

SAMUEL FRENCH SAMPLE PERUSAL

This sample is an *excerpt* from a Samuel French title.

This sample is for perusal only and may not be used for performance purposes.

You may not download, print, or distribute this excerpt.

We highly recommend purchasing a copy of the title before considering for performance.

For more information about licensing or about purchasing a play or musical, please visit our website.

www.samuelfrench.com

www.samuelfrench.co.uk

Haggard

An Entertainment

Eric Chappell

Based on characters created
by Michael Green

A SAMUEL FRENCH ACTING EDITION



**SAMUEL
FRENCH**
FOUNDED 1830

SAMUELFRENCH.COM
SAMUELFRENCH-LONDON.CO.UK

Copyright © 2013 by Eric Chappell
All Rights Reserved

HAGGARD is fully protected under the copyright laws of the United States of America, the British Commonwealth, including Canada, and all other countries of the Copyright Union. All rights, including professional and amateur stage productions, recitation, lecturing, public reading, motion picture, radio broadcasting, television and the rights of translation into foreign languages are strictly reserved.

ISBN 978-0-573-11165-5

www.SamuelFrench.com

www.SamuelFrench-London.co.uk

FOR PRODUCTION ENQUIRIES

UNITED STATES AND CANADA

Info@SamuelFrench.com

1-866-598-8449

UNITED KINGDOM AND EUROPE

Theatre@SamuelFrench-London.co.uk

020-7255-4302

Each title is subject to availability from Samuel French, depending upon country of performance. Please be aware that *HAGGARD* may not be licensed by Samuel French in your territory. Professional and amateur producers should contact the nearest Samuel French office or licensing partner to verify availability.

CAUTION: Professional and amateur producers are hereby warned that *HAGGARD* is subject to a licensing fee. Publication of this play(s) does not imply availability for performance. Both amateurs and professionals considering a production are strongly advised to apply to Samuel French before starting rehearsals, advertising, or booking a theatre. A licensing fee must be paid whether the title(s) is presented for charity or gain and whether or not admission is charged. Professional/Stock licensing fees are quoted upon application to Samuel French.

No one shall make any changes in this title(s) for the purpose of production. No part of this book may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form, by any means, now known or yet to be invented, including mechanical, electronic, photocopying, recording, videotaping, or otherwise, without the prior written permission of the publisher. No one shall upload this title(s), or part of this title(s), to any social media websites.

For all enquiries regarding motion picture, television, and other media rights, please contact Samuel French.

MUSIC USE NOTE

Licensees are solely responsible for obtaining formal written permission from copyright owners to use copyrighted music in the performance of this play and are strongly cautioned to do so. If no such permission is obtained by the licensee, then the licensee must use only original music that the licensee owns and controls. Licensees are solely responsible and liable for all music clearances and shall indemnify the copyright owners of the play(s) and their licensing agent, Samuel French, against any costs, expenses, losses and liabilities arising from the use of music by licensees. Please contact the appropriate music licensing authority in your territory for the rights to any incidental music.

IMPORTANT BILLING AND CREDIT REQUIREMENTS

If you have obtained performance rights to this title, please refer to your licensing agreement for important billing and credit requirements.

CHARACTERS

LANDLORD
HAGGARD
GRUNGE
BETTY BOUNCER
RODERICK
GENT
FANNY FOULACRE
SIR JOSH FOULACRE
LADY TARTLET
ONE-EYED WILL
THE HOOK
LORD CHESTERFIELD
LORD TARTLET
VICAR
NELLY BLIGHT
SEAMAN
PREACHER
DEATH
CATESBY
TIBBS
ELUSIVE EDWARD

SETTING

Composite set representing in turn a country inn, Lady Tartlet's withdrawing room, Haggard Hall and a prison cell.

TIME

Regency Period

AUTHOR'S NOTE

Haggard is something of an undisciplined romp. Scenes may be cut, music and songs added and actors may take several parts. It is important that they have a good time short of chewing up the scenery.

INTRODUCTION

When I came to adapt *Squire Haggard's Diary* for television I found I needed an accomplice to assist Haggard in his scheming, so I introduced a new leading character, Nathaniel Grunge. Grunge was a menial who resented his lowly position, had a gift for prophecy, and was as crafty as his master. He was played by the superb Sam Kelly.

