
DRAMA

0411/11/T/PRE

Paper 1 Set Text

May/June 2014

PRE-RELEASE MATERIAL

To be given to candidates on receipt by the Centre.

READ THESE INSTRUCTIONS FIRST

The questions in Paper 1 will be based on the three stimuli and on the extract from Yevgheny Shvarts's play *The Naked King* provided in this booklet.

You may do any preparatory work that is considered appropriate. It is recommended that you perform the extract, at least informally.

You will **not** be permitted to take this copy of the text **or** any other notes or preparation into the examination.

A clean copy of the text will be provided with the Question Paper.



This document consists of **31** printed pages and **1** blank page.

STIMULI

You are required to produce a short piece of drama on each stimulus in preparation for your written examination. Questions will be asked on **each** of the stimuli and will cover both practical and theoretical issues.

- 1 A death-defying ride
- 2 Women and children first!
- 3 Top of the league

EXTRACT**Taken from *The Naked King* by Yevgheny Shvarts**

These notes are intended to help you understand the context of the drama.

Yevgheny Shvarts's play *The Naked King* was written in 1934 and is in two Acts. The extract is taken from Act Two and there are five scenes.

The plot of Shvarts's play is based loosely on three fairy tales by Hans Christian Andersen: *The Swineherd*, *The Princess and the Pea* and *The Emperor's New Clothes*. You do **not** need detailed knowledge of these stories to understand Yevgheny Shvarts's play.

In Act One we are introduced to Henrik and Christian. Henrik is a swineherd (who is in love with the Princess) and his friend Christian is a weaver. Henrik and the Princess are in love but her father (who appears towards the end of Act Two as the King-Father) is determined to give her in marriage to his cousin, who is the King featured in the extract. Both the King-Father and the King expect total obedience and respect from their subjects.

At the opening of Act Two, Henrik and Christian, disguised as weavers, are in pursuit of the Princess.

At first sight, the play seems to be just a re-telling of Hans Christian Andersen's stories but on closer examination it turns out to be a political satire, a commentary on the rule of the Soviet dictator Joseph Stalin in the 1930s. In Shvarts's play the character of the King represents Stalin.

The Naked King was not performed during Yevgheny Shvarts's lifetime.

Stories by Hans Christian Andersen relevant to the play

The Swineherd

This is the background story of a princess and a swineherd who are in love.

The Princess and the Pea

To check that the princess is of royal birth and breeding, a pea is slipped under a thick pile of mattresses on the basis that if she is a genuine princess she will have such tender skin that even something as small as a pea will keep her awake. If she is able to sleep, therefore, she is not a real princess.

The Emperor's New Clothes

The Emperor is tricked into wearing invisible clothes by tailors who lead him to believe the cloth they use is of superior quality that cannot be seen by fools. The story comes to an abrupt end when a young boy in the crowd shouts out that the King is naked.

Characters

HENRIK	MINISTER OF TENDER FEELINGS
CHRISTIAN	CHAMBERLAIN
THE KING	LADIES-IN-WAITING
PRINCESS HENRIETTA	GOVERNESS
PRIME MINISTER	THE KING-FATHER

Boot Polishers. Chief Cook. Tailors. Head Valet. Soldiers. Sergeant. Jester. Flunkeys. Court Savant. Courtiers. Court Poet. Officer. Crowd. General. Heralds.

ACT TWO

SCENE 1

A reception hall separated by a velvet curtain from the bedroom of the KING. The hall is full of people. By the curtain stands the King's HEAD VALET who pulls the cord of a bell which is behind the curtain, in the bedroom. Next to the HEAD VALET two TAILORS are hurriedly putting the final stitches to the King's garments. Next to the TAILORS the King's COOK is whipping up the cream for the King's cup of chocolate. A little apart from them the King's BOOT-POLISHERS are cleaning his boots. The bell rings. Knocking on the door is heard.

- THE BOOT-POLISHERS: Please, Chief Cook, someone's knocking on the door of the reception hall. 5
- CHIEF COOK: Please, Tailors, someone's knocking on the door of the reception hall.
- THE TAILORS: Please, Head Valet, someone's knocking on the door. 15
- THE HEAD VALET: Someone's knocking? Tell them to come in.
[*The knocking continues, increasing in volume*]
- TAILORS: [To the COOK] Let them come in.
- CHIEF COOK: [To the BOOT-POLISHERS] They can come in.
- BOOT-POLISHERS: Come in! 20
[*Enter HENRIK and CHRISTIAN, dressed as weavers. They are wearing grey hair wigs and grey beards. They look around them, then bow to the HEAD VALET*]
- CHRISTIAN and HENRIK: Good morning, Mr Bellringer. [*Silence. HENRIK and CHRISTIAN exchange glances. They bow to the TAILORS.*] 25
Good morning, Tailors. [*Silence*] Good morning, Mr Cook. [*Silence*] Good morning, Boot-Polishers.
- BOOT-POLISHERS: Good morning, Weavers.
- CHRISTIAN: They've replied! A miracle! But tell us – what's the matter with these other gentlemen – are they deaf or dumb? 30
- BOOT-POLISHERS: Neither. But in accordance with the Court etiquette you should have spoken first to us. We'll report what you have to tell us to the next person above us. Well, what is it you wish?
- HENRIK: We are the most remarkable weavers in the world. Your King is the best dressed man, the greatest dandy in the world. We should like to serve His Majesty, your King. 35
- BOOT-POLISHERS: Aha! Mr Chief Cook, these remarkable weavers wish to serve our most gracious Sovereign.
- CHIEF COOK: Aha! Tailors, some weavers have arrived.
- TAILORS: Aha! Mr Head Valet, the weavers! 40
- HEAD VALET: Aha! Good morning, Weavers.
- HENRIK and CHRISTIAN: Good morning, Mr Head Valet.
- HEAD VALET: So you want to serve? Very well. I'll report on you direct to the Prime Minister, and he'll report to the King. For weavers we have an extra-speedy reception. His Majesty is getting married. He needs weavers very badly. For that reason he'll receive you very quickly indeed. 45
- HENRIK: Very quickly! Indeed! We've already wasted two hours before we could get as far as this place. That's a fine way of doing things, I must say! 50
[*The HEAD VALET and all the others shudder and look behind them*]

HEAD VALET:	[<i>Quietly</i>] Weavers, listen! You're respectable old men. With all the respect due to your grey hairs, I must warn you: not a single word must you say about our ancient, national traditions, sanctified by the Creator Himself. Our State is – the most exalted in the world! If you have any doubts of this, you shall ... despite your great age ... [<i>Whispers into CHRISTIAN's ear</i>]	55
CHRISTIAN:	Impossible!	60
HEAD VALET:	Sit down. Strangely enough I've been ringing the bell for a whole hour, but the King still hasn't woken up.	
CHIEF COOK:	[<i>Shivering</i>] I'll have a g-go at he-he-helping you. [<i>Runs out</i>]	
CHRISTIAN:	Tell me, Mr Head Valet, why does Mr Chief Cook shiver as if he had a fever, although this room is terribly hot?	65
HEAD VALET:	Mr Chief Royal Cook hardly ever takes a step away from his ovens. He's so accustomed to the heat that he got the tip of his nose frost-bitten last year in full sunshine, in July. [<i>A dreadful roaring noise is heard</i>]	70
	What's this? [<i>The CHIEF COOK runs in, followed by the KITCHEN BOYS carrying a large covered dish. From it issues the roar</i>]	
CHIEF COOK:	What is this? [<i>Shivering</i>] This is the great sturgeon, Mr Head Valet. We'll p-put it in the King's b-bedroom. S-she'll go on roaring and s-s-she'll wake up the K-King.	75
HEAD VALET:	Impossible.	
CHIEF COOK:	But why not?	
HEAD VALET:	Impossible. Don't you see? ... the great sturgeon ... forgive my saying so ... is ... a kind of <i>red</i> fish. And you know how the King feels about that ... Take it away! [<i>The KITCHEN BOYS run away with the dish</i>]	80
	It's better that way, Mr Chief Cook. Hey, there! Call a detachment of soldiers and tell them to fire volley after volley outside the King's bedroom window. It might help.	85
CHRISTIAN:	Does His Majesty always sleep so soundly?	
HEAD VALET:	Well, no. About five years ago he used to wake up very readily. It was enough for me to clear my throat – and off his bed he'd fly!	90
HENRIK:	Really?	
HEAD VALET:	Yes, bless my heart! He had a lot of worries then. He kept on invading his neighbours and having battles with them.	
CHRISTIAN:	And now?	
HEAD VALET:	Now he has no worries at all. His neighbours grabbed all the lands they could grab from him. So now he sleeps a lot and dreams about how he'd revenge himself on them. [<i>Loud drum beats are heard. Enter a detachment of SOLDIERS, led by a SERGEANT</i>]	95
SERGEANT:	[<i>Shouts</i>] 'Shun! [<i>The SOLDIERS stand rigidly to attention</i>]	100
	[<i>Shouts</i>] Draw a deep breath of devotion to the King as you enter his palace! [<i>The SOLDIERS draw in breath with a groan</i>] Picture to yourselves his great power and tremble with reverence! [<i>The SOLDIERS spread their arms wide and tremble</i>] Hey you, clod! You're not trembling properly! Look at your fingers! Your fingers! That's right! I can't see your stomach quiver! That's all right now. 'Shun! Think of your	105

