suspicious, you must admit.

PRISMATIC

You seem suspicious. You have not even told us where the food is.

MASTER OF CEREMONIES

You will see it when you walk in. You have ten minutes before we start.

(PRISMATIC, SCONCE, GROVE, and PYX pass through the curtain. The lights fade, then rise a few minutes later on the MASTER OF CEREMONIES, tapping a microphone. PRISMATIC, SCONCE, GROVE, and PYX stand off to the side, along with the DUCKS and the TURTLE, who are in their animal costumes, with the heads still in their hands.)

GROVE

I am nervous.

PRISMATIC

You do not have to perform. I only said that so we could eat. We can leave now.
(He starts to go.)

GROVE

But I want to perform. All my life I have wanted to perform for an audience.

PYX

I am this dancer.

MASTER OF CEREMONIES

(To the audience)

We will begin today with an acting troupe who will be performing—

(He puts his hand over the microphone, to the TURTLE)

What will you be performing?

TURTLE

The Fate of the Turtle.

MASTER OF CEREMONIES

(To the audience)

The Fate of the Turtle.

(The DUCKS and the TURTLE put on their animal heads, assume center stage.)

ELDER DUCK

(To the YOUNGER DUCK)

The lake is drying up. If we do not fly away and seek a new home, we will die of thirst. We must tell our friend, the turtle, of our plan and bid him farewell.

SCONCE

He is no turtle.

MASTER OF CEREMONIES

Shhh!

SCONCE

“Shhh!” all you want, he is no turtle, the others are no ducks. I saw them put on those heads.

(The DUCKS approach the TURTLE.)

TURTLE

Ah! Here you are. I began to wonder if I was ever going to see you again, for somehow, though the lake has grown smaller, I seem to have grown weaker, and it is lonely spending all day and night by oneself.

ELDER DUCK

Oh my friend, I have something to tell you that I fear will cause you greater pain still. If we do not wish to die of thirst, we must leave this place at once. My heart bleeds to say this, for there is nothing—nothing else in the world—that would have induced us to part from you.

TURTLE

How can you think I am able to live without you, when for so long you have been my only friends? If you leave me, death will speedily put an end to my grief.

YOUNGER DUCK

Our sorrow is as great as yours, but what can we do? And remember that if we are not here to drink the water, there will be more for you.

TURTLE

Water is as necessary to me as to you, and if death stares in your faces, it stares in mine also. In the name of all the years we have passed together, do not, I beseech you, leave me to perish here alone. Wherever you may go, take me with you.

ELDER DUCK

How can we do what you ask? Our bodies, like yours, are heavy and our feet small. Our only hope lies in our wings—and alas, you cannot fly.

TURTLE

No, I cannot fly, but you are so clever. Surely you can think of a plan.

ELDER DUCK

Take this stick firmly in your mouth, and however high above the earth you find yourself, do not move your feet or open your mouth.

TURTLE

I promise not to move head or foot and never to speak a word during the whole journey.

SCONCE

This plan is not sound.

MASTER OF CEREMONIES

Shhh!

PRISMATIC

I did not get enough to eat.

GROVE

They will throw us out.

PYX

I am this journey.

(The DUCKS tie an imaginary stick to their necks and the TURTLE stands between them and takes the stick in his mouth. The DUCKS begin to flap their wings, pretending to fly across the stage; a few areas of smoke indicate clouds and streaks of sunlight.)

YOUNGER DUCK

(Looking down)

What are those people saying down there?

ELDER DUCK

They are saying what a burden the turtle must be.

(The TURTLE looks anxiously from one DUCK to the other, struggling not to move or speak.)

ELDER DUCK

Do not worry. You are not a burden.

YOUNGER DUCK

(Looking down)

What are they saying now?

ELDER DUCK

They are saying how selfish he must be.

(The TURTLE looks anxiously from one DUCK to the other.)

ELDER DUCK

Do not worry. You are not selfish.

YOUNGER DUCK

(Looking down)

What are they saying now?

ELDER DUCK

They are saying how sorry we must be to have brought him.

(The TURTLE looks anxiously from one DUCK to the other.)

ELDER DUCK

Do not worry. We are not sorry.

TURTLE

Am I a burden?

(He falls, his words tailing off. The lights fade, then rise on the DUCKS, flying alone, looking down.)

ELDER DUCK

Come, we can let go of the stick.

(The DUCKS drop the imaginary stick.)

PYX

I am this stick.

ELDER DUCK

We feared it would end so, yet perhaps our friend was right to come with us. Even this death was better than the one which awaited him.

SCONCE

I told you your plan was not sound!

PRISMATIC

I am going back for more food.

MASTER OF CEREMONIES

Out! All of you!

(PRISMATIC, SCONCE, GROVE, and PYX exit. The lights fade, then rise on the four men standing outside.)

GROVE

One does not speak during a performance.

SCONCE

He was no turtle, and their plan was not sound.

PRISMATIC

You three took all the food for yourselves.

GROVE

All my life I have wanted to perform for an audience.

PYX

I am this audience.

PRISMATIC

We will sleep here tonight.

SCONCE

It is midday.

PRISMATIC

I am too hungry to proceed. No one even brought me a sandwich.

SCONCE

Would you like us to carry you on our shoulders?

PRISMATIC

I would not.

(He lies down. The others stand around him. The lights fade.)

SCENE 5

(The four men stand in front of a sign that reads, "Welcome Dotsuns.")

PRISMATIC

We will follow this sign. There is sure to be food.

GROVE

We are not Dachshunds.

PRISMATIC

It says "Dotsuns."

SCONCE

We are not Dotsuns, either.

PRISMATIC

For now we are. Sconce Dotsun, Grove Dotsun, Pyx Dotsun, Prismatic Dotsun.

PYX

I am this Dotsun.

PRISMATIC

Very good, Pyx.

(The men walk offstage. The lights fade, then rise on a picnic table covered with a tablecloth and bowls of food. NESSA and FERGUS DOTSON stand near it, a few feet apart. PRISMATIC, SCONCE, GROVE, and PYX enter.)

GROVE

They do not look like dachshunds.

PRISMATIC

That is because they are Dotsuns.

SCONCE

You are both mistaken. This is the House of Ulster. Note the pattern on the tablecloth, the pattern of the Ulsters.

GROVE

The ancient Celts?

PRISMATIC

For the next half hour these are the Dotsuns, and we are their relatives.

PYX

I am this Dotsun.

PRISMATIC

Listen to Pyx.

(He walks toward the picnic table. The others follow.)

NESSA

Are you with Fergus's side of the family?

PRISMATIC

Prismatic Dotsun. These are my cousins. Sconce Dotsun, Grove Dotsun, Pyx Dotsun.

