



*The Asleep At The Switch Writer's Workshop
and
Atomic Armadillo Pictures
and
Operetta on Steroids

presents
a Trifle in Four Acts

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"Three Gentlemen of Shirona"

Sea Gentleman
Land Gentleman
Air Gentleman
Alliaceae the Witch (Narrator)
Nit

The Seven Daughters:

Sterope
Merope
Electra
Maia
Taygeta
Celaeno
Alcyone

Preacher
Lord Mayor
Jane
Edward
Constable
Tim
The Shipwright
Patience
Ally Cadabra

“Three Gentlemen of Shirona”

The PROLOGUE also being that which is commonly known as THE OVERTURE

This BEING the first APPEARANCE of the WITCH ALLIACEAE, or simply the NARRATOR. Entering thus into a semi-darkness of no discernable bound.

NARRATOR:

O, Shirona, fair, and broad, we have but one simple rule, and ask this of all who would perhaps by chance, perhaps then again not, stumble upon our humble place, we are a quiet and simple folk really, and ask but one tiny request...we ever so frightfully would wish that you would leave us ALONE.

But into this peace and placidness one day would wander three gentlemen, seemingly cut from the very fabric of the world itself. Each would come from three directions commonly known; one by Sea, one by Air, and one by Land. They would learn much from us, and be on, each in their own turn their way, that which our God above had so generously planned for them, but as a very unfortunate consequence of this piece of morality to be spread before you, we would learn from them as well. And so we would be on our own generous adventure.

So, please do sit back, recline if you must, eat sparingly as not to disturb the scene, and to see the tale which all of us, each in our own part and desire, would lay like a banquet, spread before you as if a Feast of Grand Design.

And so I must leave in order that this Tale pursue its course with no further delay.

The NARRATOR exits from the semi-darkness.

EXTERIOR-THE MAIN TOWN/SEACOAST-SHIRONA

A typical sea town of the Victorian era, with turned wood in great abandon, a small TOWN SQUARE, SHOPS, a MAIN HALL, and an open space near the road to the beach and the wharf with a small gazebo, and a iron statue of Our Dear Queen, seemingly in pain and anguish, a mood to which all of us were most used and comfortable with. The streets are empty, the entire Village being for the moment occupied in the TOWN HALL

Into the scene enters a tall and handsome man, over his eyes are dust smeared glasses as if they either escaped the spray as well, or the mere journey to this point covered them again, dressed as if for traveling, the SEA GENTLEMAN, his hair still showing the effects of the sea, but his clothes remarkably dry, a small bag hanging on his back from a strap around his shoulders. The man walks up to the TOWN HALL, and looks at a small broadside showing a sign displaying what is about inside.

SEA: Hmm, this seems to be worth investigating. Curious that they would choose this to be done inside.

The SEA GENTLEMAN steps inside.

INTERIOR-TOWN HALL

A small space, doubling as the Village's only Church, the space is filled and at front is the LORD MAYOR, and in the seats, ALLIACEAE, NIT her servant, THE SEVEN DAUGHTERS, PREACHER, JANE, EDWARD, CONSTABLE, TIM, The SHIPWRIGHT, and the rest of the citizens of the VILLAGE.

The SEA GENTLEMAN enters the space, trying in not to make a noise or fuss, only succeeding to do the very and most precise opposite, and all heads turn towards him including the robust, cheery, and usually good mannered LORD MAYOR.

LORD MAYOR: I do beg your pardon kind Sir, but most people do prefer to check-in in the rooming house first before they set about to explore. Your reason for skipping the preliminaries and deciding to honor us first?

SEA GENTLEMAN: Then consider your pardon begged most graciously. But I was curious about your sign.

LORD MAYOR (sputtering¹): The sign?

SEA GENTLEMAN: Yes the sign, generally I do not find myself to repeat what I have said often.

LORD MAYOR: Parentless then? I know you not speak of me, for I have been reminded and annoyed enough of my obvious parentage.

SEA GENTLEMAN: No more than once. To the sign then.