	luck – being the King’s soldiers – think of it and – dance! Dance from sheer joy!	110
	[<i>The SOLDIERS dance to the drum beat, each one like the other, absolutely in line</i>]	
	‘Shun! Rise on tip-toe. On tip-toe – march! Right! R-right! Keep in line with His Majesty’s Grandfather’s portrait! With its nose! The Grandfather’s nose! Straight on! [<i>They march out.</i>]	115
CHRISTIAN:	Is it possible that the King was defeated with such excellently disciplined soldiers?	
HEAD VALET:	[<i>With a gesture of bewilderment</i>] Yes ... can you believe it? [<i>Enter PRIME MINISTER, a fussy old man with a long white beard</i>]	120
PRIME MINISTER:	Good morning, Inferior Servants.	
ALL:	[<i>Together</i>] Good morning, Prime Minister.	
PRIME MINISTER:	Well, how are things? Is everything in order? Eh? The truth, Head Valet! I want the whole brutal truth!	125
HEAD VALET:	Everything’s absolutely right, your Excellency.	
PRIME MINISTER:	But the King’s still sleeping? Answer me frankly. Brutally.	
HEAD VALET:	He’s still sleeping, your Excellency. [<i>A volley of rifle fire off stage</i>]	
PRIME MINISTER:	A-ha! Tell me straight – this firing means the King’s about to get up? Tailors! How are you getting on? I want the truth! Even if it kills me!	130
FIRST TAILOR:	We’re putting in the last stitches, Mr Minister.	
PRIME MINISTER:	Show me. [<i>Looks</i>] Calculate carefully. You know our requirements. The last stitch must be put in just before the King begins to dress. The King puts on an absolutely new garment every day, just as it comes off the tailor’s bench. If a minute passes after you put in your last stitch – he won’t wear your garment at all, I must tell you brutally. You’re aware of this?	135
FIRST TAILOR:	Yes, your Excellency.	
PRIME MINISTER:	I hope you’re using gold needles?	
FIRST TAILOR:	Yes, your Excellency.	
PRIME MINISTER:	You must hand him his garments straight on, sewn with golden needles. Straight and openly. Cook! Have you whipped up the cream for the King’s chocolate?	145
CHIEF COOK:	Y-yes, your Excellency.	
PRIME MINISTER:	Show me. That’ll do. But ... Head Valet! Who on earth is this? Don’t hesitate! Without equivocation. Tell me!	
HEAD VALET:	These are weavers, your Excellency, offering their services.	150
PRIME MINISTER:	Weavers? Show me. Aha! Good morning, Weavers.	
HENRIK and CHRISTIAN:	Good morning, your Excellency.	
PRIME MINISTER:	The King needs weavers – I’m telling you straight, without any hind thoughts. It’s simple enough. Today arrives his bride. Hey, Cook! What about breakfast for Her Highness? Is it ready? Eh?	155
CHIEF COOK:	Y-yes ... It’s ready, your Excellency.	
PRIME MINISTER:	What is it? Eh? Show me.	
CHIEF COOK:	Hey, you! Bring the little pies I prepared for Her Highness.	
PRIME MINISTER:	They’re bringing them. Meanwhile, I’ll go in and have a look whether the King, by any chance, hasn’t opened his eyes. And no nonsense. [<i>Goes behind the velvet curtain</i>]	160
CHIEF COOK:	Princess Henrietta didn’t eat anything for a whole three weeks.	

HENRIK:	The poor dear! [<i>Quickly writes something on a bit of paper</i>]	165
CHIEF COOK:	But they say that now she eats all the time.	
HENRIK:	May she enjoy it!	
	[KITCHEN BOYS <i>bring in a dish of little pies</i>]	
	Ah! What lovely pies! I've attended many courts but I've never seen anything like it! What an appetizing fragrance! How nicely browned they are! How soft they look!	170
CHIEF COOK:	[<i>Flattered, smiling</i>] Y-yes. They're so soft that even a hard stare leaves a mark on them.	
HENRIK:	You're a genius.	
CHIEF COOK:	Take one.	175
HENRIK:	I daren't.	
CHIEF COOK:	Yes, d-do take one! You're obviously a connoisseur! One hardly ever meets such people!	
HENRIK:	[<i>Takes a pie, pretends to bite it, but quickly puts the note inside it, instead</i>] Ah! I'm quite overwhelmed! There's no other chef in the whole world to equal you!	180
CHIEF COOK:	But my art, alas! will perish with me!	
HENRIK:	[<i>Pretending to chew</i>] But why?	
CHIEF COOK:	My book <i>That's How You Must Prepare Your Food, Gentlemen</i> has been destroyed.	185
HENRIK:	How? When?	
CHIEF COOK:	[<i>In a whisper</i>] When we started the fashion of burning books. In the first three days we burned all really dangerous books. But the fashion continued. Then they began burning all the books that came to hand. Now we have no books at all. We burn straw.	190
HENRIK:	[<i>Hisses loudly</i>] But this is terrible! Isn't it?	
CHIEF COOK:	[<i>Looking behind him, also hisses loudly</i>] You're the only man I'll admit it to. Yes. Terrible!	
	[<i>During this brief conversation HENRIK manages to put the pie with his note back on the dish, right on the top of other pies</i>]	195
HEAD VALET:	Quiet! I think the King's sneezed.	
	[<i>All listen attentively</i>]	
HENRIK:	[<i>To CHRISTIAN, quietly</i>]. Christian, I put a note inside a pie.	200
CHRISTIAN:	All right, Henrik. Don't get excited.	
HENRIK:	I'm afraid the note'll get all greasy.	
CHRISTIAN:	Shut up, Henrik. We'll write another.	
	[<i>The PRIME MINISTER emerges from behind the curtain</i>]	
PRIME MINISTER:	Our Sovereign's opened one eye. Get ready. Call the chamberlains! Where are the ladies-in-waiting? Hey, trumpeters!	205
	[<i>Enter TRUMPETERS, CHAMBERLAINS and other COURTIERS. They take their places in a curved line at both ends of the velvet curtain. The HEAD VALET, fixing the PRIME MINISTER with his eyes, grasps the cord of the curtain</i>]	210
PRIME MINISTER:	[<i>In a desperate whisper</i>] All ready? The truth!	
HEAD VALET:	Yes, your Excellency!	
PRIME MINISTER:	[<i>With abandon</i>] Pull away! On my head be it!	215
	[<i>The HEAD VALET pulls at the cord. The curtain parts in the middle. All that can be seen is a mountain of feather-beds the top of which is concealed by the arch of the ceiling</i>]	
CHRISTIAN:	But where's the King?	
CHIEF COOK:	He sleeps on one hundred and forty-eight feather-beds –	220

	that shows how noble he is! You can't see him. He's right under the ceiling.	
PRIME MINISTER:	<i>[Peering under the arch]</i> Silence! Get ready! He's turned over. He's scratched his eyebrow. He's screwing up his face. He's sat up. Trumpets, blow!	225
	<i>[A trumpet blast. All shout together: 'Hurrah, the King!' three times. Silence. After a pause, a peevish voice is heard from the top of the feather-beds]</i>	
KING:	O-oh! O-oh! What is it now? Whatever for? Why did you wake me up? I was dreaming of a nymph ... What a dirty trick – waking me like this ...	230
HEAD VALET:	Dare I remind Your Majesty that the Princess, the bride of Your Majesty, arrives today?	
KING:	<i>[Peevishly, from above]</i> Ah! What's all this about? You're just provoking me. Where's my dagger? I'll cut your throat straight away, you naughty man! Where's that dagger now? Haven't I told you a hundred times to put it under my pillow?	235
HEAD VALET:	But it's half-past-ten already, Your Majesty.	
KING:	What! And you haven't called me before? There! Take that, you ass!	240
	<i>[He throws his dagger, which lands close to the HEAD VALET's feet. A pause]</i>	
	Well? Why aren't you screaming? Haven't I wounded you?	
HEAD VALET:	No, Your Majesty.	
KING:	Perhaps I've killed you?	245
HEAD VALET:	No, Your Majesty.	
KING:	Not even killed you? Damn and blast! How unlucky I am! I can't throw straight any more! This won't do, it won't do at all! Now, stand out of my way! I'm getting up, don't you see?	
PRIME MINISTER:	Get ready! Our Sovereign's standing bolt upright on his bed. He's taking a step forward. He's opening his parasol! Trumpets!	250
	<i>[A trumpet blast. The KING appears from under the arch. He descends with an open parasol, using it as a parachute. The COURTIERS shout 'Hurrah'. On reaching the floor, the KING throws away the parasol which the HEAD VALET catches in the air. The KING is wearing a gorgeous dressing-gown and a crown fixed on his head with a ribbon, which is tied in a big bow under his chin. The KING is about 50. He is plump and seems in the best of health. He does not look at anyone although the room is full of people. He behaves as if there were no one but himself in the room]</i>	255
KING:	<i>[To the HEAD VALET]</i> I'm telling you, it won't do! It won't do at all! Well, why don't you say anything? Don't you see your Sovereign's in a bad mood? And you can't think of anything to do! Pick up that dagger!	265
	<i>[He examines with a thoughtful air the dagger the HEAD VALET hands over to him, then puts it in the pocket of his dressing-gown]</i> You sluggard! You don't even deserve to die by the royal hand. Did I tip you with a gold coin yesterday?	270
HEAD VALET:	Yes, Your Majesty.	
KING:	Hand it back to me, I'm displeased with you. <i>[Takes the money from the HEAD VALET]</i> I'm quite disgusted ... <i>[Walks up and down, brushing the COURTIERS who stand around, petrified with reverence, with the skirts of his dressing-gown]</i>	275

	I dreamed of a noble and charming nymph, of extremely good descent and very pure blood. To begin with, she and I conquered our neighbours in battle, and after that we were happy together. I wake up – and what do I see? This abominable valet! What was it I said to the nymph? Sorceress! Enchantress! He who is in love with you cannot help loving you! <i>[With conviction]</i> I was very eloquent! <i>[Peevishly]</i> Why did I have to wake up? Whatever for? Eh? Hey, you! Tell me, why?	280
HEAD VALET:	In order to wear a perfectly new garment, Your Majesty, with the last stitch just about to be put in.	
KING:	Blockhead! How can I get dressed if I'm in a bad mood? Cheer me up first! Call the jester, quickly! Bring the jester here!	285
HEAD VALET:	Bring His Majesty's Jester! <i>[The JESTER steps out of the immobile line of COURTIERS. He is a respectable-looking man in spectacles. He approaches the KING with a hopping gait]</i>	290
KING:	<i>[Assuming a brisk, jaunty manner, loudly]</i> Good morning, Jester.	295
JESTER:	<i>[In the same manner]</i> Good morning, Your Majesty!	
KING:	<i>[Dropping into an armchair]</i> Cheer me up! But be quick about it. <i>[Peevishly and plaintively]</i> It's time for me to get dressed, but I'm in such a bad mood, such a bad mood! Come on! Begin!	300
JESTER:	<i>[Gravely]</i> Here's a very funny story, Your Majesty. A tradesman of sorts ...	
KING:	<i>[Captiously]</i> The name? ...	
JESTER:	Petersen. A tradesman, called Petersen, walked out of his shop and ... stumbled over a stone, and down he went, squashing his nose on the cobbles!	305
KING:	Ha-ha-ha!	
JESTER:	And a house-painter happened to be passing. He was carrying a pot of paint, and he stumbled over the tradesman and spilled the paint all over an old woman ...	310
KING:	Really? Ha-ha-ha!	
JESTER:	And the old woman had a fright and stepped on a dog's tail ...	
KING:	Ha-ha-ha! You don't say! Ah-ha-ha! <i>[Wiping tears of laughter]</i> On a dog's tail?	315
JESTER:	Yes, a dog's tail, Your Majesty. And the dog bit a very fat man that happened to be passing by.	
KING:	O-oh! Ha-ha-ha! Enough, enough! ...	
JESTER:	And the fat man ...	320
KING:	Enough, enough! I can't take any more, I'll burst. You can go now – you've cheered me up. I'll begin to dress. <i>[Unties the ribbon under his chin]</i> Take my night crown. Bring the day-time one. That's it. Call the Prime Minister.	
HEAD VALET:	His Majesty wants his Excellency the Prime Minister! <i>[The PRIME MINISTER runs up to the KING]</i>	325
KING:	<i>[Jauntily]</i> Good morning, Prime Minister.	
PRIME MINISTER:	<i>[In the same manner]</i> Good morning, Your Majesty.	
KING:	Well, old man? What have you got to tell me? Ha-ha-ha! Isn't my Jester marvellous? The dog's got the old woman by the tail! Ha-ha-ha! What I like about my Jester is his pure humour. Without any hidden pricks or innuendoes ... The	330