NESSA

Let me get Fergus for you.

Do not trouble yourself. **PRISMATIC**

Fergus. **NESSA**

(FERGUS walks over.)

I was referring to the other Fergus. **PRISMATIC**

There is no other Fergus. **FERGUS**

He is easily forgotten, I admit. **PRISMATIC**

I do not know any of you, either. **FERGUS**

We ourselves are easily forgotten. **PRISMATIC**

I ask you to leave. **FERGUS**

I was this Dotsun. **PYX**

Do not think I will not tell the other Fergus. **PRISMATIC**

(He starts to walk off. SCONCE, GROVE, and PYX follow. PRISMATIC stops at the edge of the stage.)

We must divert them. **PRISMATIC**

(To GROVE)

You will now have your chance to play your fiddle for an audience.

Did they request a performance? **GROVE**

PRISMATIC

You will play behind that tree. When they hear the music—

SCONCE

They will copulate like the squirrels?

PRISMATIC

No, but they will turn to see where it is coming from and approach it out of curiosity.

GROVE

You honor me.

PRISMATIC

Your music. The rest of us will run off with as many bowls as we can. Stop playing and wait for us to disappear.

GROVE

Will they not be surprised?

PRISMATIC

Once they have turned around and resumed their conversations, quietly make your way to the road.

GROVE

Will they not notice the missing bowls?

PRISMATIC

We will have run off by then.

GROVE

The three of you, yes, but—

PRISMATIC

If you wait for them to turn around and quietly make your way to the road—

GROVE

What if they do not turn around, but instead pursue the origin of the sound?

PRISMATIC

Play your fiddle.

GROVE

I do not know the song of the Dachshunds.

PRISMATIC

Do *Dotsun* and *Dachshund* really sound the same to you?

GROVE

Not to me, but I am only one man.

PRISMATIC

Play.

(GROVE walks a few paces away and begins to play.)

PRISMATIC

(To FERGUS and NESSA)

Turn, damn you.

SCONCE

Perhaps they do not hear the music.

PRISMATIC

They are closer to it than we are.

SCONCE

Perhaps our hearing is superior.

(FERGUS and NESSA take the picnic table off the stage.)

SCONCE

They are leaving, taking the bowls with them.

PYX

I am this desertion.

PRISMATIC

Grenadine!

GROVE

Is something the matter?

The Ulsters have left. **SCONCE**

Grenadine! **PRISMATIC**

Was she not gone already? **GROVE**

Gray, grim, grisly, gray! **PRISMATIC**

(Lights fade, then rise on an empty stage. The men reenter)

Was my playing not satisfactory? **GROVE**

They could not hear you. **SCONCE**

Have we decided on a gift for Grenadine? **GROVE**

You are no longer giving her mittens? **SCONCE**

I was never giving her mittens! **PRISMATIC**

Anything but a ring is still my suggestion. **GROVE**

Even last time I thought the ring unwise. **SCONCE**

You should have said something before we stole it. **GROVE**

I was proposing to her! When you propose to a woman you offer her a ring! **PRISMATIC**

SCONCE

It is too conventional. It is probably why she rejected you.

PRISMATIC

She rejected me because I am unconventional.

GROVE

What is your opinion, Pyx?

PRISMATIC

You are asking him?

GROVE

We need ideas.

PRISMATIC

Not his.

SCONCE

Did Grenadine say you were unconventional?

PRISMATIC

She implied it.

SCONCE

You are a mystery, Prismatic. So particular in your daily life, and yet in love, you rely on implication.

(They exit. The lights fade.)

SCENE 6

(Early morning. PRISMATIC, SCONCE, and GROVE are waking up.)

GROVE

Where is Pyx?

Over there. **PRISMATIC**

That could be anyone. **SCONCE**

Then it is Pyx, for he is all things. **PRISMATIC**

I see no one else. **GROVE**

That does not mean it is Pyx. **SCONCE**

Should we go after him? **GROVE**

SCONCE
What if it is not Pyx, and the actual Pyx returns, discovers that we are not here, and looks for us where we have not gone?

PRISMATIC
It will be his fault for leaving.

(PRISMATIC exits. The others follow. The day begins to brighten. PYX enters.)

PYX
I am this loneliness.

(The others enter.)

GROVE
You are not alone.

(PYX exits.)

GROVE
(To PRISMATIC)
He is sad because you did not want his gift idea. He is in need of our companionship.

It was he who left us. **PRISMATIC**

He is crying out. **GROVE**

He is always crying out. **PRISMATIC**

He is heading for the ocean. **SCONCE**

(They exit. The lights continue to brighten, glaring, dazzling. PYX enters.)

I am this sea. **PYX**

(PRISMATIC, SCONCE, and GROVE enter. PYX starts to walk off.)

He is going into the water. **SCONCE**

I am this absence. **PYX**

(He exits.)

I will join him, in case he gets trapped in the coral. **GROVE**

One does not get trapped in coral. **SCONCE**

Pyx might. **PRISMATIC**

Will you go with us? **GROVE**

PRISMATIC

I have been swimming with you once already.

(SCONCE and GROVE strip down to their briefs.)

PRISMATIC

Forgive us.

GROVE

Is it our ugliness you refer to?

PRISMATIC

You were ugly with your clothes on, but with them off—

SCONCE

Are we as ugly as that?

PRISMATIC

Uglier.

SCONCE

To the sea!

GROVE

To the sea!

(GROVE and SCONCE exit. PRISMATIC sits on the sand.)

SCONCE

(Offstage)

The water is up to his neck.

GROVE

We have not abandoned you, Pyx!

SCONCE

The water covers him.

(PRISMATIC stands.)

I am going in.

GROVE

Poseidon will guide us.

SCONCE

(PRISMATIC runs off, fully clothed. The stage is empty except for the pile of clothes and the fiddle. Several seconds pass.)

I have him!

GROVE

He was not easy to bring up.

SCONCE

It is me, you idiots!

PRISMATIC

(Pause. The lights fade to sunset. PRISMATIC, SCONCE, and GROVE reenter, sit, and face the ocean.)

We must have faith.

SCONCE

Have whatever you like. It has been over two hours.

PRISMATIC

Is that too long?

GROVE

(The lights fade to darkness, then rise. It is dawn, and the men are sitting as they were, still gazing at the sea.)

Perhaps we should say a few words, to let him know we think well of him.

GROVE

Even when Pyx was alive it was difficult to convey information to him.

PRISMATIC

Play your fiddle. He will shout, "I am this music," and we may make amends.

SCONCE

(To GROVE)

Pyx is done shouting.

PRISMATIC

We must have faith.

SCONCE

(GROVE plays. After a few seconds, the sound of seagulls is heard overhead. PRISMATIC looks up.)