LORD MAYOR: Yes, please do go on...the sign.

SEA GENTLEMAN: Well it is my peculiar opinion that they are not usually held indoors.

LORD MAYOR: Yes, yes that would be the case. And?

SEA GENTLEMAN: I came to see about this EXECUTION of yours.

A GASP, most horrific, quite noisily falls over the crowd.

LORD MAYOR (sputtering): Execution! Why the very idea, step out side and I and my Daughter Jane, and the Constable will in our own way, attempt to humbly and discreetly settle this obvious difficulty.

Turning back to the crowd.

LORD MAYOR: A moment kind people. Please do excuse.

The LORD MAYOR motions to JANE, and the CONSTABLE, and they and the SEA GENTLEMAN step outside.

EXTERIOR-TOWN HALL

The LORD MAYOR, JANE, the CONSTABLE, and the SEA GENTLEMAN are standing near the sign.

SEA GENTLEMAN: Now about this EXECUTION of yours?

¹ It is now, or should be commonly known that the LORD MAYOR is seemingly overly fond of SPUTTERING, as if he has spent his entire adult life being like a tea kettle left on the flame much too long, and the trivet for the moment forgotten.

LORD MAYOR: Are you quite sure you've read the sign correctly.

SEA GENTLEMAN: Actually it does appear but a rather subtle blue, but yes I am certain.

LORD MAYOR: Yes but are you sure?

SEA GENTLEMAN: Reasonably.

LORD MAYOR: Reasonably sure?

SEA GENTLEMAN: Yes I do believe so.

LORD MAYOR: Kind sir, normally I do not tend to criticize peoples personal habits on first glance, but might I suggest a cleaning of your spectacles would be in order now. For, having crafted the sign myself only this morning, am also quite sure that I put the word "ELOCUTION" upon its wooden surface.

The SEA GENTLEMAN having received a cloth most graciously from the CONSTABLE, sets to cleaning his spectacles and putting them back on his head gives an expression of relief, and a bow of great umbrage.

SEA GENTLEMAN: Yes, now that would be ever so much better in understanding, thank you. My apologies for interrupting your Elocution then. It was going well?

CONSTABLE: Oh my yes. The Lord Mayor was most gravely explaining the finer points of "The Cataract of Lodore", a real knee slapper if I must say. It has helped me most graciously with the firm application of the Lew.

SEA GENTLEMAN: The Lew?

LORD MAYOR (first shutting his mouth with an audible snap): I do believe he means The Law. A concept which is embraced by Our Queen.

The LORD MAYOR turns in the direction of the statue and then turns back.

LORD MAYOR: I shall bid you good day. And to my lessons, to fulfill an obvious need....

He looks at ths CONSTABLE who shrugs his shoulders...

LORD MAYOR: in that particular area. The Constable will see you to the

LORD MAYOR: Rooming House, and get you settled before he returns to his duties.

The LORD MAYOR clears his throat loud enough to flatten the three others.

CONSTABLE: Yes my Lord Mayor.

LORD MAYOR: And I and my Daughter Jane...

The young girl gives a curtsy,

LORD MAYOR: will come and see that you are indeed safe and well before you retire.

The SEA GENTLEMAN walks up to the LORD MAYOR and whispers in his ear.

SEA GENTLEMAN: I beg your indulgence, and I mean no offence on family or station, but kind sir, your Daughter seems most unusually plain.

LORD MAYOR: Plain, she is a woman child, not a cask of yogurt! Constable, take our visitor away before he wishes once again to put his shoe leather in close proximity to his speech again.

The CONSTABLE and the SEA GENTLEMAN exit to the end of the Village and the trail along the beach and to the bluff which has the ROOMING HOUSE, and the LORD MAYOR, and JANE return to the lessons.

EXTERIOR-BEACH TRAIL & THE ROOMING HOUSE.

The SEA GENTLEMAN and the CONSTABLE, are walking along the narrow trail through the dunes on the way to the cliff side and the ROOMING HOUSE.