	tradesman bites the fat man! Ha-ha-ha! Well, what's the news, old man? Eh?	
PRIME MINISTER:	Your Majesty! You know that I'm an honest old man, an absolutely straight old man. I tell the truth straight to a man's face even when the truth happens to be unpleasant. You see, I've been standing here all the time, I saw you waking up, I heard you – to put it crudely – laughing at things, and so on. Allow me to tell you straight, Your Majesty ...	335
KING:	Yes, yes, go on, tell me. You know I'm never cross with you.	
PRIME MINISTER:	Permit me to tell you straight to your face, brutally, in my old man's way – you're a great man, Sire!	340
KING:	<i>[Very pleased]</i> Now, now ... Why should you?	
PRIME MINISTER:	No, Your Majesty, no, I just can't contain myself! I must repeat this – forgive my lack of self-control – you're a giant! A blinding light!	345
KING:	Oh-oh! What a fellow! You really mustn't ...!	
PRIME MINISTER:	For instance, Your Majesty ordered your Court Savant to draw – excuse my saying it – the pedigree of the Princess. To find out everything – putting it very crudely – about her ancestors. Forgive my frankness, Your Majesty – that was a marvellous idea.	350
KING:	Go on with you! Not at all!	
PRIME MINISTER:	Well, the Court Savant is here. I'm telling you this without any tricks or beating about the bush. Shall I call him? Oh, Sire! <i>[Shakes his finger at the King]</i> Oh, clever, clever Majesty!	355
KING:	Come here, you truthful old man! <i>[Moved]</i> Let me kiss you. And don't you ever be afraid of telling me the truth straight to my face. I'm not like other kings. I love truth, even when it happens to be unpleasant. Has the Court Savant come? Never mind. Please! Call him in here. I'll be putting on my clothes and drinking chocolate, and he can talk on. Give orders for dressing and the chocolate, my honest old man.	360
PRIME MINISTER:	<i>[Jauntily]</i> I obey. <i>[Calls]</i> Flunkeys! <i>[FLUNKEYS carry in a screen to the sound of trumpets. The KING disappears behind it, so that only his head shows]</i> Tailors! <i>[The trumpets sound even more solemnly. The TAILORS, putting in the last stitches as they walk up to the screen, station themselves beside it]</i> Cook! <i>[CHIEF COOK marches up to the screen to the accompaniment of trumpet blasts. He hands a cup of chocolate to the HEAD VALET, walks backwards and disappears in the crowd of COURTIERS]</i>	365
	The Savant! <i>[The COURT SAVANT, holding an enormous book, places himself in front of the screen, facing it]</i> Silence! <i>[Looks round him]</i> <i>[Everyone is dead still]</i>	370
	Are you ready? <i>[In a commanding voice]</i> Begin! <i>[The trumpets stop and a light, rhythmical music follows. It is like the sound of a musical box. The TAILORS disappear behind the screen. The HEAD VALET spoons the chocolate into the KING's mouth]</i>	375
KING:	<i>[Having swallowed several spoonfuls, shouts jauntily]</i> Good morning, Court Savant!	380
		385

SAVANT:	Good morning, Your Majesty.	
KING:	Start talking. But no, wait a moment. Prime Minister! Let the courtiers listen, too.	390
PRIME MINISTER:	Courtiers! His Majesty's noticed that you are here.	
COURTIERS:	Hurrah, King! Hurrah, King! Hurrah, King!	
KING:	And I see the girls are here, too. Ladies-in-waiting. Coo-coo! [Hides behind the screen]	395
FIRST LADY-IN-WAITING:	[An elderly, energetic-looking woman, in a bass voice] Coo-coo, Your Majesty.	
KING:	[Re-appearing] Ha-ha-ha! [Jauntily] Good morning, my little rascals!	
FIRST LADY-IN-WAITING:	Good morning, Your Majesty.	400
KING:	[Playfully] Whom did you see in your dreams last night, my sweet?	
FIRST LADY-IN-WAITING:	You, Your Majesty.	
KING:	Me? Brave girl!	
FIRST LADY-IN-WAITING:	Glad to serve Your Majesty.	405
KING:	And you, girls, what did you dream about?	
ALL THE OTHER LADIES-IN-WAITING:	About you, Your Majesty.	
KING:	Brave girls!	
ALL THE LADIES-IN-WAITING:	Glad to serve Your Majesty.	
KING:	Fine! First Lady-in-Waiting, you've succeeded in militarizing the girls very well. They answer me very smartly today. I graciously acknowledge my satisfaction. What's your grade?	410
FIRST LADY-IN-WAITING:	A Colonel, Your Majesty.	
KING:	I make you a General.	
FIRST LADY-IN-WAITING:	I humbly thank Your Majesty.	415
KING:	You deserve it. You've been my leading beauty for thirty years now. Every night you see me – only me – in your dreams. You're my little bird, General.	
FIRST LADY-IN-WAITING:	Glad to serve Your Majesty.	
KING:	[Getting sentimental] My little sweeties! Don't go too far from me, my darlings! The Professor's going to be as dry as dust. I'll need refreshing. Well, Court Savant, come, spit it out!	420
SAVANT:	Your Majesty! With the assistance of Professor Brochhaus and Lecturer Effron, I have compiled an absolutely exact pedigree of our high-born visitor.	425
KING:	[To the LADIES-IN-WAITING] Coo-coo! He-he-he ...	
SAVANT:	First of all, about her coat-of-arms. A coat-of-arms, Your Majesty, is a symbolic representation, yes, a symbolic representation which is passed from generation to generation and designed in accordance with certain rules, yes, rules.	430
KING:	I know what a coat-of-arms is, Professor.	
SAVANT:	From immemorial times certain symbolic designs, yes, designs, came into use and were cut on signet rings ...	435
KING:	[To the LADIES-IN-WAITING] Tew-tew! [as to birds]	
SAVANT:	They were also painted on weapons, banners and other things, yes, other things.	
KING:	[To the LADIES-IN-WAITING] Chuck-chuck! My little birds!	
SAVANT:	These designs represented the results ...	440
KING:	Enough about the designs! Come to the point! [To the LADIES-IN-WAITING] Coo-coo!	
SAVANT:	Yes, they represented the outcome of a wish to separate oneself from the general mass of people, yes, to separate	

	oneself ... To give oneself a sharp distinction which would be noticeable even in the heat of battle. Yes! Of battle!	445
	<i>[The KING comes out from behind the screen. He is gorgeously attired]</i>	
KING:	Come to the point, Professor!	
SAVANT:	Coats-of-arms ...	450
KING:	To the point, I tell you! Be brief!	
SAVANT:	From times ancient and immemorial ...	
KING:	<i>[Raising his dagger at him]</i> I'll kill you like a dog! Cut the cackle, or else ...	
SAVANT:	In that case, Your Majesty, I'll begin to blazonize ...	455
KING:	Eh? What will you begin?	
SAVANT:	Blazonize, Your Majesty.	
KING:	I forbid it! What abomination is this? What's that word?	
SAVANT:	But, Your Majesty ... to blazonize means to describe a coat-of-arms.	460
KING:	Then you should say so straight away!	
SAVANT:	And so, I blazonize. The Princess's coat-of-arms. On a gold field strewn with scarlet hearts there are three royal-blue, crowned partridges, burdened with a leopard.	
KING:	What? What? Did you say 'burdened'?	465
SAVANT:	Yes, Your Majesty. Round them, a border combining the colours of her kingdom.	
KING:	All right, all right ... I don't like it, but let it be so, all the same. Tell me about her pedigree but be briefer.	
SAVANT:	I obey, Your Majesty.	470
KING:	I should think so! I must be sure that the Princess is of pure blood. This is very fashionable just now, and I stick to fashion. I'm a man of fashion, am I not, my little birds?	
LADIES-IN-WAITING:	You certainly are, Your Majesty.	
SAVANT:	Yes, Your Majesty. You've always kept in step with the most modern ideas of the day, Your Majesty. Yes, most!	475
KING:	Absolutely! Take the cost of my trousers alone ... Continue, Professor.	
SAVANT:	Then, Your Majesty, permit me to pass on directly to the Princess's own dynasty. The founder of the dynasty was George the First, named Great for his exploits ... Yes, Great ...	480
KING:	That's fine.	
SAVANT:	He was succeeded by his son, George the Second, whose exploits earned him the name of Ordinary. Yes, Ordinary.	485
KING:	I am in a great hurry. Just enumerate her ancestors. I'll understand without explanation why they earned their various names. If you don't hurry up, I'll cut your throat.	
SAVANT:	I obey, Your Majesty. Further we have Wilhelm I, the Happy, Henrik I, the Short, George III, the Dissolute, George IV, the Pretty, Henrik II, the Devil May Care.	490
KING:	Why was he called that?	
SAVANT:	For his exploits, Your Majesty. Then come Philip I, the Abnormal, George V, the Funny, George VI, the Negative, George VII, the Barefoot, George VIII, the Anaemic, George IX, the Brutal, George X, the Spindleleg, George XI, the Brave, George XII, the Antipathetic, George XIII, the Impudent, George XIV, the Interesting, and finally, the present reigning monarch, the Princess's father, George XV, named for his exploits the Bearded. Yes, the Bearded.	495
		500