Let us go.

PRISMATIC

(He exits. GROVE and SCONCE put on their clothes and follow. The lights fade, then rise on the OLD MAN SITTING ON THE SIDE OF THE ROAD. PRISMATIC, SCONCE, and GROVE enter.)

Abel, son of Adam.

SCONCE
(Aside)

Doubtful.

PRISMATIC

Was he not killed by Cain?

GROVE

He was kicked.

SCONCE

He was killed.

PRISMATIC

If he was killed, how do you explain his presence here?

SCONCE

This is not Abel.

PRISMATIC

Are you Abel?

SCONCE
(To the OLD MAN)

OLD MAN

Not anymore.

PRISMATIC

Can you tell us where to find some food?

OLD MAN

Down the road an old couple is selling tomatoes.

GROVE

I like tomatoes.

SCONCE

You do not seem pleased, Prismatic.

PRISMATIC

I am allergic to tomatoes.

GROVE

(To the OLD MAN)

Will you join us?

OLD MAN

I prefer to be alone.

GROVE

Have you always preferred it?

OLD MAN

Some of my companions left me, I left the others.

GROVE

We would never leave you.

OLD MAN

One seldom plans to.

GROVE

You are happy, then?

OLD MAN

I am sitting on a curb without prospects. You need not ask whether I am happy.

SCONCE

You are a plainspoken man. We are sorry you cannot join us.

OLD MAN

I envy your enthusiasm.

PRISMATIC

We are not enviable.

OLD MAN

You are still together.

PRISMATIC

But not enviable.

(He exits. SCONCE and GROVE follow. The lights fade, then rise on the OLD MAN and OLD WOMAN SELLING TOMATOES. PRISMATIC, SCONCE, and GROVE enter.)

SCONCE

(To PRISMATIC)

What happens when you eat tomatoes?

PRISMATIC

My face breaks out in a rash.

SCONCE

Have you tried creams?

PRISMATIC

I do not believe there are creams for such a rash.

SCONCE

There are creams for everything.

PRISMATIC

And where would I find them now?

SCONCE

Perhaps the old couple has some.

PRISMATIC

I have never come across a tomato stand that sells creams.

SCONCE

In certain provinces.

PRISMATIC

Not the ones I have been to.

GROVE

Why are we not enviable?

(They approach the tomato stand.)

OLD WOMAN

Three for a dollar.

(SCONCE and GROVE each pick out three tomatoes.
PRISMATIC hands the OLD WOMAN two dollars.)

OLD WOMAN

(To PRISMATIC)

None for you?

PRISMATIC

I am allergic to tomatoes.

GROVE

Succulent.

SCONCE

Succulent, indeed.

(PRISMATIC grabs a tomato and stuffs it in his mouth.)

OLD WOMAN

One dollar.

(PRISMATIC hands the OLD WOMAN a dollar and devours two more tomatoes. SCONCE and GROVE eat slowly, gazing at PRISMATIC. PRISMATIC clenches his fists, fighting the urge to scratch. He cannot resist for long and begins to scratch his face.)

GROVE

It would be better if you did not scratch.

OLD WOMAN

His face swells.

PRISMATIC

Grenadine!

GROVE

He refers to his love. Perhaps you could help us think of a gift for her.

SCONCE

Tell him an engagement ring is too conventional.

GROVE

She declined the first one, which we stole from a pawn shop.

OLD WOMAN

My husband, too, did not have enough money for a ring, so he put his finger around my own and said he would keep it there always if I wished.

GROVE

(To SCONCE)

That is a much better idea.

SCONCE

We are not as smart as we seem.

PRISMATIC

Grenadine!

OLD WOMAN

What is her occupation?

GROVE

She worked at the pier with the four of us.

OLD WOMAN

There are only three of you.

GROVE

Forgive me, there used to be four. She operated the carousel. The four of us were custodians.

OLD WOMAN

Perhaps he could give her a ceramic pony.

GROVE

He has given her horses before. He would spend his wages, often our wages too, on the games at the pier, throwing rings around the green bottles, flipping frogs onto lily pads, knocking over tin cans. Afterward, he would bring her the horses he had won. She said she wanted real horses, not the lifeless ones of the pier.

OLD WOMAN

If she did not want those horses, why did he keep bringing her more?

GROVE

He could not afford real ones. He said he would steal all the horses in Camelot if she would marry him. It turned out she was not interested in the horses of Camelot but in the ones in the park overlooking the pier.

OLD WOMAN

(To the OLD MAN)

If she loved him it would not matter.

(The OLD MAN nods.)

GROVE

At least we do not have to go to Camelot.

PRISMATIC

Grenadine!

(The lights fade, then rise on an empty stage as the three men reenter.)

Lovely people. **GROVE**

The gentleman said little. **SCONCE**

He said nothing. **PRISMATIC**

But was still lovely. **GROVE**

And the tomatoes were succulent. **SCONCE**

How is your face? **GROVE**
(To PRISMATIC)

You are looking at it. **PRISMATIC**

It is a good thing Grenadine is not here to observe it. **SCONCE**

It is my belief that we are better off with blemishes, as our ugliness can be attributed thereto. **GROVE**

Play your fiddle. **PRISMATIC**

(GROVE plays. The GIRL and BOY enter.)

Romulus and Remus. **SCONCE**
(Aside)

Romulus and Remus were boys. **PRISMATIC**

Remus was a girl.
SCONCE

He was a boy.
PRISMATIC

He plays well, does he not?
SCONCE
(To the BOY and GIRL)

(The BOY and GIRL smile. GROVE stops playing.)
GROVE

Do you like the fiddle?

We are six.
GIRL

You are two.
SCONCE

She refers to their age.
PRISMATIC

Then they are twelve.
SCONCE

Unless they are each three.
GROVE

They are not each three.
SCONCE

Are you two loons?
BOY

Keen lad.
PRISMATIC

We never met a loon.
GIRL

As you grow older. **PRISMATIC**

As they grow older what? **SCONCE**

They will meet more and more loons. **PRISMATIC**

I want to be a loon. **BOY**

I want to be a loon, too. **GIRL**

Be something else. **PRISMATIC**

But I want to be one. **BOY**

And I want to be one, too. **GIRL**

Do you really want to be like us? **GROVE**

(The BOY and GIRL nod fervently.)

Would you like to help us find his Grenadine? **GROVE**

We are going to be loons! **GIRL**

They cannot come with us. They have parents and so forth. **PRISMATIC**

Everyone has parents. **GROVE**

(The MOTHER and FATHER enter.)

MOTHER

Get away from them!

FATHER

Did I tell you you could leave us?

MOTHER

Did they touch you?

SCONCE

So many questions.

PRISMATIC

We did not touch them.