For the role of Roderick I asked for Reece Dinsdale, so good in *Home to Roost*. Reece made the part more romantic, less dithering, but still concerned for his personal safety.

Keith Baron, another old mate, from *Duty Free*, played the immortal Haggard. Keith found Haggard, brilliantly conceived by Michael Green, a gift to play, as I did to write.

Years later when I decided to put the series on the stage I tried it out in two productions. The first was enjoyed by the audience but I felt it lacked something. I decided it was anarchy.

In the second production I allowed my three characters, already straining at the leash, to go mad. The effect was contagious. People burst into song, women vied to play the men's parts, anachronisms abounded, and everyone went Regency. The result was a glorious romp and a good time was had by all – including the audience.

– Eric Chappell

THE STORY OF SQUIRE HAGGARD

Squire Haggard was born in a damp cellar under Northampton Market Square in 1943 when I was a cub reporter on the Northampton evening paper, *The Chronicle and Echo*. They also published a weekly paper, the *Northampton Mercury*, which had the distinction of being one of the oldest newspapers in the world, with files going back to 1729. Each week the paper printed an extract from the files of 200 years previously. Compiling this item was usually given to me (along with making the tea) and I spent hours in the basement turning over the files. At first, it was just a chore but then I began to get fascinated by the glimpses of eighteenth century life disclosed. Eventually, the Chief Reporter had to send someone down to fetch me up.

Reports of hangings were frequent, often for what would today be considered a minor crime, such as stealing a pig. One man was hanged for stealing two shillings. But surely the most unfortunate case was that of one John Wild, who was sentenced to be transported to the colonies and then later to death for "returning before his time". Presumably he hitched a lift.

Illness featured heavily, with lists of mortalities. Few diseases had their modern name. Some had picturesque titles such as Stoppage of the Blood or Gripping of the Guts. Others were blamed on foreigners, such as The French Disease (syphilis) or The Spanish Fever. Then there were The Blains, The Boils and The Windy Spasms. Not to mention Worms, Scurvy, Wind, The Stone and Gravel. One woman with dropsy was tapped 48 times to remove the fluid and yielded 12 barrels, 12 gallons and two pints.

Much of this interesting information had been brought to town in the 1700s by a courier with two pistols stuffed in his boots who would gallop into the Market Square where the editor was waiting to greet him. I could look out of the office window and see the same market square, little changed.

Soon afterwards I joined millions of other young men in the wartime army. Boredom is the curse of the soldier and I read avidly anything that came to hand. I was already fascinated by the eighteenth century from my experiences in the basement. Then I found Boswell's *Life of Johnson* in the camp library and became hooked on 18th century diaries. The drinking habits of the diarists left me gasping. Even Dr. Johnson could drink three bottles of claret at dinner. And their hypocrisy was outrageous. Boswell complained he was too ill to go to church while suffering from venereal disease brought on by his own drunken fornication. Naturally, he blamed the woman for infecting him. Another diarist was Parson Woodford, who drank a bottle of port every day for starters. He had strange dishes on the table – "Pigge's face"; rook pie; "Branes";

Pease pudding; and “a lung with roots”. He was quite partial to a dish of larks as well. And afterwards, a “plumb pudding”.

Woodford, along with others such as Pepys a century before him, had an obsession with small sums of money and would dutifully record, “lost 0.0.2d at cribbage”. Not surprising, if he’d had his usual ration of port.

Demobbed, I returned to Northampton and started an occasional column satirising those old diaries. It was supposed to be the diary of a 1777 squire, whose idea of fun was getting drunk and evicting a crippled old lady. I forget the squire’s name, but it wasn’t Haggard in those days. He vanished when I went to London but reappeared a few years later when the *Daily Telegraph* asked me to contribute to their new satirical column Peter Simple, brilliantly compiled by Michael Wharton, who suggested the name Haggard.