KING:	A very rich and varied collection of ancestors, I'm sure.	
SAVANT:	Yes, Your Majesty. The Princess has eighteen ancestors, not counting the coats-of-arms on her mother's side. Yes, she has.	
KING:	It's quite sufficient ... You can go. [<i>Looks at his watch</i>] Oh, how late it is! Call the Court Poet, quickly!	505
PRIME MINISTER:	The King wants the Poet. At the double! [<i>The COURT POET runs up to the King</i>]	
KING:	Good morning, Court Poet.	
POET:	Good morning, Your Majesty.	510
KING:	Have you prepared the speech of welcome?	
POET:	Yes, Your Majesty. My inspiration ...	
KING:	And the poem on the Princess's arrival?	
POET:	My muse assisted me in finding five hundred and eight pairs of most splendid rhymes, Your Majesty.	515
KING:	Why – are you going to read out only rhymes? And what about the verses?	
POET:	Your Majesty! My muse has only just had time to complete a poem on your Majesty's parting with the Lady-in-Waiting on the right flank ...	520
KING:	Your muse never manages to keep up with the pace of events. All she and you can do is to cadge now a country cottage, then a little house in town, then a cow. It's quite disgraceful! Why, for instance, should a poet need a cow? But when it comes to writing, you're never on time ... You poets are all the same, all of you!	525
POET:	Nevertheless, my devotion to Your Majesty ...	
KING:	I happen to need your poems, not your devotion!	
POET:	But the speech is quite ready, Your Majesty.	
KING:	A speech! Indeed, you're all past masters at making speeches! Well, give us the speech, at least.	530
POET:	As a matter of fact, it isn't even a speech but a conversation. Your Majesty says things and the Princess replies. A copy of her replies was sent to the Princess on her journey by a special messenger. May I make the contents public?	535
KING:	You may.	
POET:	Your Majesty says: 'Princess! I am so happy that you ascend my throne like the rising sun. The light of your beauty illuminates everything around you.' To this the Princess replies: 'The sun is you, Your Majesty. The brilliance of your exploits has eclipsed all your rivals.' And you retort to this: 'I am so happy that you are capable of appreciating my true worth.' The Princess replies: 'Your virtues are a pledge of our future happiness.' And you: 'You understand me so well that all I can say is that you are as intelligent as you are beautiful.' The Princess then says: 'I am so happy that Your Majesty likes me.' And you: 'I feel that we love one another, Princess. Permit me to embrace you.'	540
KING:	That's very good.	
POET:	The Princess says: 'I'm overcome with confusion, but ...' Just then there's a salvo of cannon fire, the soldiers shout 'Hurrah!', and you kiss the Princess.	550
KING:	I kiss her? Ha-ha! That's not bad!	
POET:	Exactly so, Your Majesty.	
KING:	That's rather clever! You can go. Ha-ha! [<i>To PRIME MINISTER</i>] It's a pleasant prospect, old man. Yes! Yes,	555

	indeed! [<i>In his excitement seizes the FIRST LADY-IN-WAITING by the waist</i>] Who else is waiting for an audience? Eh? Speak out, my truthful old man!	
PRIME MINISTER:	Your Majesty, I won't conceal from you that two weavers are still waiting for an audience.	560
KING:	Ah! Why aren't they admitted? Quickly! Send them to me at the double!	
PRIME MINISTER:	Weavers! The King calls you! At a gallop! [HENRIK and CHRISTIAN <i>skipping jauntily run out to the centre of the stage</i>]	565
KING:	How old they look – they must be very experienced. And how agile – I bet they're good workers. Good morning, Weavers.	
HENRIK and CHRISTIAN:	We wish good health to Your Majesty.	
KING:	What have you got to say? Eh? Well? Why don't you speak? [CHRISTIAN <i>sighs with a moan</i>] What are you saying? [HENRIK <i>sighs with a moan</i>] What?	570
CHRISTIAN:	Poor King! O-oh!	575
KING:	Are you trying to scare me, you fools? What's the matter? Why do you call me 'poor King'?	
CHRISTIAN:	Such a great King, and look – how he's dressed!	
KING:	How am I dressed? Eh? Tell me!	
HENRIK:	Most ordinarily, Your Majesty.	580
CHRISTIAN:	Like anybody.	
HENRIK:	Like any of the kings, your neighbours.	
CHRISTIAN:	O-oh, Your Majesty, o-oh!	
KING:	What's this? What are they saying? How can it be? Unlock my wardrobes! Bring me the cloak number 4009, part of my lace suit. Look at it, you fools. Pure silk. Bordered with guipure lace in front. Round the collar lace d'Alençon, round the hem Valenciennes lace. This goes with my all-lace suit for outdoor functions ... And you tell me I dress like anybody! Bring me the boots. Look, the boots, too, are trimmed with Brabant lace! Have you ever seen anything like it?	585
HENRIK:	We have indeed!	
CHRISTIAN:	Many a time!	
KING:	Damn and blast! Bring my dinner suit, then! No, not that one, you ass! Number 8498. Look at it, you! What is this?	595
HENRIK:	A pair of trousers.	
KING:	Made of? ...	
CHRISTIAN:	Need I tell you? Of gra-de-naples.	
KING:	Have you no conscience? Do you mean to say that gra-de-naples is nothing special? And what about this coat? Pure gro-de-tour, with sleeves of gros-grain. And the collar of pou-de-soie. And the cloak in turquoise silk with vertical stripes of reps along the surface. Come on, admire it! Why are you turning away?	600
HENRIK:	We've seen enough of such things.	605
KING:	Fine stockings?	
CHRISTIAN:	We've seen enough of that, too.	
KING:	Feel them, you fool!	
HENRIK:	I don't need to ... I know.	
KING:	You know! Bring me my trousers for the wedding ball! What's this?	610
CHRISTIAN:	Broadcloth.	

- KING: Correct, but of what quality? Where else in the world will you find such quality? And the coat of Cheviot cloth with the Boston collar? And the cloak? Made of the best Jersey cloth! Have you ever seen such garments, you fool? 615
- HENRIK: Yes, Your Majesty. Indeed, any fool's seen plenty of garments like these.
- CHRISTIAN: Whereas we can make such cloth that ... O-ho! Such stuff that only clever people would be able to see it. We'd make you a fabulous wedding suit, Your Majesty. 620
- KING: Indeed? They all say that! Have you got references?
- CHRISTIAN: We worked a whole year for the Turkish Sultan. He was quite indescribably pleased with our work. That's why he didn't write anything to recommend us. 625
- KING: A Turkish Sultan! Fancy that!
- HENRIK: The Great Mogul of India thanked me personally.
- KING: Fancy that! The Great Mogul! Don't you know that our nation is the greatest in the world? All other nations are mere rubbish – only ourselves are fine fellows. Haven't you heard that? 630
- CHRISTIAN: I must add that our fabric possesses one truly marvellous property.
- KING: Just imagine! What is that?
- CHRISTIAN: I've already mentioned it, Your Majesty. Only clever people would be able to see it. Our cloth is invisible to people who are unfit for their jobs or who are complete and utter fools. 635
- KING: [*Getting interested*] Go on, go on. How's that?
- CHRISTIAN: Our fabric cannot be seen by persons who are unfit for their jobs or who're plain stupid. 640
- KING: Ha-ha-ha! O-oh, o-oh, o-oh! You're killing me! I'm damned! D'you mean that my Prime Minister here won't see it if he's unfit for his job?
- CHRISTIAN: Correct, Your Majesty. Such is the miraculous property of that fabric. 645
- KING: Ah-ha-ha! [*He is weak with laughter*] D'you hear, old man? Prime Minister! I'm speaking to you!
- PRIME MINISTER: Your Majesty, I don't believe in miracles.
- KING: [*Threatening him with his dagger*] What? You don't believe in miracles? A man so close to the throne doesn't believe in miracles? Then you're a materialist? You scoundrel! To the dungeons with you! 650
- PRIME MINISTER: Your Majesty! Allow me, an old man, to put you right on this. You didn't hear me out to the end. I was going to say: 'I don't believe in miracles, saith the fool in his heart.' A fool says this ... as for ourselves, we owe our very existence to a miracle! 655
- KING: Ah, that's what you meant? Well, it's all right then. Wait a moment, Weavers. What remarkable cloth it must be! You mean, it'll enable me to see who of my staff is not fit for his job? 660
- CHRISTIAN: Exactly so, Your Majesty!
- KING: And I'll grasp at once who is clever and who stupid?
- CHRISTIAN: It won't take you a moment, Your Majesty.
- KING: The stuff is of silk? 665
- CHRISTIAN: Pure silk, Your Majesty.
- KING: Stay here. I'll talk to you again after the Princess's reception. [*A trumpet blast*]

	What's that now? Eh? Find out, old man.	
PRIME MINISTER:	It's the Minister of Tender Feelings who's just arrived.	670
KING:	A-ha! A-ha! A-ha! Fine, fine! Quickly bring the Minister of Tender Feelings in! Be quick, I tell you!	
	[Enter the MINISTER OF TENDER FEELINGS]	
	Have you good news? I see by your face the news is good!	
	Good morning, Minister of Tender Feelings!	675
MINISTER:	Good morning, Your Majesty.	
KING:	Well, well, my dear man? I'm listening.	
MINISTER:	Your Majesty! Alas! The Princess is absolutely without reproach as far as her morals are concerned.	
KING:	He-he! But why 'alas'?	680
MINISTER:	The purity of her blood, alas! Your Majesty, the Princess failed to feel the pea through twenty-four feather-beds. More than that, since that night she slept on one feather-bed only through the rest of her journey.	
KING:	Why are you grinning then, you ass? It means there'll be no wedding! And I was so much in the mood for it! What a let-down! What a disgusting trick! Come here! I'll cut your throat for this!	685
MINISTER:	But Your Majesty, I felt I had no right to conceal this unpleasant truth from you!	690
KING:	I'll show you an 'unpleasant truth' right away! [<i>Chases him with a dagger</i>]	
MINISTER:	[Screams] O-oh! A-ah! I won't do it again! Spare me! [<i>Runs out of the room</i>]	
KING:	Get out! Get out all of you! You've upset me! You've offended me! I'll stab all of you to death! Bury you alive in my dungeons! Get out!	695
	[<i>Everyone, except the PRIME MINISTER, rushes out of the reception hall</i>]	
KING:	[<i>Pounces on the PRIME MINISTER</i>] Drive her out! Immediately! The Princess is to be chased away! Out! Away!	700
PRIME MINISTER:	Your Majesty! Do hear an old man out! I'll tell you straight away, rudely, like a bear. If you drive her away because she's – reputedly – not of pure blood ... well, her father would take offence.	705
KING:	[<i>Stamping his foot</i>] Let him take offence!	
PRIME MINISTER:	That'll start a war.	
KING:	What do I care?	
PRIME MINISTER:	It might be much better if you meet the Princess and then tell her gently, delicately, that – let's say – her figure doesn't quite please you. Let me tell you in my crude, straightforward way that you, Your Majesty, are quite an expert in these matters. It's quite hard to please you. And in this way, gently, quietly, we'll get rid of the Princess. I can see – yes, indeed, I can – the King's beginning to see my point! Oh, clever, clever Majesty! He agrees with me!	710
KING:	Very well, I agree, old man. Go, get everything ready for the reception, and after that I'll get rid of her. She'll have first to be received at Court.	715
PRIME MINISTER:	Oh, what a King! What a genius! [<i>Goes out</i>]	720
KING:	[<i>Peevishly</i>] How dreadful it all is, really! Again they've upset me. Jester! Bring the Jester here, quickly! Talk to me, buffoon! Cheer me up, [<i>The JESTER runs in, hopping up and down</i>]	