FATHER

Did I ask you to speak?

SCONCE

If you did, I did not hear you.

FATHER

I asked neither him nor you to speak.

SCONCE

In all fairness we did not ask you to speak either.

BOY

We are finding Grenadine!

GIRL

And becoming loons!

MOTHER

Kidnappers!

FATHER

You think you can take our children!

SCONCE

It would have been possible, but Prismatic would not let us because he said they had parents and sofas.

GROVE

He did not say “sofas,” he said “so forth.”

SCONCE

I do not know this so forth.

(The MOTHER and FATHER pull the GIRL and BOY away.)

BOY

But I want to go with them!

GIRL

I want to be a loon!

(The GIRL and BOY exit with their MOTHER and FATHER. PRISMATIC, SCONCE, and GROVE look on. The lights fade.)

SCENE 7

(Lights rise on SCONCE kneeling before a plant. PRISMATIC and GROVE stand behind him.)

SCONCE

This plant is edible and also has several medicinal properties. I know of no better remedy for reducing a fever, especially if the fever is accompanied by dizziness, nausea, shortness of breath, and cramps.

GROVE

Quite the fever.

SCONCE

When Sir Galahad—

Sir Galahad?

PRISMATIC

SCONCE

When Sir Galahad was taken with such a fever, we fed him the leaves and stems of this plant, for both are edible, and not only did it alleviate his infirmity, it also removed his wart.

Sir Galahad had a wart?

PRISMATIC

SCONCE

On his thumb.

GROVE

I have a wart on my thumb.

SCONCE

This plant would remove it.

PRISMATIC

Do not listen to him.

GROVE

You are fond of my wart?

PRISMATIC

It is not your wart that concerns me.

SCONCE

Galahad, too, had reservations.

PRISMATIC

I want you to think for a moment, Grove. I want you to think of Sconce, and of this plant, and of Galahad most of all.

GROVE

I realize I am not his equal, but our warts are similarly placed.

SCONCE

His was on the other thumb, but that should not make a difference.

(GROVE takes a bite from the plant. The lights fade, then rise a moment later.)

GROVE

I do not feel well.

PRISMATIC

He has a temperature.

SCONCE

We all do.

GROVE

I am also a bit dizzy.

SCONCE

Give it time.

GROVE

Seasick.

PRISMATIC

He begins to sweat.

GROVE

Short of breath.

SCONCE

Have patience.

GROVE

Cramps.

PRISMATIC

You are killing Grove!

GROVE

My wart remains.

SCONCE

Perhaps you need both the fever and the wart.

I *have* both the fever and the wart. **GROVE**

I mean before you eat the plant. **SCONCE**

If you think so. **GROVE**

Grenadine! **PRISMATIC**

(GROVE takes another bite. The lights fade, then rise.)

He is practically yellow. **PRISMATIC**

I feel worse. **GROVE**

I cannot explain it. **SCONCE**

Would you like me to help you? **PRISMATIC**

Perhaps he should have eaten only the stems. **SCONCE**

I will not allow you to feed him more of this plant. **PRISMATIC**

You wish him to remain sick? **SCONCE**

I am this plant! **GROVE**

Do you know what this means? **SCONCE**

He is hallucinating. **PRISMATIC**

He sounds like Pyx. **SCONCE**

I am this illness! **GROVE**

Perhaps since Pyx is all things he is now Grove, and with this plant we have recovered them both. **SCONCE**

Grenadine! **GROVE**

We have found her! **SCONCE**

Do you hear my cries and my shouts and my lamentations and my fears! **GROVE**

He is turning into you too now. **SCONCE**

We are not as smart as we seem! **GROVE**

And into you. **PRISMATIC**

It is difficult to decipher indeed. **SCONCE**

(PRISMATIC puts his arm around GROVE.) **PRISMATIC**

Help me support him. **SCONCE**

It is beyond my reckoning. **SCONCE**

PRISMATIC

There is much beyond your reckoning.

SCONCE

Sir Galahad could not have lived without my help.

PRISMATIC

If only the rest of us were as fortunate.

(PRISMATIC and SCONCE help GROVE off. The lights fade.)

SCENE 8

(The SISTER OF THE BRIDE, FATHER OF THE BRIDE, and MOTHER OF THE BRIDE are standing around nervously. PRISMATIC, SCONCE, and GROVE enter.)

SISTER OF THE BRIDE

Are you the band?

FATHER OF THE BRIDE

Did we not hire more than just a fiddler?

MOTHER OF THE BRIDE

They are vagrants.

GROVE

We have been called ugly, too.

SISTER OF THE BRIDE

I think the fiddle a beautiful instrument.

FATHER OF THE BRIDE

Tell your sister the music has arrived.

(The FATHER and MOTHER OF THE BRIDE exit. The SISTER OF THE BRIDE lingers for a moment, gazing at GROVE.)

PRISMATIC

(To SCONCE)

Do you notice this?

SCONCE

She thinks the fiddle a beautiful instrument.

PRISMATIC

But Grove?

SCONCE

He is a handsome man.

PRISMATIC

He is not.

(The SISTER OF THE BRIDE exits.)

GROVE

I do not know what to play.

SCONCE

Your fiddle.

(The three men exit. The lights fade.)

SCENE 9

(The lights rise on GROVE playing his fiddle. SCONCE dances frantically with the MOTHER OF THE BRIDE, swinging her around. PRISMATIC and the FATHER OF THE BRIDE stand off to the side. The SISTER OF THE BRIDE gazes at GROVE.)

PRISMATIC

He plays well, does he not?

FATHER OF THE BRIDE

Indeed, but I still maintain I hired more than just a fiddler.

PRISMATIC

Is there something wrong with your other daughter?

FATHER OF THE BRIDE

She prefers unattractive men. I suppose because of me.

PRISMATIC

You are one thing, Grove another.

MOTHER OF THE BRIDE

Help!

FATHER OF THE BRIDE

Should I worry about your other companion?

PRISMATIC

He thinks he helped Galahad search for the Grail.

FATHER OF THE BRIDE

It is good to exercise the imagination.

PRISMATIC

Sconce does more than exercise it.

FATHER OF THE BRIDE

Too often we distrust our imaginations.

PRISMATIC

Sconce trusts nothing else.

FATHER OF THE BRIDE

More of us should think we traveled with Galahad.

(GROVE stops playing. SCONCE stops swinging the MOTHER OF THE BRIDE around. She totters about. The FATHER OF THE BRIDE helps her offstage. The SISTER OF THE BRIDE continues to gaze at GROVE.)

SISTER OF THE BRIDE

(To GROVE)

Where are you going now?

(GROVE does not respond.)

PRISMATIC

Answer her, Grove.