A typical entry might go something like this:

Dec 25: Rain. Jas. Kneebone d. From the Howling Spasms. This day being that most sacred feast in the calendar, viz. Quarter Day, I sallied forth in a.m. to evict those behind with their rent. The first was old Granny Hayseed who snivelled, “Do you not know which day it is?” to which I replied, “Yes, Rent Day” which caused me so much mirth I fell in a Spasm.

Shot an interesting trespasser in p.m. After he fled I remembered it might have been my brother- in- law who sometimes walks over on Christmas Day.

Dec 26: Hail. Jeremiah Barnwood dead from the Black Eruption. My servant Grunge came to return the old pair of breeches I gave him for Christmas. He said there was a huge hole in them. This I knew full well, since it had been bitten out by Lady Constance Bedwell in a fit of passion after the Hunt Ball last year. Gave him a piece of coal instead and he left crying “God bless you for a fine old English gentleman, sir”.

The Squire had his TV debut in a BBC programme called Grubstreet, about the humorous columns of Fleet Street. In 1975 I turned his adventures into a book and in 1990 Eric Chappell of *Rising Damp* fame transformed it into two hilarious TV series for Yorkshire TV, starring Keith Baron as the Squire and Sam Kelly as Grunge, after which *The Telegraph* promoted the squire to his own column.

Now Eric Chappell has brought new life to the outrageous old devil with a stage version which takes the squire away from his pen and his diary and out into the wider world and lets us see his boozing, conniving and lusting for real. Enough to make even a sufferer from Rising of the Tripes laugh.

– Michael Green

For Keith Barron, Reece Dinsdale and Sam Kelly

ACT ONE

Scene One – Gingerbread

(The set is a composite one representing in turn a country inn, Haggard Hall, Lady Tartlet's withdrawing room and, finally, a prison cell. There are long tables, benches, pillars, a fireplace, and a high window.)

(Int. of The Swan With Two Necks. A few nights before Christmas.)

(Solitary drinkers sit around the corners of the room.)

(HAGGARD enters with a flourish and takes a seat by the fire. He is a mean looking man in a shabby coat and soiled lace. A surly LANDLORD advances to meet him.)

LANDLORD. Sir?

HAGGARD. Bring me a brace of pheasants, well hung.
A plump capon. A side of beef – if tender. Potatoes
roasted and two bottles of your best Madeira.

LANDLORD. *(dryly)* Will that be all?

HAGGARD. Yes. I dine alone.

LANDLORD. Not here you don't.

HAGGARD. What! You refuse to serve me, you dog?

LANDLORD. I do.

HAGGARD. Then take care. You are obliged to provide
comfort and sustenance to the weary traveller. That is
the law.

LANDLORD. Are you a traveller?

HAGGARD. I am.

LANDLORD. Then keep going.

HAGGARD. Be warned. I am a magistrate.

LANDLORD. I know you're a magistrate, Haggard. But judge not lest you be judged – for on the great day all will be judged and all will be equal.

HAGGARD. What!

LANDLORD. And don't ask for credit because refusal often offends...

(The LANDLORD exits with a sneer. GRUNGE, a menial, enters. He is about the same age as HAGGARD and equally down at heel. He hovers uncertainly.)

HAGGARD. What is it, Grunge?

GRUNGE. I thought I might warm myself by the fire, sir.

HAGGARD. Well, don't stand too close or the dog will charge you for it.

GRUNGE. Has he refused you credit?

HAGGARD. Not only that – he presumed to speak to me as an equal.

GRUNGE. They say in France that all men are born equal.

HAGGARD. You weren't, Grunge, you were born under a hedge.

GRUNGE. They talk of liberty, equality and fraternity. They say one day the rivers will run red with the blood of the aristocracy.

HAGGARD. *(frowns)* Have you been talking to the landlord?

GRUNGE. No, sir?

HAGGARD. Then take note. I'm not interested in what a nation of onion nibblers and mincing dressmakers has to say – and if you repeat these lies I'll have you whipped from here to Haggard Hall.

GRUNGE. Yes, sir.

(GRUNGE moves downstage.)

(bitter aside) They'll pay one day. Those that stretch themselves on beds of down – those that grind our faces and flay our skins. What are their rustling silks and velvets but the sweat of our brows and the wants of our bellies.