JESTER:	A certain tradesman ...	725
KING:	[<i>Aggressively</i>] His name? ...	
JESTER:	Ludvigsen. A certain tradesman was crossing a bridge – and suddenly – flop! straight into the river!	
KING:	Ha-ha-ha!	
JESTER:	And he fell on a boat that was passing under the bridge, and hit the oarsman on the head with the heel of his boot.	730
KING:	Ha-ha-ha! On the head? Ho-ho-ho!	
JESTER:	The oarsman, too, tumbled over into the water, but he grabbed an old woman that was passing along the bank by her skirt. She, too, tumbled into the river.	735
KING:	Ha-ha-ha! You're killing me! O-oh! O-oh! Ha-ha-ha! Ha-ha-ha!	
	[<i>Wipes his tears, fixing the JESTER with eyes full of admiration</i>] Well?	
JESTER:	And the old woman ...	740

CURTAIN

SCENE 2

The courtyard of the royal palace, paved with multi-coloured tiles. By the back wall stands a throne. On the right a barrier to keep the populace within bounds.

THE MINISTER OF TENDER FEELINGS:	[<i>Enters, limping slightly. Shouts</i>] O-oh! Come here, Mr Chamberlain! O-oh!	745
CHAMBERLAIN:	Why are you groaning? Are you wounded? Ah! Halloo!	
MINISTER:	Ah! No, not wounded! Murdered! Here! Carry the sedan chair of the Princess in here. O-oh! [<i>Runs out</i>] [<i>A sedan chair bearing the PRINCESS is carried in. The GOVERNESS and the CHAMBERLAIN walk beside it</i>]	750
CHAMBERLAIN:	[<i>To the PORTERS</i>] Put the sedan chair down and clear out. Don't you dare come near the window, you scoundrels!	
GOVERNESS:	Tell them: take hands of pockets out! Noses not touch! Straight stand!	
CHAMBERLAIN:	Ah, I can't be bothered with manners! I look out that no <i>gogol-mogol</i> notes over handed your-mine Princess. [<i>To the PORTERS</i>] What are you listening for? You don't understand any foreign language anyway. Get out! [<i>The PORTERS run away</i>]	755
	[<i>To the GOVERNESS</i>] It's like a heavy load my shoulders off, <i>ein, zwei, drei!</i> We'll get <i>diese</i> Princess off our hands and on to the King's. And – <i>una, duna, res!</i>	760
GOVERNESS:	[<i>Cheerfully</i>] <i>Kvinter, baba, jess.</i> And mine is glad!	
CHAMBERLAIN:	[<i>To the PRINCESS</i>] Get ready, Your Highness. Presently I'll go and report your arrival to the King. Your Highness! Are you asleep?	765
PRINCESS:	No, I was just thinking.	
CHAMBERLAIN:	Ugh! Well, never mind! [<i>To the GOVERNESS</i>] You go and stand by that gate, <i>lobi-tobi.</i> And keep your eyes skinned! I go speak <i>avec</i> the King.	770
GOVERNESS:	<i>Und!</i> [<i>She places herself by the entrance to the courtyard</i>]	
PRINCESS:	Everything is so foreign here – the ground all covered with stones – not a blade of grass! The walls are watching me as	

	a wolf watches a lamb. I'd feel very afraid if I hadn't received a note from my charming, curly-haired, kind, affectionate, handsome Henrik, my own dear Henrik! I am so glad, that I can even smile. [<i>Kisses the note</i>] Oh, how nicely it smells of nuts! Oh, how prettily it's gone all greasy! [<i>Reads</i>] 'We are here. I am wearing white hair and a white beard. Swear at the King. Tell him that he's abominably dressed. Henrik.' I don't understand it at all. But oh, how clever he is! I wonder where he is. If only I could see him for a second! [<i>The sounds of singing are heard from behind the wall. Two male voices sing quietly</i>]	775
	For our love we'll fight And surely win through, Then we'll go home to live Together – just us two.	780
PRINCESS:	Ah, it's his voice! It means he'll come out presently. That's how it happened last time – he sang a song, then he came! [<i>Enter the PRIME MINISTER and stands stock still, as if struck by the PRINCESS's beauty</i>] It's he! With white hair and white beard!	785
PRIME MINISTER:	Allow me to tell you, Your Highness, tell you in my crude, old man's, paternal way – I'm quite overcome by your beauty.	790
PRINCESS:	[<i>Runs up to him</i>] Well?	
PRIME MINISTER:	[<i>Puzzled</i>] Yes, Your Highness.	
PRINCESS:	Why don't you tell me to pull you by the beard?	
PRIME MINISTER:	[<i>Appalled</i>] Whatever for, Your Highness?	800
PRINCESS:	[<i>Bursts out laughing</i>] Oh, you! You won't take me in this time! I've recognized you at once!	
PRIME MINISTER:	Good God!	
PRINCESS:	Now I know how to pull! [<i>She pulls his beard with all her force</i>]	805
PRIME MINISTER:	[<i>Shrilly</i>] Your Highness! [<i>The PRINCESS pulls him by the hair and pulls off his wig. He is quite bald</i>]	
PRIME MINISTER:	[<i>Shrilly</i>] Help! [<i>The GOVERNESS runs up to him</i>]	810
GOVERNESS:	What is he do to her, the foreign old man? La! <i>Pas-de-trois!</i>	
PRIME MINISTER:	But me – the Prime Minister of His Majesty!	
GOVERNESS:	Princess, why do you <i>bitte-dritte</i> him?	
PRINCESS:	I want him to go to hell or some such similar place!	
GOVERNESS:	Take those drops, <i>vass-iss-dass</i> .	815
PRINCESS:	I smashed the bottle, and you can go to hell yourself, you witch!	
PRIME MINISTER:	[<i>Laughs loudly, enjoying it. Aside</i>] But she's stark mad! This is wonderful! It'll be perfectly easy to get rid of her. I must go and report to the King. No, I'd better not – he doesn't like unpleasant reports. Let him see for himself. [<i>To the PRINCESS</i>] Your Highness, permit me to tell you straight out, in my old man's way: you're so playful that my heart rejoices at you! Our ladies-in-waiting will fall in love with you at first sight. By God, they will! May I call them in? They'll help you to freshen yourself up after the journey, they'll show you this and that, while we get ready here for the reception. Girls! [<i>LADIES-IN-WAITING enter in military formation</i>]	820
		825

	Permit me, Princess, to introduce the ladies-in-waiting to you. They're very glad to meet you.	830
PRINCESS:	So am I. Very glad. I feel so lonely here, and now I see they are – most of them – as young as I. Are you really glad to see me?	
FIRST LADY-IN-WAITING:	Allow me to report to you, Your Highness.	835
PRINCESS:	What?	
FIRST LADY-IN-WAITING:	Your Highness! During my hours of duty nothing special occurred. Four ladies-in-waiting are here. Four are not attending on Your Highness. One is on duty in the neighbourhood. Another on point-duty. Two are having fits of hysterics on account of the impending marriage. [<i>She salutes</i>]	840
PRINCESS:	Are you a soldier, Lady-in-waiting?	
FIRST LADY-IN-WAITING:	No, Your Highness, I'm a General. Please enter the palace, Princess. Girls! Listen to my command! Steady! Ready? March! [<i>They go in</i>]	845
PRINCESS:	But this is dreadful! [<i>They all disappear inside the palace</i>]	
PRIME MINISTER:	Hey, you there! Bring in the soldiers. I'm off to fetch the crowd. [<i>Goes out</i>] [<i>Enter SOLDIERS and an OFFICER</i>]	850
OFFICER:	In anticipation of meeting the King, get weak in the knees with emotion! [<i>The SOLDIERS bend their knees</i>] With knees bent – forward march! [<i>The SOLDIERS march with bent knees</i>] Left! Right! To the wall! Stand still! [<i>Enter the CROWD. The PRIME MINISTER leads them behind the barrier</i>]	855
PRIME MINISTER:	[<i>To the CROWD</i>] I know that you're his Majesty's most loyal subjects, but I must remind you that in the grounds of his Majesty's palace you mustn't open your mouth except to shout 'hurrah' or to sing a hymn of praise. Understand?	860
THE CROWD:	Yes, we understand.	
PRIME MINISTER:	I see you don't, not properly. You're already in the precincts of the palace. But instead of shouting 'hurrah', you're saying something quite different. Well?	865
THE CROWD:	[<i>Apologetically</i>] Hurrah!	
PRIME MINISTER:	Just think of it – the King! Do you grasp it? The King himself is quite close beside you. He's wise, he's very special! Not like other men at all. And think – such a wonder of Nature is not much more than two paces away from you. Amazing, isn't it?	870
THE CROWD:	[<i>Reverently</i>] Hurrah!	
PRIME MINISTER:	You must stand here in silence until the King comes out. Then sing the hymn of praise and shout 'hurrah' until the King tells you to 'stand at ease'. After that, keep silent. Only when his Excellency gives the sign to the Royal Guards to shout, you may shout, too. You understand?	875
THE CROWD:	[<i>Soberly</i>] Hurrah! [<i>Shouting is heard, increasing in volume as it gets nearer: 'The King is coming! The King is coming! The King is coming!' The KING enters with his suite</i>]	880
OFFICER:	[<i>Commands</i>] Overcome with delight at the sight of the King – faint!	885