SEA GENTLEMAN: If you do not mind, I should like to ask a question.?

CONSTABLE: Yes.

SEA GENTLEMAN: Yes that you do not mind, or yes that I may ask a question?

CONSTABLE: Both!

SEA GENTLEMAN: You do the police work here?

CONSTABLE: As little as humanly possible, but yes Sir, I do.

SEA GENTLEMAN: But you seem to like your work, if you do not mind me observing.

CONSTABLE: Oh it's the work I approve, but the reports sir are another matter entirely, especially when one must file a report saying that yet once again have but nothing to report.

SEA GENTLEMAN: Ah yes.
This rooming house, it is well run?

CONSTABLE: You will find Patience there.

The CONSTABLE grins madly, showing a very proper duty to correct dental hygiene.

SEA GENTLEMAN: Patience is a very virtuous thing to have?

CONSTABLE: To HAVE Sir?

SEA GENTLEMAN: To be desired.

CONSTABLE; To be DESIRED Sir?

SEA GENTLEMAN: Worthy?

CONSTABLE: Why yes Sir, very worthy indeed. As a matter of fact, our conversation is about to come to an end, as we have in fact...most punctually arrived at our destination.

The SEA GENTLEMAN looks up and sees before him a grand Victorian House, which it seems cannot decide whether it wishes to stand on the top of the cliff, or coyly join the raging waters below.

On the bottom of the steps leading to the front porch, is the Daughter of the SHIPWRIGHT, PATIENCE, of a somewhat noticeable and rounder figure which is coyly peeking from the top of her open dress, but not overly noticeably so. She looks at him and the CONSTABLE bows and makes his exit to the TOWN away and below.

PATIENCE: I am Patience, the Daughter of The Shipwright.

SEA GENTLEMAN: Yes...you most certainly are.

PATIENCE: Your baggage Sir?

SEA GENTLEMAN: I have nothing but this...

He swings his back off of his shoulder and drop it to the ground,

SEA GENTLEMAN: I am a man of very simple needs.

PATIENCE looks at the bag and then travels up the man and cannot help but stop at that which defines the worth of a man and in this case is most noticeable indeed under that which he is wearing, and she boldly turns crimson and begins to fan herself.

PATIENCE: I can see...and perhaps if you would allow, I may see to whatever little needs you may have.

SEA GENTLEMAN: Yes.

PATIENCE: Now let us get you...settled and then you may rest after, no doubt, your long journey to this place of ours that we hold so dear.

PATIENCE motions the SEA GENTLEMAN inside.

The NARRATOR comes out to a darkened stage and scene

NARRATOR:

To rest then our Gentleman to go, and get most settled in. And yet in this settling, would he also alter the subtle landscape of that which is known to us as our Faire Shirona...to what extent only the Time Sisters would be able to guess most educatingly...and so our Journey, for the moment continues.

The NARRATOR returns to her place and the scene resumes.

INTERIOR-FRONT PARLOR-ROOMING HOUSE

The SEA GENTLEMAN is sitting down on the couch and catching up on the local news...in this particular case with the "SHIRONA INQUISITOR", a noble although altogether brief endeavor.

From the ENTRY HALL comes the LORD MAYOR and his dutiful Daughter, the erstwhile, but nevertheless, rather plain JANE.

LORD MAYOR: I see that you have settled in well.

The SEA GENTLEMAN makes a move to rise, but is called off by a motion from the LORD MAYOR.

LORD MAYOR: No, by all means don't get up.

JANE SHOOTS him a glance in the area which PATIENCE discerned earlier and puts her hand over her mouth for a moment and giggles.

JANE: No...please Sir do not, at least not at this particular moment.

The LORD MAYOR smiling makes a gesture to no particular thing in general and clears his throat loudly.

LORD MAYOR: Now where were we...oh yes. Might I suggest that the two of you go out on the porch and perhaps then our Gentleman can see the folly of his discourse with respect to the beauty of my Daughter.

JANE: Father!

Then just as quickly, and as if a lantern went off in her mind, a grin proceeds to form on her face.