HAGGARD. What was that, Grunge?

(GRUNGE turns innocently.)

GRUNGE. I was merely observing that times are changing. *(becomes mystical)* I see a time when there will be no more hardship. When the forces of nature will serve the poorest of men. When the electric fluid will drive mighty engines, illuminate our streets, turning night into day. I see a time when our homes will be warmed and water heated by this same power and there'll be baths for everyone.

HAGGARD. Well, that won't suit you, you verminous rogue.

(BETTY, a buxom serving wench enters and begins cleaning the tables.)

(HAGGARD watches her with evident approval as she crosses the room.)

HAGGARD. By thunder, Grunge. I haven't seen jellies like that since the Lord Mayor's banquet. Who is she?

GRUNGE. That's Betty. Betty Bouncer – the new serving wench. You knew her sister.

HAGGARD. Of course – the Bouncers – I knew them well.

(BETTY approaches and gives HAGGARD a hostile glance.)

GRUNGE. What news, Betty?

BETTY. *(glumly)* The plague's raging in Vienna and James Soper has been hanged for stealing a nail. His last words were 'may you all rot'.

HAGGARD. I'm sure he didn't mean me, Betty. I'm a sad figure – all alone in that empty house...

BETTY. What of your wife?

HAGGARD. Gone to Bath to take the waters – so I'm all alone...in that big empty house...

BETTY. Are you indeed?

(She crosses to serve a customer.)

HAGGARD. (*sighs*) See how they treat me, Grunge. There was a time when my credit would have been good until harvest. Now my debts stretch out before me like a whore in bed – and it's a long time since I've seen one of those. (*pause*) We'll have to evict someone.

GRUNGE. So near Christmas?

HAGGARD. Why not? We'll evict Granny Acorn.

GRUNGE. They say she's a witch.

HAGGARD. Superstitious nonsense.

GRUNGE. Amos Bindweed said it was nonsense – now he's a stoat.

HAGGARD. He's not a stoat.

GRUNGE. They found a stoat sitting in his chair.

HAGGARD. I don't care if they found a stoat sitting in his chair, wearing his slippers and taking snuff. Amos Bindweed planted that stoat to fool his creditors – and I'll have to do the same if things don't improve. (*sighs*) I haven't even the price of a bottle of Madeira.

GRUNGE. I have a shilling.

HAGGARD. A shilling! How came you by it?

GRUNGE. I sold my body on death to the anatomists.

HAGGARD. You sold your body for a shilling?

GRUNGE. Yes, sir.

HAGGARD. You got a bargain, Grunge.

(*He takes the shilling from him.*)

You may join me.

(**GRUNGE** sits.)

(**HAGGARD** catches **BETTY**'s arm as she passes.)

HAGGARD. How's your sister, Betty?

BETTY. She's a great sorrow to us. She was debauched by a gentleman and ran away to London.

HAGGARD. How sad.

(*He turns the coin over in his hands.*)

Know what this is, Betty? A silver shilling.

BETTY. A silver shilling. I haven't seen one of those since my sister left home.

HAGGARD. It could be yours – and more. This is nothing. I can give you a greater gift. I can make you a lady of quality.

BETTY. How so?

HAGGARD. Come to the Hall tonight and I shall dress you in silks and satins.

BETTY. That's what you told my sister. Now she's selling gingerbread on London Bridge.

(HAGGARD leers at GRUNGE.)

HAGGARD. Gingerbread... *(another leer)* And do you have a little gingerbread for me, Betty?

BETTY. Certainly not. You wouldn't cover me in silks and satins – not while you've got a hole in your britches.

(She flounces off.)

(HAGGARD sighs and calls to the passing LANDLORD.)

HAGGARD. Landlord, a bottle of your best Madeira.

(He gives him a coin.)

(The LANDLORD examines the coin carefully then bites it thoughtfully before exiting.)

Did you see that? I thought the cur was going to eat it.

(RODERICK HAGGARD enters from the yard. He is a younger version of his father but dressed with more care.)

Roderick! What are you doing here?

RODERICK. I've been sent down, father.

HAGGARD. Why?