	<i>[The SOLDIERS fall down]</i>	
PRIME MINISTER:	<i>[To the CROWD]</i> Sing the hymn!	
THE CROWD:	<i>[Sings]</i>	
	Lo! our King! What a King!	
	Lo! Lo! Oh la! la!	890
	Let us sing	
	Oh! la-la	
	To our King	
	Hurrah!	
	Lo! Lo! Our King! Such a King!	895
	Oh, la, la! Hurrah!	
KING:	Stand at ease!	
	<i>[The CROWD falls silent]</i>	
OFFICER:	<i>[Commands]</i> Recover!	
	<i>[The SOLDIERS get up]</i>	900
KING:	Well, where is she? How annoying! What a bore! I want my lunch as soon as possible, and I've got to ... waste time on that girl.	
	Where is she? We must get rid of her quickly.	
PRIME MINISTER:	She's coming, Your Majesty.	905
	<i>[Enter PRINCESS with the LADIES-IN-WAITING]</i>	
OFFICER:	<i>[Commands]</i> At the sight of the beautiful young Princess – jump with joy!	
	<i>[The SOLDIERS jump up and down.</i>	
	<i>From the moment the PRINCESS appears the KING begins to behave in an enigmatic way. His face reflects complete bewilderment. He speaks in a hollow voice like a hypnotized person. He gazes at the PRINCESS with his head lowered, like a bull's. The PRINCESS mounts the dais]</i>	910
OFFICER:	<i>[Commands]</i> Calm down!	915
	<i>[The SOLDIERS stop jumping]</i>	
KING:	<i>[Speaking like a sleep-walker]</i> How are you, Princess?	
PRINCESS:	Go to hell!	
	<i>[The KING gazes at her for a few moments as if trying to grasp the meaning of her words. Then with a strange smile, he unrolls the written speech of welcome and clears his throat]</i>	920
OFFICER:	<i>[Commands]</i> Look struck dumb with attention!	
KING:	<i>[In the same sleep-walker's voice]</i> Princess! I am happy to see you ascend my throne like the rising sun! The light of your beauty illuminates everything.	925
PRINCESS:	Shut up, you stupid windbag!	
KING:	<i>[In the same manner]</i> I am happy, Princess, that you appreciate my true worth ...	
PRINCESS:	Silly ass!	
KING:	<i>[In the same manner]</i> You understand me so well, Princess, that all I can say is that you're as intelligent as you are beautiful.	930
PRINCESS:	You're an idiot!	
KING:	I feel that we love one another, Princess.	
	Will you allow me to kiss you? <i>[He takes a step forward]</i>	935
PRINCESS:	Get away from me, you goat!	
	<i>[Salvoes of cannon fire. Joyous shouts of 'Hurrah'. The PRINCESS descends from the dais. The KING, walking strangely, without bending his knees, advances to the footlights. LADIES-IN-WAITING crowd round him. The PRIME MINISTER supports him by the elbow]</i>	940

FIRST LADY-IN-WAITING: Your Majesty! Allow me to pinch the impertinent girl!

PRIME MINISTER: Your Majesty, shall I call the doctor!

KING: [*Speaking with difficulty*] No, not the doctor ... No ... [*Shouts*]
Call the weavers! 945

PRIME MINISTER: They're here, Your Majesty.

KING: [*Shouts*] Make me a wedding suit! Immediately!

FIRST LADY-IN-WAITING: But didn't you hear, Your Majesty, how she broke the discipline?

KING: No, I didn't hear! I only saw! I'm up to my ears in love! She's wonderful. I'll marry her! Marry her at once! How dare you look so surprised? I don't care a damn about her origin! I'll change all the laws – she's so pretty! No! Write this down! I grant her, here and now, the most noble, most pure-blooded origin! [*Roars*] I'll marry her even if the whole world is against me! 950 955

CURTAIN

SCENE 3

A corridor in the palace. A door leading into the weavers' room. The PRINCESS stands, pressing herself against the wall. She is looking very sad. Loud drum-beats are heard from outside. 960

PRINCESS: It's very hard to live in a foreign land. Here everything is mili ... what's the word? Militarized! Everything's done to the beating of drums. The trees in the garden are lined up like a detachment of soldiers. The birds fly in batallions. And in addition to all that, they have these dreadful traditions, made sacred by centuries of use. You can't breathe for them. At dinner they serve first chops, then orange jelly, then soup. This has been an established practice from the ninth century. Flowers in the garden are dusted with white powder. Cats' fur is shaved off, leaving only whiskers and a tuft on the end of the tail. And none of this can be changed, or else – the State will go to ruin! I could be very patient if Henrik were with me. But Henrik has disappeared, vanished without a trace! How can I find him when the ladies-in-waiting follow me about everywhere in close formation! Only when they're led away to be drilled can I come alive ... It was very difficult to track down all the bearded men and pull their beards. So often when I caught one in the passage and pulled hard – nothing happened. The beard held firm, as if stitched on, the man screamed for help ... It was no joke! I've heard the new weavers have beards ... The ladies-in-waiting are outside in the town square, marching, preparing for the wedding parade ... The weavers are working in this room. Shall I go in and pull their beards? Oh, I'm so scared! What if Henrik is not there, either? What if he had been caught and had his head chopped off in the public square, to the beating of drums – in accordance with the eighth century traditions? No, I really feel ... I feel I'll have to cut this King's throat, however disgusting I might find it. I'll go in to the weavers. I'll put on my gloves ... My hands have gone rough with all this beard pulling. [*She takes a step towards the door* 970 975 980 985 990

	<i>when the LADIES-IN-WAITING enter the corridor in military formation]</i>	
FIRST LADY-IN-WAITING:	Permit me to report, Your Highness ...	
PRINCESS:	Turn about! [<i>The LADIES-IN-WAITING turn round</i>] March! [<i>The LADIES-IN-WAITING march out. The PRINCESS takes a step to the door. The LADIES-IN-WAITING return</i>]	995
FIRST LADY-IN-WAITING:	The wedding dress ...	1000
PRINCESS:	Turn about – mar-rch! [<i>The LADIES-IN-WAITING take several strides, then return</i>]	
FIRST LADY-IN-WAITING:	Is ready, Your Highness.	
PRINCESS:	Turn about – mar-rch! [<i>The LADIES-IN-WAITING turn round and march. They meet the KING and the PRIME MINISTER who enter</i>]	1005
FIRST LADY-IN-WAITING:	‘Shun! Stand still!	
KING:	Ah, my sweet girls! And, oh! She’s here, too! Looking exactly as I saw her in my dream, only much more cross. Princess! Darling Princess! He who’s in love with you can’t help loving you!	1010
PRINCESS:	Get lost. [<i>Runs away, followed by the LADIES-IN-WAITING</i>]	
KING:	[<i>Laughs uproariously</i>] Her nerves are on edge. I understand her so well. I, too, am at the end of my tether – I can hardly wait. Never mind! Tomorrow’s the wedding! In a moment I’ll see that remarkable cloth. [<i>Goes towards the door, then stops</i>]	1015
PRIME MINISTER:	Your Majesty, as usual, is taking the right direction. It is here, yes, just here.	
KING:	Wait a minute, though ...	1020
PRIME MINISTER:	The weavers are working – if I may put it so crudely – they’re working just here.	
KING:	I know, I know. [<i>Walks up to the footlights</i>] Yes ... that material is very special ... Of course, I’ve nothing to worry about. First of all, I’m intelligent. Secondly, I’m absolutely no good for any place except the royal throne. Even on the throne I’m never quite satisfied, I’m always getting annoyed with something. In any other occupation I’d be simply terrible. And yet ... It might be better if someone else first paid a visit to the weavers. For instance, the Prime Minister. He’s an honest, clever old man – but he’s certainly less intelligent than I. If he would see that material, I’d be sure to see it, too. Prime Minister! Come here!	1025
PRIME MINISTER:	I’m here, Your Majesty.	
KING:	I’ve just remembered that I must slip round to my treasury, to select diamonds for the bride. You go and have a look at that stuff, and report to me afterwards.	1035
PRIME MINISTER:	Your Majesty, forgive my rudeness ... but ...	
KING:	No, I won’t forgive. Go! And be quick about it! [<i>Runs out</i>]	
PRIME MINISTER:	Y-yes ... It doesn’t matter ... All the same ... [<i>Calls</i>] Minister of Tender Feelings! [<i>Enter the MINISTER OF TENDER FEELINGS</i>]	1040
MINISTER:	Good day!	
PRIME MINISTER:	Good day. Listen – I’m expected at my office this moment. Go in to the weavers and afterwards report to me how they’re getting on. [<i>Aside</i>] If this fool finds he can see the stuff, I’m sure to see it, in my turn ...	1045

MINISTER:	But, Mr Prime Minister, I'm supposed to go immediately to the barracks of the ladies-in-waiting and persuade them not to weep at the King's wedding tomorrow.	1050
PRIME MINISTER:	Plenty of time for that! Go in to the weavers! At once! [<i>Runs out</i>]	
MINISTER:	Y-yes ... Of course, I ... However ... [<i>Calls</i>] Court Poet! [<i>Enter COURT POET</i>]	
MINISTER:	Go in to the weavers and then report to me how they're getting on. [<i>Aside</i>] If this fool can see that cloth, I'm sure to see it, too.	1055
COURT POET:	But, your Excellency, I'm engaged in completing the poem on the Princess's departure from her country to take the road to our Kingdom!	1060
MINISTER:	What use is that to anybody? The Princess arrived here a fortnight ago. Go now! Quickly! [<i>Runs out</i>]	
POET:	I'm sure I'm not a fool ... But ... Ah! I'll risk it! Come to the worst, I can tell a lie. It wouldn't be the first time!	

CURTAIN

SCENE 4

	<i>The weavers' room. Two large hand looms are pushed against the wall. In the middle of the room two large empty frames. A large table. On the table a pair of scissors, a pin cushion with gold pins and a folding yard measure.</i>	1065
CHRISTIAN:	Henrik, Henrik, cheer up! Here, in this sack we have the finest silk thread they gave us for weaving the cloth. I'll weave it into a marvellous dress for your bride. And in this sack we've got gold. We'll ride home on the best horses we can get. Cheer up, Henrik!	1070
HENRIK:	I'm very cheerful. I'm silent because I'm thinking.	
CHRISTIAN:	What about?	1075
HENRIK:	About myself and Princess Henrietta strolling together by the river near my home. [<i>Knocking on the door is heard. CHRISTIAN seizes the scissors and pretends to be cutting something out as he bends over the table. HENRIK draws on the table with a piece of chalk</i>]	1080
CHRISTIAN:	Come in! [<i>Enter COURT POET</i>]	
POET:	Good day, Court Weavers.	
CHRISTIAN:	[<i>Without leaving his work</i>] Good day, Court Poet.	1085
POET:	Listen, Court Weavers. I've been sent here on a very important errand. I must examine and report on your cloth.	
CHRISTIAN:	Certainly, Mr Poet. Henrik, what do you think of this design? Shall we make the roses with the petals pointing upwards or downwards? Or perhaps with the foliage at the top?	1090
HENRIK:	[<i>Narrowing his eyes</i>] Yes, I think, yes. I think with the petals pointing upwards. The gleam on the silk shows best that way. The petals would move as if they were alive with every breath the King draws.	
POET:	I'm waiting, Court Weavers.	1095
CHRISTIAN:	What for exactly, Mr Poet?	
POET:	What do you mean – 'what for exactly'?	