SISTER OF THE BRIDE

(To GROVE)

I was hoping you would be staying here for awhile.

(GROVE remains speechless.)

PRISMATIC

Go to it, Grove.

GROVE

We are searching for his Grenadine.

PRISMATIC

Stop it, Grove!

GROVE

What is it?

PRISMATIC

Consider the odds that a young woman with a fondness for fiddles, of fine appearance, of adequate means, of good health—

SCONCE

Do we know if she is in good health?

PRISMATIC

Likes you, Grove, in spite of your unsavory appearance, your lack of means, your lack of good health. Consider the odds!

GROVE

Are they that small?

PRISMATIC

Smaller!

GROVE

You are my friends.

PRISMATIC

Forget us! Just look at us for a moment!

SCONCE

How can he forget us if he is to look at us?

GROVE

I have already looked at you.

SCONCE

He is looking at us even now.

PRISMATIC

How could you possibly wish to remain with us? We are unsightly, unseemly, untenable.

SCONCE

You present a foul portrait.

PRISMATIC

We are a foul portrait!

GROVE

Does it matter if we are a foul portrait?

(The MOTHER and FATHER OF THE BRIDE enter.)

SISTER OF THE BRIDE

I have to go soon.

GROVE

I have no conception of time.

PRISMATIC

Damn it, Grove!

SISTER OF THE BRIDE

You can stay in my sister's room.

(The MOTHER OF THE BRIDE whimpers. The FATHER OF THE BRIDE helps her offstage.)

GROVE

(To PRISMATIC)

You do not want me to come with you?

PRISMATIC

You have come with us long enough.

GROVE

I do not understand.

PRISMATIC

I command you, Grove.

(GROVE walks off with the SISTER OF THE BRIDE, then stops at the edge of the stage and turns around.)

GROVE

I will remember you.

PRISMATIC

Forget us, as we will forget you.

(GROVE exits with the SISTER OF THE BRIDE.)

SCONCE

You were unkind to Grove.

PRISMATIC

No one has ever been kinder to him.

(He bends over in pain.)

SCONCE

Did I not tell you to eat less?

PRISMATIC

It had been days since I had eaten.

SCONCE

You will listen to me next time.

PRISMATIC

I will kill you when I have the strength.

SCONCE

Cuchulainn was a fractious companion, but, I maintain, no more fractious than you.

PRISMATIC

Cuchulainn? The Irish Achilles?

SCONCE

The noblest of the Ulsters, and as irritable as a goat.

PRISMATIC

You knew him?

SCONCE

I remember once he slapped me for no reason.

PRISMATIC

I can think of several reasons he may have slapped you.

SCONCE

“Why did you just slap me?” I asked him. But he did not know why he had just slapped me.

PRISMATIC

Had you been speaking, because I find that when you speak—

SCONCE

I moved to the other side of our group, but he followed me and slapped me again. “You have slapped me again,” I said. “I have,” said Cuchulainn. I returned to the other side of our group. He followed me and slapped me a third time. “Is there no stopping this?” I asked. “It is impossible to say,” said Cuchulainn. I paused and waited for him to advance with the rest of our group, but he remained beside me. At last I set out, and he slapped me once more.

PRISMATIC

There he cannot be blamed.

(PRISMATIC exits. SCONCE follows. The lights fade.)

SCENE 10

(The OLD WOMAN PAINTING A LANDSCAPE is seated by her easel. PRISMATIC and SCONCE enter.)

SCONCE

(Aside)

Sibyl.

PRISMATIC

I no longer respond to this.

SCONCE

You deny my report?

PRISMATIC

Sibyl, the seer?

SCONCE

She.

PRISMATIC

Whom Apollo gave eternal life?

SCONCE

Would she be here if he had not?

PRISMATIC

Who forgot to ask for eternal youth?

SCONCE

Do you not detect her aged appearance?

PRISMATIC

This is that Sibyl?

SCONCE

Who else?

PRISMATIC

(To the OLD WOMAN)

Sibyl.

(The OLD WOMAN does not reply.)

PRISMATIC

(To SCONCE)

Sibyl forgot to ask for eternal hearing, too.

SCONCE

Sibyl does not respond, because you have no faith.

PRISMATIC

(To the OLD WOMAN)

Sibyl, if I had faith, would you respond to me?

SCONCE

You cannot trick Sibyl.

PRISMATIC

You cannot do anything to Sibyl.

SCONCE

I believe I know what the trouble is.

PRISMATIC

This is not Sibyl.

SCONCE

As Sibyl began to age, we began to lose confidence in her powers of prediction.

PRISMATIC

We?

SCONCE

As she grew older, we no longer consulted her, so that now, though her augury be as potent as before, she refuses to answer.

PRISMATIC

You think that this woman before us, painting this landscape, is Sybil, the seer, who pretends not to hear us because we doubt her prophesies, on account of her shrunken appearance, apropos of her misunderstanding with Apollo two thousand five hundred years ago over the meaning of eternity?

SCONCE

Is there another explanation?

OLD WOMAN

(Suddenly turning on them)

How long do you two nincompoops plan to stand above me and waste my day with your words? I come here for silence and serenity, and instead I am subjected to two idiots insulting my appearance and disturbing me in the modest pursuit of my work.

PRISMATIC

I apologize. You will appreciate the difficulty I have dealing with this imbecile.

OLD WOMAN

I daresay it is no easier to deal with you.

SCONCE

Prismatic has his faults, especially his irritability, equal to that of Cuchulainn, but he is a good man, Sybil, and together you and I, who have never denied your power of prophesy, can convince him that though you shrivel to a ball of string, it is better to seek you before any Cassandra, fair and lithe though she be.

PRISMATIC

(To the OLD WOMAN)

You do not believe he is more difficult to deal with?

OLD WOMAN

He has finished speaking, you have not.

SCONCE

We will go now. I have said what needed to be said.

(SCONCE exits, and PRISMATIC grumblingly follows.
The lights fade, then rise on the empty stage as
PRISMATIC and SCONCE reenter.)

SCONCE

She reminds me in her perseverance of Cuchulainn. In his final battle he was cudged in the abdomen.

PRISMATIC

Every word of yours is like a cudgel to the abdomen.

SCONCE

In order to keep fighting he strapped himself to a rock.

PRISMATIC

In the middle of battle?

SCONCE

How else?

PRISMATIC

His combatants simply waited for him?

SCONCE

I do not understand your question.

PRISMATIC

Why did someone not cudgel his head while he was strapping himself to the rock?

SCONCE

You underestimate Cuchulainn's ability.

PRISMATIC

Someone managed to cudgel his abdomen.

SCONCE

Cuchulainn did combat with fifty men at once.

PRISMATIC

All the more reason someone ought to have cudged his head as he strapped himself to the rock.