JANE: Yes perhaps I shall.

The LORD MAYOR turns to the two.

LORD MAYOR: I shall regrettably have to, and against better advice mind you, leave you two alone and (GASP) un-chaperoned...but unfortunately my duties to this village and....

The LORD MAYOR turns in the rough direction of the statute in the square.

...to our beloved Queen, demand my attention elsewhere.

JANE: I understand Father.

LORD MAYOR: Take care however my Daughter. And I shall remind you at this opportune point that your devotions lie elsewhere.

JANE: I do most earnestly remind myself when able.

The LORD MAYOR nods and exits to the HALL, soon followed by JANE and the SEA GENTLEMAN.

EXTERIOR-REAR PORCH-ROOMING HOUSE

In fact the same as the front, since the porch surrounds the house on all four sides.

From the inside comes JANE and the SEA GENTLEMAN, holding hands except for the fact that they are still quite some distance away from each other.

The two of them wander slowly to the inviting and somewhat sea drenched corner of the porch as the Sun having finished its scholarly discourse for the Day is about to bid a fond goodbye yet once again.

JANE looks into the SEA GENTLEMAN's eyes.

JANE: Pray tell me kind sir...do you still think me....

JANE moves ever closer to the man, in the end quite only a few inches away from him.

JANE....plain?

SEA GENTLEMAN: Well I do admit that from this particular view, that my opinion seems to be in disagreement from my original thought.

JANE: Yes yes, do continue.

SEA GENTLEMAN: Still I am enough of a gentleman to remember that it is my duty as well to honor your obligations.

JANE pushes ever onward and manages a mere brush of lips before she pulls away and pouts for a moment and looks back up at the man.

JANE: Perhaps that would be best after all.

Still, would thou think me perhaps a bit forward if I admitted that your mere presence has begun to change things...I pray hope for the better, in or wonderful little domesticity. To Edward then.

The Man laughs.

SEA GENTLEMAN: Tis a line, I have heard before yes...it is afraid my lot in this

Mortal shell. To Edward then?

JANE: Well not now for he has retired, but I shall greet him all the better in the morn'
To you goodnight then.

She manages yet another look and coughs.

JANE: May all of you find sleep tonight. I will see you tomorrow then.

JANE does not so much kiss him as much as collide with his mouth most awkwardly, and then in a gather of skirts, JANE and her virtue, still quite intact, hurry around the porch and to her exit. The SEA GENTLEMAN shares a private amusement, as the Sun having gotten to the last page, decides to dip amongst the waves to its slumber.

EXTERIOR-EDWARD'S HOUSE

A house which explodes in opulent splendor as if perhaps a bunch of decorators had a rather loud and raucous party before they put pen and ink to paper to draw this monumental edifice, and of course the carpenters merely of the mind to put saw to wood, so no reason to alter such a grand design.

Into this scene enters our aforementioned JANE, who strides up the walk which defines its entrance, holding in her hands a sufficient, although entirely modest breakfast for two.

EDWARD dressed like a proud prow of a merchant vessel, in that all is appropriately put on and arrayed, stands at the top of the step, and as JANE gains the space in front of him, she gives him a small peck on the cheek. Just enough to have counted, but perhaps influenced by her mind being, for the moment, engaged elsewhere.

JANE: Good morning Edward.

EDWARD: Good morning dear Jane.

At that moment, like a clock striking or perhaps some other mechanism unknown, a smirk should appear on our fair JANE, and she looks EDWARD straight in the eye, giggling before she should continue thusly.

JANE: I think...and I am not always prone to do so, being most properly raised, that maybe we should have this picnic of ours on the lawn!

EDWARD: The Lawn?

JANE: Yes the lawn.

EDWARD: To sit upon the grass and eat?

JANE: Well it is a perfectly good lawn as I can see with mine own, although limited such as they are by convention, eyes which are firmly affixed in my head.