- I'm waiting for you to show me the fabric you've made for the King's wedding garments.
 [HENRIK and CHRISTIAN stop working. They stare at the COURT POET in utter amazement. Alarmed, he continues] 1100
 Now, now! Haven't you heard me? Why are you staring at me so? If I've slipped up over something, tell me – don't try to muddle me up! My work is nerve-racking anyway. I must be treated with care. 1105
- CHRISTIAN: But we are so surprised, Mr Poet!
 POET: Surprised – at what? Tell me at once!
 CHRISTIAN: But the cloth is before you. Here it is, on these two frames, stretched for drying. And here on the table there's a pile of other materials. Look, what lovely colours, what fine designs! 1110
- POET: [Clears his throat] Of course, there they are ... On the table ... What a large pile! [Recovers his confidence] But I was telling you to show me the silks. To show and explain which would be used for the waistcoat, which for the cloak, the coat, and so on. 1115
- CHRISTIAN: Certainly, Mr Poet. On this frame you see three kinds of silk. [The POET writes in his note book] This one, with a rose design, will be used for the waistcoat. It'll look very pretty. The petals would move like real ones as the King breathes. Here, in the middle, the silk with the King's coat-of-arms. It's for the King's cloak. On this other silk we've woven the pattern of forget-me-nots. It's for the King's trousers. The plain white silk on that frame will be used for the King's underclothes and for his stockings. This satin is for the King's shoes. And on the table there are lengths of silk of all kinds. 1120
- POET: But tell me – I'm just curious to know – what name do you give in your common language to this silk here, the one with the rose pattern? 1125
- CHRISTIAN: In our common language we call the ground of this design green. And in your language? 1130
- POET: We call it green, also.
 HENRIK: Quite a cheerful colour, isn't it, Mr Poet?
 POET: Oh, yes! Ha-ha-ha! Very cheerful indeed! Yes! Thank you, Weavers. You know – there's no other subject of conversation in the whole of the palace other than your wonderful cloth. Everyone's quivering with eagerness to make sure that everyone else is a fool. The Minister of Tender Feelings will be here in a moment. Good-bye, Weavers. 1135
- CHRISTIAN and HENRIK: Good-bye, Court Poet. [The POET goes out] 1140
 HENRIK: Well, our affairs are improving, Christian.
 CHRISTIAN: Yes. Now I'll make the Minister of Tender Feelings bounce.
 HENRIK: How – bounce, Christian?
 CHRISTIAN: Like a ball, Henrik.
 HENRIK: And you expect him to oblige, Christian? 1145
 CHRISTIAN: I'm absolutely sure of it, Henrik.
 [Knocking on the door. Enter the MINISTER OF TENDER FEELINGS. In his hand he holds the pages from the POET's note book. With great assurance he goes up to the first frame] 1150
- MINISTER: What wonderful roses!
 CHRISTIAN: [Lets out a wild shout] Ah!
 MINISTER: [Jumps] What's the matter?

CHRISTIAN: Forgive me, Mr Minister, but can't you see? [*Points at the floor*] 1155

MINISTER: What is it I can't see? What the devil have I got to see?

CHRISTIAN: You're standing on the silk we've put on the floor to cut the King's waistcoat out from.

MINISTER: Ah, yes, I see! I see! [*Takes a step sideways*]

HENRIK: Ah! Now you're treading on the King's cloak. 1160

MINISTER: Oh, damn it! I'm so absent-minded. [*Jumps well to the right*]

CHRISTIAN: Ah! That's the King's underclothes!
[*The MINISTER jumps far to the left*]

HENRIK: Ah! The King's stockings!
[*The MINISTER takes a gigantic leap towards the door*] 1165

CHRISTIAN: Ah! The King's shoes!
[*The MINISTER jumps out of the room. Pokes his head in through the half-open door*]

MINISTER: [*Through the door*] Oh, what excellent work! Unfortunately, we Ministers of the Crown are obliged by the nature of our duties to hold our heads up. For that reason, I can't properly see anything that's low down, or on the floor. But all that is displayed on the frames – the roses, forget-me-nots, coats-of-arms – all that is most beautifully done! Carry on, Weavers, carry on! The Prime Minister will be here to see you, shortly. [*Exit, closing the door*] 1170

CHRISTIAN: Well, who was right, Henrik?

HENRIK: You were, Christian.

CHRISTIAN: As for the Prime Minister, I'll call him a fool straight to his face. 1175

HENRIK: Straight to his face, Christian?

CHRISTIAN: Yes, absolutely straight, Henrik.
[*The PRIME MINISTER opens the door and pokes his head through. CHRISTIAN, pretending not to notice him, goes behind the empty frames*] 1185

PRIME MINISTER: Hey, Weavers! Why don't you tidy up your floor a bit? Such precious cloth – and you let it trail in the dust! Ai,ai,ai! The King'll be coming to see you presently.

HENRIK: I obey, your Excellency. [*Pretends to be picking up the cloth and folding it on the table*] 1190
[*The PRIME MINISTER comes in. Cautiously stops just inside the door. CHRISTIAN, on the other side of the frame, takes a bottle from his pocket and drinks*]

PRIME MINISTER: Hey you, how dare you drink vodka at work?

CHRISTIAN: What fool is bawling out there? 1195

PRIME MINISTER: What! Have you gone blind, you ass? It's me, the Prime Minister!

CHRISTIAN: Forgive me, your Excellency, I can't see you from behind this cloth, and I didn't recognize your voice. But you saw *me* – that's what I can't understand! 1200

PRIME MINISTER: Yes ... I mean, no – I recognized the smell of the stuff! I hate vodka. I can smell the damned stuff a mile off!
[*CHRISTIAN comes out from behind the frame*]

CHRISTIAN: But this isn't vodka at all – it's water, your Excellency.

PRIME MINISTER: Stop pushing your filthy bottle under my nose! Go back to your loom! The King'll be here shortly. [*Goes out*] 1205
[*Singing is heard off stage. The KING approaches, singing*]

KING: [*Off*] I'm coming to look at it, I'm coming to look at it! Troll-la-la! Troll-la-la!

	[<i>Gaily enters the room, followed by his PRIME MINISTER, MINISTER and his COURTIERS</i>]	1210
	Troll-la-la, troll-la-la ... [<i>His voice trails off in dismay</i>] Troll-la-la ... [<i>A pause. Smiling vaguely, he makes a very wide gesture with his hand</i>] Well? What do you think of it? Eh?	
COURTIERS:	Marvellous, truly remarkable cloth!	1215
MINISTER:	The cloth is most noble and luxurious, Your Majesty.	
COURTIERS:	So true! What a fitting description! Most noble and luxurious!	
KING:	[<i>To the PRIME MINISTER</i>] And what do you say, my honest old man? Eh?	
	[<i>The KING is dismayed but does his best not to show it. While talking to the PRIME MINISTER, he glances at the table and the frames, obviously still hoping to see the wonderful cloth. There is a fixed smile on his face</i>]	1220
PRIME MINISTER:	Your Majesty, this time I'll tell you such absolutely pure truth as the world's never heard before. It may surprise you, Your Majesty, you may be amazed, but all the same, I'm going to tell you the truth!	1225
KING:	Yes, yes.	
PRIME MINISTER:	You must forgive me, but now and again I feel like being absolutely direct. Nowhere will you find cloth, Your Majesty, even remotely like this. It is gorgeous and full of colour.	1230
COURTIERS:	Oh, how true! Gorgeous and full of colour! How well he puts it!	
KING:	Yes, the weavers have done well! I see, you have ... you've got most of it more or less ready? ...	1235
CHRISTIAN:	Yes, Your Majesty. I hope Your Majesty won't find us at fault as far as the colour of these roses is concerned?	
KING:	No, I won't find you at fault. Definitely not.	
CHRISTIAN:	We decided that red roses were too common: everyone sees enough of them on bushes all over the place.	1240
KING:	Sees them on bushes ... Yes. Fine, fine!	
CHRISTIAN:	For that reason we wove them on silk in sa ... [<i>coughs</i>] si ... [<i>coughs</i>]	
COURTIERS:	Satin! How clever! How original! Most noble and luxurious!	
CHRISTIAN:	In silver, Courtiers, Sirs!	1245
	[<i>A pause</i>]	
MINISTER:	Bravo, bravo! [<i>Claps his hands, the COURTIERS do the same</i>]	
KING:	I was just about to thank you for making them silver. Silver's my favourite colour. I was literally on the point of ... Well, I express my royal gratitude to you.	1250
CHRISTIAN:	And you don't think, Your Majesty, that the cut of this waistcoat is too bold?	
KING:	No, not too bold. No. But we've talked enough. Come, let's start trying things on. I still have many things to attend to.	1255
CHRISTIAN:	I must ask the Minister of Tender Feelings to hold the King's waistcoat for a few moments.	
MINISTER:	I'm not sure I'm worthy of ...	
KING:	You are worthy. Yes. Well? [<i>Braces himself up</i>] Let him hold this beautiful waistcoat. Prime Minister, help me to undress. [<i>Takes off his suit</i>].	1260
CHRISTIAN:	Ah!	
MINISTER:	[<i>Jumps and looks at the floor</i>] What is it?	
CHRISTIAN:	The way you're holding the waistcoat, your Excellency!	
MINISTER:	It's how I'd hold a sacred object! ... Why?	1265