SCONCE

May I continue?

PRISMATIC

You acknowledge my point.

SCONCE

I acknowledge your lack of faith.

(They exit. The lights fade to early evening. PRISMATIC and SCONCE reenter.)

PRISMATIC

I thought you were going to continue.

SCONCE

I will not allow you to insult Cuchulainn.

PRISMATIC

I was not insulting him. I was questioning his ability to fight off fifty men while strapping himself to a rock.

SCONCE

Cuchulainn was trained by Scathach.

PRISMATIC

Regardless of who trained him, to strap oneself to a rock requires both hands, and I do not see how a man without hands can fight off fifty men with cudgels.

SCONCE

Scathach taught him how to jump.

PRISMATIC

There too I am in doubt, for I do not see how one can jump effectively after having been cudgeled in the abdomen.

SCONCE

That is why I speak of his perseverance. He fought until all his blood had run from him.

PRISMATIC

I thought you said he was cudgeled.

SCONCE

It was a spiked cudgel.

PRISMATIC

A spiked cudgel! And still no one could strike him as he strapped himself to the rock.

SCONCE

I speak of the death of a great warrior and friend, and you can only mock.

PRISMATIC

You consider him your friend though he slapped you in the face for no reason?

SCONCE

I consider you my friend, though your mockery hurts worse than any hand.

(They exit. The lights fade.)

SCENE 11

(The BEEKEEPER is standing before a hive in his protective gear. The sound of swarming bees is heard. PRISMATIC and SCONCE enter.)

PRISMATIC

Good afternoon.

BEEKEEPER

You are agitating the bees.

PRISMATIC

Is it not their normal state to be agitated?

BEEKEEPER

Move along.

PRISMATIC

May we take a jar of honey?

BEEKEEPER

You may not.

(He exits.)

PRISMATIC

(To SCONCE, pointing offstage)

The honey must be in that shanty.

SCONCE

We will ask the beekeeper to reconsider when he returns.

PRISMATIC

We will not wait for him to say no.

SCONCE

We cannot know what he will say until we ask.

PRISMATIC

We will argue about this later.

(He walks off. SCONCE follows. Their ensuing dialogue takes place offstage.)

PRISMATIC

Help me carry them.

SCONCE

We have gained nothing from stealing.

PRISMATIC

We have gained nothing from starving.

BEEKEEPER

Did I not tell you to move along?

PRISMATIC

So many jars remain to you, let us take these two.

BEEKEEPER

You have five seconds before I set these bees upon you.

SCONCE

If Grove were here he would tell you he had no conception of time.

PRISMATIC

I have not seen my love in years. If I do not eat soon—

BEEKEEPER

What is your love to me?

PRISMATIC

What are two jars of honey to you?

BEEKEEPER

More than your love.

SCONCE

Has it not been five seconds?

BEEKEEPER

It has.

PRISMATIC

Two jars, damn you!

(The sound of swarming bees is heard. It becomes much louder as PRISMATIC and SCONCE reenter and race across the stage, PRISMATIC carrying two jars of honey.)

SCONCE

No crime of ours goes unpunished!

PRISMATIC

You are the punishment!

(They exit. The sound of bees fades. The lights fade, then rise as PRISMATIC and SCONCE reenter, run onto the stage and collapse. PRISMATIC tries in vain to open one of the jars. He looks at his hands.)

PRISMATIC

How long will it take for this swelling to go down?

SCONCE

Several hours, I maintain.

PRISMATIC

I shall wait until morning, then.

(The lights fade, then rise to dawn. PRISMATIC is sleeping. SCONCE sits a few feet away. PRISMATIC wakes up and looks around.)

PRISMATIC

Where is the honey?

SCONCE

I love you, Prismatic.

PRISMATIC

Where is the honey, damn you!

SCONCE

In the sea.

PRISMATIC

In the what!

SCONCE

I would have returned it to the beekeeper, but you might have gone looking for me, and we might not have found each other.

PRISMATIC

You think I would have gone looking for you!

SCONCE

We can ask the beekeeper to reconsider now.

PRISMATIC

Why are you doing this to me!

SCONCE

We are not thieves.

PRISMATIC

Why are you starving me!

SCONCE

There will be more food.

PRISMATIC

I am leaving you!

(He starts to go. SCONCE starts to follow.)

PRISMATIC

Do not follow me.

(He exits. SCONCE remains where he is. The lights fade.)

SCENE 12

(PRISMATIC enters.)

PRISMATIC

Idiot! How improved is my situation. No faith, he tells me. No faith in that imbecile. I would never have found you, Grenadine. Now we will be reunited. I can almost see you.

(He exits. The lights fade to sunset. He reenters.)

PRISMATIC

I have to get off this road. I have to go where there are more people. Do not worry, Grenadine, I will find a side road, and we will be reunited. I will bring you a sunflower. I do not know where I will find one of those, either. But I will find one. A sunflower and a side road. For my gossamer gay gosling. For my sun. For my Grenadine.

(He exits. The lights fade to twilight. He reenters.)

PRISMATIC

Where is everyone? I know there are more people on the Earth than this. Deserts have more people. Hello there! Anyone? Perhaps this is a desert. But I cannot go back. That idiot might want to rejoin me. Not that I would let him. I am free of him, of him and of his fellow idiots. If only I could find a side road, and a sunflower.

(He exits. The lights fade to moonlight. He reenters.)

PRISMATIC

Where am I? There still must be cities on this Earth. Any sign of life would be positive. Have you thought of me often, Grenadine?

(“Grenadine” echoes back to him. PRISMATIC stops.)

PRISMATIC

Play your fiddle, Grove.

(Pause)

I said, Play your fiddle.

(He turns to where he expects GROVE to be.)

It is getting late.

(He lies down.)

How much better I shall sleep without them.

(The lights fade.)

SCENE 13

(Dawn. PRISMATIC is sleeping. The TWO-LEGGED DACHSHUND rests beside him, his hind legs in a buggy. PRISMATIC rises.)

PRISMATIC

Welcome, Dotsun. How was the picnic? I suppose you cannot speak.

(The DACHSHUND takes a few steps closer to PRISMATIC, and the buggy wheels squeak as he struggles forward.)

PRISMATIC

You must be hungry.

(The DACHSHUND barks feebly.)

Control your excitement. I have had little success in obtaining food, or in partaking of the right amount. Sconce and the others, admittedly, were often impediments to my attempts, but now it seems our prospects are fewer. Perhaps there is a rabbit bounding about, but I do not see you catching him in that buggy of yours. It appears I shall have to maintain this conversation for both of us.

(PRISMATIC rises and starts to walk off. The DACHSHUND follows, but stops soon afterward.)

PRISMATIC

I am thoughtless. Forgive me.