RODERICK. I threw a chamber pot at the dean.

HAGGARD. I've told you before – that's not funny, Roderick.

RODERICK. It wasn't meant to be. He wanted settlement of my college debts.

HAGGARD. (*sighs*) I cannot pay them, Roderick. We're staring ruin in the face.

RODERICK. Never mind, father. I shall soon be as rich as a London alderman. I'm almost engaged to a lady of quality with ten thousand in the funds.

HAGGARD. What!

RODERICK. She's the only daughter of Sir Josh Foulacre and when he dies she inherits the whole estate.

HAGGARD. Then let's drink to his early death. Landlord, another glass. (*pause*) One moment, you said almost engaged.

RODERICK. Her father doesn't like me.

GRUNGE. (*quietly*) That's a surprise.

HAGGARD. Why not?

RODERICK. He hates fortune hunters above all men.

GRUNGE. He's fought three duels to defend her honour.

RODERICK. And that is why I must meet Fanny in secret. She arrives today on the London stage.

HAGGARD. Then book a room. You must make Fanny yours within the hour.

RODERICK. But I have no money. I spent my last crown on gingerbread.

HAGGARD. (*grins*) You young dog. Nevertheless you shall have money. Hurry.

(**RODERICK** *exits into hall.*)

HAGGARD. We need money, Grunge.

GRUNGE. Money...

(*He looks around. He takes a ring from his finger.*)

Then what about the ring and the rustic...?

HAGGARD. The ring and the rustic...? Do you think it'll work?

GRUNGE. It's worked before...

HAGGARD. Then let's give it a whirl...

(**GRUNGE** *winks and exits.*)

(**HAGGARD** looks about the room. He selects a solitary drinker, a superior young man. He approaches and begins peering about the floor.)

GENT. (*curiously*) Have you lost something, sir?

HAGGARD. Yes. I mislaid a ring in here last night. It is of no great worth but of considerable sentimental value.

GENT. (*looking*) Would you describe it?

HAGGARD. It was a simple gold ring with a green stone. It was given to me by His Royal Highness the Prince of Wales.

GENT. (*impressed*) The Prince!

HAGGARD. We caroused together when we were young and when I returned to the shires he gave me the ring to remember him by. I would not be parted from it for all my wealth. I intend to post a reward of a hundred guineas for its safe return.

GENT. A hundred guineas!

HAGGARD. I must see the landlord...

(*He exits stage left being careful to cover the hole in his britches.*)

(*The young gentleman begins to look about. GRUNGE enters stage right. There is straw in his hair and he's chewing on a blade of grass. He is singing softly to himself.*)

GRUNGE. (*mummerset*) 'Oi've just come up rom Zummerset where the coider apples grow...etc.'

GENT. Get out of here, fellow – this room is for gentlemen.

GRUNGE. I know that, sir. But I seek the advice of a gentleman. I found this ring in the dust outside and wondered if it was of any value...

GENT. Let me see...

(*He examines the ring.*)

GENT. It has no value. The stone is glass and the gold is pinchbeck.

GRUNGE. (*sighs*) I thought not.

GENT. But stay – it takes my fancy. I'll give you a guinea for it.

GRUNGE. Ah, but it takes my fancy, too.

GENT. Then should we say five?

GRUNGE. It still takes my fancy...

GENT. Then ten and be damned to you. What do you say?

GRUNGE. Oi may be cabbage looking but I aint green. Oi think you want it enough to pay thirty...

GENT. (*hesitates*) Then thirty it is and the devil take you.

(**GRUNGE** takes the money.)

GRUNGE. Now I'll be able to buy the meadow I set my heart upon, and a few cows, and marry my childhood sweetheart. But first – some gingerbread.

(**GRUNGE** exits into yard.)

(**HAGGARD** enters from kitchens.)

GENT. Great news, sir. I have found the ring and claim the reward.

(*He hands ring to HAGGARD.*)

HAGGARD. (*angrily*) The ring! The stone is glass – the gold is pinchbeck. Do you think the Prince would give me this piece of tat?

GENT. But I gave thirty guineas for it.

HAGGARD. Then more fool you, sir.