EDWARD slowly creeps down the steps and looks upon the grass, in its also large and magnificent expanse with the same not too casual regard as perhaps he would a rolling sea of man eating sharks, and steps back a bit to the comfort of the walk again.

EDWARD: Of that there is no dispute Miss, for I can see its rolling green splendor as well...but it is after all a lawn, and more befit of those four legged hooves to graze than proper people to set and eat on. Tis to be admired, not to be....TRAMPLED!

JANE continues to look at him and slowly moves to a clear spot on the grass, her smile becoming a most proper pyrotechnic display as one would see on holiday perhaps and The Queen's Birthday most assuredly so.

JANE: The food is getting cold Edward, and I am of the mind....yes I find I do have one now, not to move but one inch from this very spot!
So if you wish to be fed, then you will either come to me here or starve. For I being a Lady born, will not pitch it to you on the walk.

EDWARD: But dear...it is a lawn.

JANE: Yes it is, and still a most proper one at that.

EDWARD relents, the growling of his stomach approaching that of a most unproper and unsightly beast, and sits down fearfully, as if he was about to face the prospect of an exam of his rearward parts below. And JANE most happily sprawls upon the surface and opens up the basket and sets to arranging things, passing EDWARD his plates in turn first before setting to her meal.

EDWARD: I have spoken to Father about our accounts and they seem to be doing well, enough so that we would be most able and agreeable to set upon matrimony in the spring. And of course I went on my first collection visit, and had a great difficulty, but I was most persuasive and victorious in the end.

JANE look almost as if she is going to smash her teacup to the ground, but still thinking of propriety and of its value, chooses to drain it first and set it in her lap most gently.

JANE: Edward...must we always talk about business!

EDWARD: What else is there...you have forbidden me to speak on matters political, and of course it would be quite unseemly indeed to bring up ones mind with respect to that which Preacher would espouse.

JANE: You could talk about me for example.

EDWARD: About you?

JANE: Yes about me.

EDWARD: But I often speak about you.

JANE: And this is when exactly?

EDWARD: When I am about to retire, and close my eyes, my thoughts, as well as either things which I cannot politely mention, often drift to you.

JANE: Oh Edward, I long deep within my most chaste and, for the moment, unfulfilled bosom, for you to wax poetic upon my virtue, and to hold me in your arms, and tell me of those thoughts you seem to keep bottled up and only cast in their polite measure when you wish to sleep.

EDWARD: During Breakfast?

JANE: Yes!

EDWARD: While we're eating?

JANE: Unless you can think of something else which is done during such a meal...yes.

EDWARD: Miss...this new found mind of yours perhaps should be bottled up and shut tightly as much as you seem to enlighten me about my wishes for your company!
To eating then...with most haste!

JANE: Yes Edward...to eating then.

The two of them continue to have their meal until the scene does slowly end and go dark.

EXTERIOR-REAR PORCH-ROOMING HOUSE

The SEA GENTLEMAN stands up, having a most proper and invigorating breakfast served to him by PATIENCE, who has been paying him attention as closely as but would spread butter upon the inviting surface of a warm scone.

The two of them walk to the rail and look out at the crashing waves below and before them.

PATIENCE: Tis peaceful if you have time for it.

SEA GENTLEMAN: But I don't have the Patience I am afraid.

She looks at him, irrepressibly looks down, and smiles.

PATIENCE: Ah but you could.

SEA GENTLEMAN: I could?

PATIENCE: Have the Patience then...you could. Oh is would be a marriage most wondrous indeed!

My Father could build the ships and you could sail in them!

The SEA GENTLEMAN looks as if he has swallowed something most indecent and foul and rubs his neck and coughs AND NOT IN A HANKIE EITHER...GASP!
HORROR!

SEA GENTLEMAN: Ah yes that would be most honorably true...if in fact a ship was my manner of conveyance...

PATIENCE seeing a possible opening as she has only heard one of the propositions being spoken to, takes herself and her scent most perilously close to the SEA GENTLEMAN.

SEA GENTLEMAN: And of course, if I was not sadly promised to another.

PATIENCE: I would wait for you.