(He attempts to pick up the DACHSHUND, which immediately begins to bark.)

PRISMATIC

A proud fellow. But you must try to keep up.

(He walks offstage. The DACHSHUND follows. Day begins to brighten. PRISMATIC and the DACHSHUND reenter.)

PRISMATIC

In case you are interested, we are returning to my Grenadine. At your rate, it will take us some time. But perhaps some time will make her miss me more. She is as round as the sun and I love her. Occasionally you will hear me shout her name. Do not be startled. She is my gossamer gay gosling and her glands are aglow. I was too hasty in my initial pursuit of her. Women do not like haste, they like slow-moving creatures like yourself. I must use you as a guide, if you do not mind.

(The DACHSHUND veers off, exiting.)

Where are you going? I have not offended you, I hope?

(PRISMATIC exits. The lights fade, then rise on a shanty. The DACHSHUND enters, followed by PRISMATIC.)

PRISMATIC

Good work!

(PRISMATIC walks up to the shanty and knocks. The COOK opens the door, wearing a bloodstained apron.)

PRISMATIC

We would like something to eat.

(The COOK looks down at the DACHSHUND.)

COOK

No dogs.

PRISMATIC

We will wait out here. We do not mind.

COOK

We do not serve dogs.

PRISMATIC

You may serve me, and I will serve the dog.

COOK

We would still be serving him.

PRISMATIC

What if I promise not to do so?

COOK

You would be lying.

(He closes the door.)

PRISMATIC

Do not worry. We will persuade him.

(He knocks. No answer.)

He is assessing our fortitude.

(He knocks again.)

Fortitude is essential.

(The COOK opens the door.)

PRISMATIC

(Indicating the DACHSHUND)

Do you not perceive his injury?

COOK

We serve no dogs!

PRISMATIC

We will pay you.

COOK

How much?

PRISMATIC

No money per se, but the dog will do tricks.

With two legs? **COOK**

All the more impressive the tricks. **PRISMATIC**

What sort of tricks? **COOK**

He will dance. **PRISMATIC**

Let me see. **COOK**

He must have a full stomach. **PRISMATIC**

(The COOK closes the door.)

He is deliberating. **PRISMATIC**
(To the DACHSHUND)

(PRISMATIC knocks. The COOK flings the door open.)

Scraps! Feed us scraps! **PRISMATIC**

You have three seconds. **COOK**

Three seconds is sufficient. **PRISMATIC**

Get out! **COOK**

We are out! **PRISMATIC**

COOK

Get the hell out of here!

PRISMATIC

I already told you—

(The COOK swipes at PRISMATIC with the back of his hand. PRISMATIC ducks. The DACHSHUND barks. The COOK slams the door.)

PRISMATIC

We will go around. There will be garbage. The difference between garbage and food is merely the presentation. If anything, garbage is superior, as it has had time to marinate.

(PRISMATIC and the DACHSHUND walk to the side of the shanty. The sound of buzzing flies is heard.)

PRISMATIC

Do not let the flies trouble you. They are simply pointing out to us that the beef is of good quality and suitable to our needs.

(The DACHSHUND rummages in the garbage. PRISMATIC bends over and picks up a plate of food.)

PRISMATIC

Maggots, too, remind us that the food is of good quality. We must remember that we are all sprung from the same Earth, nurtured by the same air, the same sun, all of us mortal and regenerative, sharing a common evolutionary stage—algae, bacteria, sponges—only a few thousand years removed, according to Grove.

(The DACHSHUND remains in the garbage.)

PRISMATIC

Let us perceive it from the perspective of a child.

(He picks up a piece of gristle from his plate.)

Let us—

(The back door opens. The COOK stands with a garbage bag in his hand.)

PRISMATIC

You said nothing about the garbage.

COOK

You are the garbage, and I said go to hell.

(The COOK brings the garbage inside, including PRISMATIC's plate, and closes the door.)

PRISMATIC

(To the DACHSHUND)

Come, we do not want his garbage, anyway.

(He starts to walk off. The DACHSHUND follows.)

We are too good for garbage.

(They exit. The lights fade, then rise as PRISMATIC and the DACHSHUND reenter.)

PRISMATIC

That man was cruel, was he not? A descendant of bacteria. You would have liked Grove. He believed your kind could host picnics. Sconce, of course, thought the hosts were Ulsters. Pyx thought the hosts were Pyx. Pyx who is now drowned.

(The DACHSHUND stops.)

PRISMATIC

It is too early to stop. We must find a gift for Grenadine.

(The DACHSHUND slumps to the ground.)

PRISMATIC

Tomorrow you must try harder.

(He sits down beside the DACHSHUND.)

What do you think of mittens?

(The lights fade.)

SCENE 14

(The FISHERMAN, smoking a pipe, is tugging his boat ashore. PRISMATIC and the DACHSHUND enter.)

PRISMATIC

A good day at sea?

FISHERMAN

A bluefin tuna. *Thunnus Thynnus*.

PRISMATIC

Thunnus Thynnus! It must be eight feet.

FISHERMAN

Nine.

PRISMATIC

Do you need help eating it?

FISHERMAN

I am taking it to town to sell.

PRISMATIC

There is a town?

FISHERMAN

A few miles down.

PRISMATIC

Let us help you transport it, for a small percentage of the sale, so we can buy some food and a pair of mittens.

FISHERMAN

(Indicating the DACHSHUND)

What happened to his legs?

PRISMATIC

He found me this way. I have not seen my love in years.

FISHERMAN

Perhaps you are not meant for each other.

PRISMATIC

Will you let us help you?

FISHERMAN

I have a buggy of my own.

PRISMATIC

That fish must be two hundred pounds. We could take turns.

FISHERMAN

That is not necessary.

PRISMATIC

May we at least accompany you, in case you change your mind?

FISHERMAN

I never change it.

PRISMATIC

May we accompany you, all the same?

FISHERMAN

You may not.

PRISMATIC

Have you no pity for the dachshund?

FISHERMAN

I am not fond of dogs.

PRISMATIC

The whole purpose of pity is to have it where one is not fond.

FISHERMAN

I weary of this conversation.

PRISMATIC

We will see you in town.

(PRISMATIC exits. The DACHSHUND follows. The lights fade, then rise on the empty stage as PRISMATIC and the DACHSHUND reenter.)

PRISMATIC

Not fond of dogs. Just a few miles, you will see. No slacking now.

(They exit. The lights dim to pre-sunset. PRISMATIC and the DACHSHUND reenter.)

PRISMATIC

Where in hell is this town? Perhaps the fisherman has underestimated the distance, or has a strange conception of “a few.”

(The DACHSHUND slumps to the ground.)

PRISMATIC

We cannot rest. We are almost there.