GENT. That conniving bumpkin!

(*He exits thoughtfully.*)

(**GRUNGE** enters stage left carrying smock over his arm.)

(**HAGGARD** catches his arm.)

HAGGARD. (*silky*) How did we do, Grunge?

GRUNGE. Twenty-five.

HAGGARD. Thirty, you rogue.

(*He takes the money from him.*)

Try that again and I'll cut your ears off and allow that hat to fall over your eyes.

(RODERICK enters.)

RODERICK. The landlord won't prepare the room until he's paid.

(HAGGARD hands RODERICK the money.)

HAGGARD. Then here's payment – and more.

RODERICK. Where did this come from?

HAGGARD. Let's say it's your allowance...that should impress the lady. Make sure she hears the guineas chink.

RODERICK. God bless you, father.

(He exits stage left.)

(GRUNGE sees the young gentleman approaching. He drops the smock on a chair, tips his hat over his eyes and sidles out. The young gentleman picks up the smock and glances from GRUNGE to HAGGARD.)

(HAGGARD looks innocent and crosses to his seat by the fire. The young man exits, again looking thoughtful, and carrying smock.)

(FANNY FOULACRE enters. She is finely dressed and fluttering her fan in an agitated manner. She has the habit of talking to herself in asides. She moves downstage.

HAGGARD watches her curiously.)

FANNY. Where is Roderick? He promised to be here. I'm a woman alone – in a tavern. Tongues will wag. I must remain calm. I've grown quite pale.

(She pinches her cheeks, she continues striding and fluttering.)

No one must know. I must dissemble...

(HAGGARD approaches.)

HAGGARD. You must be Fanny. Fanny Foulacre...

(The fan flies out of FANNY's hand.)

FANNY. I am undone!!

(HAGGARD retrieves the fan.)

HAGGARD. My name is Haggard.

(A horse neighs in panic from the stables.)

I'm Roderick's father.

(FANNY moves further down stage.)

FANNY. Roderick's father. What a grim visage...

HAGGARD. Since you're travelling alone may I offer you my protection?

(He gestures to a chair.)

FANNY. (further downstage) His protection. But who will protect me from him? Still, I must be condescending...

(HAGGARD stares over FANNY's shoulder to see whom she's addressing. Finds himself staring into space. She smiles sweetly and joins HAGGARD at the table.)

My father will be here within the hour.

HAGGARD. (leers) Time enough.

FANNY. Time enough?

HAGGARD. To become acquainted...

FANNY. Acquainted?

HAGGARD. With Roderick.

FANNY. (busy with fan) Roderick! Is he here?

HAGGARD. You're sitting in his chair.

FANNY. Oh! It's still warm.

HAGGARD. He's a hot blooded youth.

FANNY. To think we're so close!

HAGGARD. You could become closer still...

FANNY. How so?

HAGGARD. He's having a room prepared...

FANNY. (shocked) What! Would he anticipate the lawful rites of matrimony?

HAGGARD. Indeed not, my lady. It's so that you make take some light refreshment – and possibly a little gingerbread...

(RODERICK enters.)

FANNY. Roderick!

RODERICK. Fanny!

(She hurls herself at him and kisses him furiously.)

(HAGGARD looks discreetly away.)

(FANNY breaks away.)

FANNY. We must be circumspect.

RODERICK. Of course.

FANNY. And discrete.

RODERICK. Discretion is my watchword.

(He embraces her. She breaks away and moves downstage.)

FANNY. I am transported.

(She breathes heavily.)

(RODERICK takes her by the hand.)

RODERICK. Let me work a metaphor. Fanny.

(He sits her at a table and takes an orange from the bowl.)

You are this orange.

(She stares at the orange.)

FANNY. Oh.

RODERICK. Bright and dazzling and cool to the touch. But peel back the skin and what is revealed?

(He peels back the skin. The orange looks rather soggy.)

The soft and succulent flesh beneath, sweet to the taste...

(He sucks noisily at the orange. He lowers his voice.)

Yield to me even as this orange does...

(The fan begins to flutter furiously. They become aware of the threatening figure of SIR JOSH FOULACRE standing over them.)