CHRISTIAN:	But you're holding it upside down! ...	
MINISTER:	I was so taken up by the beauty of the design. [<i>Turns about the non-existing waistcoat in his hands</i>]	
CHRISTIAN:	Would the Prime Minister be so kind as to hold the King's trousers?	1270
PRIME MINISTER:	I've just come out of my office, my friend. I've got ink on my hands. [<i>To one of the COURTIERS</i>] You take them, Baron.	
FIRST COURTIER:	I left my spectacles at home, your Excellency. Perhaps the Marquess here ...	
SECOND COURTIER:	I'm too excited ... my hands are trembling. Perhaps the Count here ...	1275
THIRD COURTIER:	In our family we consider it a bad omen – to hold the King's trousers ...	
KING:	What's all this about? Come, dress me quickly! I'm in a hurry.	
CHRISTIAN:	I obey, Your Majesty. Henrik, come here! Your leg, please Your Majesty. A little to the left, please. Now to the right. I'm afraid your Courtiers would have helped you with a greater skill. We feel embarrassed in the presence of so great a King. Now the trousers are on. Mr the Minister of Tender Feelings, the waistcoat, please. Excuse me, but you're holding it back to front! Ah! You've dropped it now! Allow me, then ... Henrik, bring the cloak. That's all. The charm of this cloth is that it is so light. Your shoulders don't feel the weight of it at all. The underclothes will be ready tomorrow morning.	1280
KING:	It's a little tight round the shoulders. [<i>Turns about in front of a looking-glass</i>] The cloak's a bit on the long side. But on the whole the costume suits me well.	1285
PRIME MINISTER:	Your Majesty, forgive my rudeness. You're a very handsome man as it is, but in this costume you're twice as handsome.	
KING:	Really? Well, take it off now. [<i>The weavers undress the KING and put his own clothes back on him</i>]	1290
	Thank you, Weavers. You're a fine couple of fellows. [<i>Goes to the door</i>]	
COURTIERS:	[<i>Together</i>] Fine fellows, Weavers! Bravo! Noble and luxurious! Splendid and full of colour! [<i>They slap the weavers on the shoulders</i>] Now we won't let you go. You'll have to dress all of us.	1295
KING:	[<i>Stops in the doorway</i>] You can ask anything you like of me. I'm very pleased.	1300
CHRISTIAN:	Your Majesty, allow us to accompany you in your wedding procession. That would be our best reward.	
KING:	I give my permission. [<i>Exit with his suite</i>]	
	<i>The CURTAIN comes down for a few moments. When it rises again it is the same room the following morning. The noise of the crowd is heard from outside. The KING is being dressed behind a screen. The PRIME MINISTER stands, facing the audience.</i>	1305
PRIME MINISTER:	Now, why did I take on the Prime Minister's job? Whatever for? As if there weren't plenty of other jobs! Today's affair will end badly – I feel it in my bones! Fools will see the King naked! This is terrible! Really terrible! The whole of our national system, all our traditions are founded on unshakeable stupidity. What'll happen if the fools tremble at the sight of their Sovereign stark naked? Our very	1310
		1315
		1320

foundations will be shaken, the walls will crack, smoke will rise from the ruins of our State! No, we mustn't let the King go out naked! Splendour is the great prop of the throne. I had a friend once – a Colonel of the Guards. He retired, and on one occasion he came to see me – out of uniform. And all of a sudden I saw that he wasn't a Colonel at all – just a fool. It was dreadful. All his prestige, all his charm, vanished with the glitter of his uniform. No! I'll go to the Sovereign and tell him straight – he mustn't go out! No! He must not! 1325

KING: *[Calling]* My honest old man! 1330

PRIME MINISTER: *[Runs to him behind the screen.]* Here I am – to put it crudely!

KING: Do these underclothes become me?

PRIME MINISTER: They're sheer beauty – I'm telling you straight.

KING: Thank you. You may go. 1335

PRIME MINISTER: *[Comes forward again]* No! I can't do it! I can't tell him anything. The words freeze on my lips. I've lost the habit in my twenty years of service. Shall I tell him? Shall I not tell him? What'll happen? What'll come of it!

CURTAIN

SCENE 5

A square. In the foreground a richly carpeted dais. On either side of the dais a road covered with carpets. The road on the left leads to the gates of the royal palace, that on the right towards backstage. A barrier draped in luxurious materials separates the crowd from the roads and the dais. The CROWD sings, whistles and makes a lot of noise. When the noise abates somewhat, separate conversations are heard. 1340

FIRST WOMAN: Oh, I'm so excited about the King's new clothes! I had a heart attack twice last night from sheer excitement.

SECOND WOMAN: And I was in such a state of nerves that my husband fainted. 1350

A BEGGAR: Help, help! I've been robbed!

VOICES: What's the matter? What's happened?

BEGGAR: Someone stole my purse.

A VOICE: But you only had a few coppers in it, surely? 1355

BEGGAR: A few coppers? What cheek! A few coppers in the purse of an old hand, a clever old beggar like me? I had ten thousand Thalers in it! Ah! Here it is, my purse! It's slipped inside my coat lining. Thank Heaven! Give to an old man, for heaven's sake! 1360

A CLEAN-SHAVEN MAN: What if the King-father is late?

A BEARDED MAN: Didn't you hear the salute from the cannon? The King-father's already arrived. He'll come with the Princess, our King's bride, straight from the harbour. The King-father travelled by sea. Over-land travel by carriage makes him sea-sick. 1365

THE CLEAN-SHAVEN MAN: And the sea doesn't?

THE BEARDED MAN: It's not quite so vexing on the sea.

A BAKER AND HIS WIFE: Allow me, gentlemen, allow me! You're here just for the spectacle but my wife and I are on business. 1370

VOICES:	We're all here on the same business.	
THE BAKER:	No, not all of us. The wife and I've been arguing for fifteen years. She says I'm a fool, and I say she is. At last we'll get our argument settled today – by means of the King's clothes. Let us through!	1375
VOICES:	No, we won't. We're all here with our wives, we all argue, we all have business!	
A MAN WITH A CHILD ON HIS BACK:	Make way for the child! Make way for the child! He's only six, but he can read and write, and he knows his tables. I promised to show him the King as a reward. Boy, how much is seven times eight?	1380
THE BOY:	Fifty-six.	
THE MAN:	D'you hear? Make way for the child, make way for my clever son! And how much is six times eight?	
THE BOY:	Forty-eight.	1385
THE MAN:	D'you hear, gentlemen? And he's only six! Make way for the clever boy, my clever son!	
ABSENT-MINDED MAN:	I left my spectacles at home, so I won't be able to see the King. Damn my short sight!	
A PICKPOCKET:	I can easily cure you of your short sight.	1390
ABSENT-MINDED MAN:	Really? How?	
PICKPOCKET:	With massage. Here, straight away.	
ABSENT-MINDED MAN:	Oh please, do! My wife told me to take a good look and then describe everything to her in detail ... And here I am, without my glasses ...	1395
PICKPOCKET:	Open your mouth, shut your eyes and count loudly up to twenty. [The ABSENT-MINDED MAN counts aloud without shutting his mouth. The PICKPOCKET takes his watch, his purse, his wallet, and disappears in the crowd]	1400
ABSENT-MINDED MAN:	[Having finished counting] But where's he gone? He's run away. And I can't see any better! Worse, if anything. I can't see my watch, my purse or my wallet.	
THE MAN:	Make way for my boy! Make way for my clever son! How much is six times six?	1405
THE BOY:	Thirty-six.	
THE MAN:	D'you hear? Make way for my son! Make way for a child-genius! [Drum beats are heard. There is a great movement in the crowd. People climb up telegraph poles, stand on kerbstones, get on to one another's shoulders]	1410
VOICES:	He's coming! He's coming! Here he is! Isn't he goodlooking! Well-dressed, too! I say, you've squashed my watch! ... You're sitting on my neck! Why don't you come in your own carriage if you want more room? Look at him! Wears a helmet, too! Look at him! Got glasses on, too! [Enter SOLDIERS led by a GENERAL]	1415
GENERAL:	[Commands] Push the crowd back! Farther from the barrier!	
SOLDIERS:	Back you go! Farther away! Away, away! [They push the crowd back]	1420
GENERAL:	[Commands] Turn your backs to the crowd! [SOLDIERS turn their backs to the crowd and face the dais. Trumpets blare out. HERALDS march in]	
HERALDS:	Off with your caps! Off with your caps! Off with your caps to his Majesty the King-father!	1425

- [*They go into the palace. From the right enter KING-FATHER, richly dressed and the PRINCESS in wedding apparel. They mount the dais. The crowd falls silent*]
- PRINCESS: Father, do believe me for once in your life! The bridegroom is an idiot! 1430
- KING-FATHER: A king can't be an idiot, my child. Kings are always wise.
- PRINCESS: But he's so fat!
- KING-FATHER: Child, a king can't be 'fat'. You ought to say he 'has presence'.
- PRINCESS: I think he's deaf, too. When I swear at him, he doesn't hear – he just neighs. 1435
- KING-FATHER: A king doesn't 'neigh'. He only smiles graciously. But do stop bothering me! Why are you looking at me with such pathetic eyes? I can't do anything. Turn away at once! There now! I brought you the music kettle. The King won't be with you the whole day, after all. When he's not there, you might listen to music, to the little bells ringing. And when there's no one near, you could even listen to the song the kettle sings. A princess can't be allowed to marry a swineherd, you know. It's simply not allowed! 1440
- PRINCESS: He's not a swineherd – he's Henrik.
- KING-FATHER: That makes no difference. Don't be silly, don't undermine respect for kingship. If you do, our neighbour kings would smile contemptuously at you. 1445
- PRINCESS: You're a tyrant!
- KING-FATHER: I'm nothing of the sort. There – look! The Minister of Tender Feelings is running to tell us something. Cheer up, child! Isn't he a funny sight? 1450
- MINISTER: Your Majesty and Your Highness! My Sovereign will come out in a minute. At this moment he's graciously engaged in pursuing the Second Chamberlain with a dagger. The wretched man dared to smile when he saw the new costume our most gracious master had just put on. As soon as the impudent knave is punished, our Sovereign will come out. [A trumpet blast] The Chamberlain's been punished! 1455
- [HERALDS come out]
- HERALDS: Off with your caps, off with your caps, off with your caps to his Majesty! 1460
- [From the palace come out TRUMPETERS, followed by the LADIES-IN-WAITING in military formation, then by the COURTIERS in richly embroidered uniforms. After them comes the PRIME MINISTER]
- PRIME MINISTER: The King is coming! The King is coming! The King is coming! [He looks round. The KING is not there] 1470
- Halt! [He runs back to the palace, returns and says to the KING-FATHER] In a moment! Our Sovereign's – to put it bluntly – been delayed in front of a looking-glass. [Shouts] The King is coming! The King is coming! The King is coming! [Looks round. The KING is still not there. He runs into the palace, returns. To the KING-FATHER] They're bringing him! [Loudly] The King is coming! The King is coming! The King is coming! 1475
- [A sedan chair is brought in with the KING sitting inside. Smiling graciously, he looks out of the window. The SEDAN CARRIERS stop. The CROWD shouts 'Hurrah!' The SOLDIERS fall down on their faces. The door of the sedan opens. The welcoming shouts cease abruptly]
- [BLACKOUT] 1480

A BOY'S VOICE: Papa, look – he's got nothing on! He's naked, and he's fat!
[*A pause, then an uproar*]

CURTAIN

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