SEA GENTLEMAN: If you had Patience then.

PATIENCE: Yes.

SEA GENTLEMAN; Then you would have a long wait.

PATIENCE: I see.

SEA GENTLEMAN: But I must be off today....places I must be, even though Shirona occupies my thought and gaze.

PATIENCE: I will wait.

SEA GENTLEMAN: As is your due. For today then.

The SEA GENTLEMAN breaks their gentle closeness and goes off around the porch. PATIENCE looks down at her ample and downward towards an imaginary point in space and deeply sighs, straightens up and sets to clearing the table in Breakfast, forgetting the mornings encounter and duty bounding her elsewhere.

Later that Evening in the same place

The SEA GENTLEMAN is once again at the rail, this time his company is in fact the LORD MAYOR'S daughter JANE....looking positively un-plain at this particular juncture of our adventure.

SEA GENTLEMAN: Ah yes Jane. I was very busy today...I even had to turn down a proposal.

JANE: A proposal?

SEA GENTLEMAN: Yes.

JANE: A question then if you wish kind Gentleman?

SEA GENTLEMAN: Yes...go on.

JANE: If this very evening I should say accidentally find myself in the same room as you when you retire?

SEA GENTLEMAN: I would not seek for you to go.

JANE: And then if I should accidentally find myself atop you?

SEA GENTLEMAN: I would not push you off then.

JANE: And if mind you by the same accident, I should give of my self to you, being in that circumstance where a proper girl is presented a choice.

SEA GENTLEMAN: What of Edward?

JANE: Ah yes of Edward. Sir, you do realize of accidents I speak of. For my Maiden Honor would not allow otherwise. Still?

SEA GENTLEMAN: Honor being such as it is, I find my heart that beats within me would offer a most convincing argument for such a thing.

JANE: To accidents then.

SEA GENTLEMAN: To accidents then.

The two of them go inside the house...to in that wonderful play which is the proper and higher mind which can convince its cousin the body of the necessity of almost anything...especially purely by accident.

The scene darkens and from around the same corner which we viewed the exit of PATIENCE, comes ALLIACEAE, or more simply the NARRATOR.

NARRATOR:

And so let us all raise a glass and toast to that which in Mortal Mind is known as Accident. Or in this case perhaps is it not really. For curiosity being what it is, and people of the same. Have you not for one moment wondered of what "business" our Gentleman should choose to disturb the blissful slumber which is our fair and proud Village of Shirona.

So maybe then...we should leave this place, knowing that accident has woven its trap, purposeful even though it be made. And to good night, until again we shall meet , this time not so long in the waiting.

EXTERIOR-EDWARDS HOUSE

JANE looking like a sputtering top comes charging up to EDWARD who is at his usual station on the top of the stairs and on the porch. No meal does she carry, yet her thoughts and actions surely weigh more than any bit of consumability would truly ensue.

EDWARD: Breakfast?

JANE: Will have to be conveyed in some other way today I am afraid.
And every other day, I fear if things do turn out aright.

EDWARD; Dearest One?

JANE: Edward...you are most assuredly....PLAIN!

JANE spins around to utter yet only once more.

JANE: HA! Then!

JANE continues down the lane, giggling and laughing as she does so, until behind a hill she leaves us. EDWARD for the moment having his stomach and other parts his only company. Most distressed is he...for although unsure he is of the location of the Kitchen, let alone any needed utensils and pots...he is most unsure of the method to which he would need to turn said raw cuisine into that which might be suitable for being eaten.

The NARRATOR once more appears as the scene darkens to speak thusly.

NARRATOR:

And so this part of our Tale comes to an End, leaving us to wonder in the eternal stillness which is our Home and Hearth, just what exactly this charge as told will do to us. Yet so that I not divulge the process before I have yet journeyed there.

I will take my short leave before I appear again at the beginning of the next Act, thus written. Goodnight all and till the morning when we meet.

The NARRATOR vanishes back into the Dark.

End of Act One

THE FIRST INTERMISSION

begins.