SIR JOSH. Fanny! What is this? I arrive a few minutes late to find you alone in a tavern with this limb of Satan.

FANNY. Not alone, father. I am chaperoned.

SIR JOSH. Chaperoned?

(HAGGARD stands.)

RODERICK. My father, sir.

HAGGARD. Your servant, sir.

(He bows. A faint ripping sound.)

SIR JOSH. You are Haggard?

(A horse neighs in panic off.)

HAGGARD. The same.

SIR JOSH. Then you confirm what I've heard. That you've been broken on the exchange and your estate is mortgaged.

HAGGARD. A malicious rumour. Why do you believe such lies?

SIR JOSH. Because you have a hole in your britches and your jacket is torn.

HAGGARD. I've spent all day in the coverts, sir. I may dress frugally but I'm an indulgent parent. Roderick, show Sir Josh the extent of my generosity.

(RODERICK smiles and produces the ring.)

(SIR JOSH examines the ring.)

SIR JOSH. This ring is worthless. The stone is glass and the gold is pinchbeck.

HAGGARD. What!

(He stares in horror at the ring.)

RODERICK. That may be so. But it's worth a hundred guineas.

HAGGARD. *(weakly)* A hundred guineas...

SIR JOSH. If you think that ring is worth a hundred guineas, you're a fool, sir. And a knave, if you seek to seduce my daughter with this bauble.

FANNY. He's not a knave, father. All he proposed was that we should pause for a little gingerbread.

SIR JOSH. (*suspiciously*) Gingerbread.

(*The LANDORD approaches.*)

LANDLORD. The room is ready for you and the young lady, sir.

SIR JOSH. What! Would you procure my daughter? Stay clear of me, you knaves, or you will taste powder and shot to season your gingerbread.

(*He drags FANNY from the room.*)

(*HAGGARD stares in silence at RODERICK for a moment. He sighs and examines the ring.*)

HAGGARD. A hundred guineas, Roderick?

RODERICK. I met this very nice young man who'd lost this same ring.

HAGGARD. And was it of great sentimental value?

RODERICK. How did you know?

HAGGARD. Just a wild guess. And did this nice young man offer a reward?

RODERICK. He's posting a reward of a hundred guineas. And here's a coincidence.

HAGGARD. I think I can see it coming.

RODERICK. Would you believe it? I met a bumpkin who had found this same ring and didn't know its value. I was able to buy it from him for a fraction of its worth. Now I must find the young man...

HAGGARD. (*sighs*) I don't think you're going to, Roderick. Now tell me gently – did you give all your money for the ring?

RODERICK. Good lord, no. (*winks*) I kept a little back for gingerbread...

(HAGGARD *brightens.*)

HAGGARD. Gingerbread!

(*He regards BETTY lustfully as she bends low over the table.*)

RODERICK. I know how much you like it, father.

HAGGARD. I do indeed, Roderick.

(*He holds out his palm still regarding BETTY.*)

(RODERICK *hands him a bag of gingerbread.* HAGGARD *looks down and groans.*)

Scene Two – Daring Deeds

(The Swan With Two Necks. Evening. HAGGARD, RODERICK and GRUNGE enter to find the room deserted. They are greeted by BETTY.)

HAGGARD. Quiet tonight, Betty. Is this further evidence of the recession?

BETTY. No sir. We had a visit from One-eyed Will and The Hook last week and the customers are still fearful.

RODERICK. One-eyed Will and The Hook?

HAGGARD. Why do you blanch, Roderick?

RODERICK. They're the notorious tavern brawlers and bullies, father. Have you not seen the posters?

GRUNGE. Aye, the whole town goes in fear of them.

RODERICK. They say that One-eyed Will is terrible but The Hook is worse.

BETTY. Aye, many crimes are laid at their door but none dare inform.

GRUNGE. They abuse women and terrify the populace.

RODERICK. We read of their exploits daily. What were they like, Betty?

BETTY. One-eyed Will is taller and has a hunch.

HAGGARD. *(dryly)* As if one eye isn't enough.

BETTY. The Hook is smaller and has a hook for a hand.

GRUNGE. Aye, smaller but twice as dangerous.