(The GENTLEMAN enters in a white suit, smiling and twirling a white cane.)

PRISMATIC

This gentleman will be able to tell us. Greetings. I like your suit. How far is it to the town?

GENTLEMAN

Town? There is no town in this direction.

PRISMATIC

No need for humor, my good man. You see the condition of my dog, my own, too, for that matter.

GENTLEMAN

There is only the ocean behind me.

PRISMATIC

Then where are you coming from?

GENTLEMAN

That is not a useful question.

Answer me, anyway.

PRISMATIC

I please not to.

GENTLEMAN

Stop smiling and answer my damn question.

PRISMATIC

You are aggravated.

GENTLEMAN

I would be less aggravated if you answered my question.

PRISMATIC

I will not.

GENTLEMAN

Would you like to know what I think of that suit?

PRISMATIC

It is not necessary.

GENTLEMAN

It is more than not necessary.

PRISMATIC

I wish you all the best.

GENTLEMAN

(The GENTLEMAN starts to walk off.)

To hell with you.

PRISMATIC

(The GENTLEMAN exits.)

Come, I am sure he is lying.

PRISMATIC

(The DACHSHUND gets up. PRISMATIC starts to walk off. The DACHSHUND slumps to the ground.)

PRISMATIC

I know you are tired. You think I am not tired? Do you know what Sconce would tell you? You are not a dachshund in a buggy, you are Pegasus, a winged horse. Pyx would have you say, "I am these wings, I am this Pegasus." I suspect we shall arrive before sundown, within the hour, I would say. Yes, I am convinced of it. I know they say not to be convinced of anything because then it will not come true, but to hell with them and their sayings. I fly in their faces, if you know what I mean.

(He starts to go; the DACHSHUND rises and follows.)

Yes, the sun will be setting as we turn the corner, and there it will be, like Gibraltar or Jericho or one of the others. I fly in their faces!

(They exit. The lights fade, then rise on a deep orange sunset. PRISMATIC and the DACHSHUND reenter.)

PRISMATIC

You see, the sun is setting. Half my prediction has come true. In a few steps we will see the town. Like Atlantis it will rise—

(PRISMATIC stops suddenly, drops to his knees. The DACHSHUND slumps beside him.)

Remind me to tell the fisherman there is no town in this direction. He must have run into some difficulties not to have overtaken us. Perhaps he will stumble upon us tonight, and in the morning we will share his fish. He cannot refuse us now.

(The lights dim to darkness.)

SCENE 15

(Dawn. PRISMATIC is sitting with the DACHSHUND resting his chin on PRISMATIC's foot.)

PRISMATIC

"Come with me, Grenadine," I said. "We will live up in the Andes and raise vicuñas with our children. The huts. The huts at night, Grenadine. The sapajou monkeys and the chinchillas, the vampire bats with their crushed snouts and their fangs. We will fight them off, Grenadine." It was a beautiful speech. I do not understand how she could have given the engagement ring and the stuffed unicorn back to me.

(PRISMATIC rises.)

PRISMATIC

Come, the fisherman did not make it.

(He starts off. The DACHSHUND follows.)

We will walk along the beach. Perhaps there will be a side trail.

(PRISMATIC exits. The DACHSHUND follows. The lights fade, then rise on the YOUNG MOTHER, standing in front of a tent. PRISMATIC and the DACHSHUND enter.)

PRISMATIC

Is there a town in this direction?

(The YOUNG MOTHER puts a finger to her lips.)

PRISMATIC

(Whispering)

A town?

YOUNG MOTHER

About twelve miles.

PRISMATIC

(To the DACHSHUND)

I told you there was a town.

YOUNG MOTHER

Tell him more softly.

PRISMATIC

Do you have any food?

YOUNG MOTHER

Only for my son and me.

PRISMATIC

How old is he?

Seven. **YOUNG MOTHER**

Anything at all? **PRISMATIC**

I only bring what is necessary. **YOUNG MOTHER**

We have not eaten in days. Well, the dachshund ate two days ago, but I— **PRISMATIC**

I must think of my child. **YOUNG MOTHER**

I thank you all the same, for the directions to town. **PRISMATIC**

(PRISMATIC starts to go, but the DACHSHUND does not follow.)

PRISMATIC
(To the DACHSHUND)
Come, she has no food for us.

Perhaps I could find him something. **YOUNG MOTHER**

PRISMATIC
(To the DACHSHUND)
It is only twelve miles.

Just follow the path. When you reach the main road, you have three miles to go. **YOUNG MOTHER**

PRISMATIC
(To the DACHSHUND)
I cannot blame you, of course.

I will take care of him. **YOUNG MOTHER**

PRISMATIC

If you see a fisherman with a large tuna, tell him the town is this way.

(PRISMATIC exits. The lights fade, then rise on the empty stage as he reenters.)

PRISMATIC

A kind woman. It would not have been right to take food from the boy. And how much faster I am moving without the dachshund. Only a few miles to go. I should see the road soon, and then the town.

(PRISMATIC exits. The lights fade to twilight. He reenters. The sound of seagulls and waves. PRISMATIC stops.)

PRISMATIC

Maybe the town is under water. Wherever you wish, Grenadine. Antarctica or El Dorado.

(PYX enters.)

PRISMATIC

Pyx. I am reduced to hallucinations.

PYX

I am this return.

(SCONCE enters, carrying two jars of honey covered with barnacles.)

SCONCE

I told you, with faith, he would drift ashore.

PRISMATIC

He is at the bottom of the sea.

SCONCE

We did not swim out far enough.

PRISMATIC

We searched for hours.

SCONCE

Not out far enough. He must have joined Nereus, wise man of the sea.

PRISMATIC

I was wrong to abandon you, Sconce.

SCONCE

I have been following at a safe distance. You missed the turnoff to the main road.

PRISMATIC

You might have said something.

SCONCE

I thought you might still be angry with me.

PRISMATIC

I am angry with you now for not saying something.

(GROVE enters.)

GROVE

Pyx?

PYX

I am this companion.

GROVE

What is happening?

PRISMATIC

I am sorry she ended it, Grove.

GROVE

It was I who left her.

PRISMATIC

Then I beseech you to go back.

GROVE

You are not happy to see me?

PRISMATIC

We have seen you. Now go before the sight of you becomes permanent.

GROVE

She did not need me as you need me.

PRISMATIC

As to needing you—

PYX

I am this happiness.

GROVE

Have we thought of a gift for Grenadine?

SCONCE

I have thought of several.

PRISMATIC

Play your fiddle, Grove.

SCONCE

You will not be able to hear my ideas.

PRISMATIC

Play loudly.

(GROVE plays.)

PYX

I am this music.

(They exit. The lights fade. Curtain.)