BETTY. He's very sensitive about the hook. If you as much as look at the hook...

RODERICK. What, Betty?

BETTY. There's a brawl.

RODERICK. They won't be coming back, will they, Betty?

BETTY. I should hope not – the Watch have driven them out of the town.

RODERICK. That's a relief.

HAGGARD. You're not afraid, are you, Roderick?

RODERICK. Not for myself but Fanny and her aunt rest here this evening on their way to London.

HAGGARD. Her aunt – Lady Tartlet?

RODERICK. Yes, and she's more fearful than any tavern brawler.

HAGGARD. Well, I hope you get the colour back in your cheeks before they come. Remember, faint heart never won fair lady.

GRUNGE. That gives me an idea – I've been thinking –

HAGGARD. Don't, Grunge – you know it gives you a headache.

GRUNGE. Suppose Master Roderick was to save Fanny from a terrible fate by a deed of daring? Wouldn't her father be forever grateful?

HAGGARD. But that's hardly likely, is it? Look at the way he quaked at the very thought of One-eyed Will and The Hook.

GRUNGE. Ah, but suppose he was to save her from drowning say?

HAGGARD. Drowning?

GRUNGE. That lake of theirs is dark and deep. Suppose she was to fall in...?

RODERICK. Grunge, she's played about that lake since she was a child – she's hardly likely to fall in.

GRUNGE. She would...if she was pushed from the bridge – then you could leap in and save her.

RODERICK. Oh, I see, someone pushes Fanny from the bridge just as I happen to be passing – a large coincidence, Grunge.

(HAGGARD and GRUNGE exchange glances.)

HAGGARD. *(sighs)* It wouldn't be a coincidence, Roderick.

RODERICK. I know what would be.

HAGGARD. What?

RODERICK. That I'd learned to swim in the meantime.

GRUNGE. It was just a thought.

HAGGARD. And a good one, Grunge. You've put me in mind of a stratagem. Didn't you say that the ladies travel alone, Roderick?

RODERICK. Yes.

HAGGARD. Good. Women who travel alone are particularly vulnerable. Suppose Grunge and I enter the inn, heavily disguised, and menace the ladies. Then Roderick arrives in the nick of time and puts us to flight?

RODERICK. Heavily disguised?

HAGGARD. As One-eyed Will and The Hook.

RODERICK. But Fanny would recognise you.

HAGGARD. No because no one dare look at One-eyed Will and The Hook. All I'd need is an eye patch and a cushion up my back and Grunge could be The Hook.

GRUNGE. I'm not having my hand off.

HAGGARD. Of course you won't have your hand off. All you'll need is a butcher's hook from the kitchen and your sleeve pulled down.

GRUNGE. It won't work.

HAGGARD. It will. I'll do the difficult bit – all you have to do is glower.

RODERICK. But what do I do?

HAGGARD. Before we start the ravishing you approach, make some slighting remark – seize Grunge by the throat, shake him thus...

(He begins to shake GRUNGE furiously.)

Hurl him to the ground.

(GRUNGE is hurled to the ground.)

Stamp on him.

(He stamps on GRUNGE.)

Then drag his inert body to the door and hurl him down the steps.

(GRUNGE picks himself up indignantly.)

RODERICK. And what of you, father? What do I do to you?

HAGGARD. Nothing.

(GRUNGE looks more indignant.)

You quell me with a glance. You point towards the door and I slink away. All bullies are cowards at heart.

GRUNGE. Why can't I slink away?

HAGGARD. We can't both slink away, Grunge. It wouldn't be convincing.

GRUNGE. Why can't I be One-eyed Will?

HAGGARD. You're not tall enough. Don't complain – you have the best part.

GRUNGE. The best part! An inert body! I'm not being an inert body for anyone.

HAGGARD. Grunge, if we succeed in this, Fanny's father will be forever grateful. Our fortunes will be made, yours included. You have a mother, have you not?

GRUNGE. *(hesitates)* There's a woman who claims to be my mother...

HAGGARD. Does she still live in that hollow tree?

GRUNGE. Yes.

HAGGARD. Wouldn't you like to buy her a house with windows and doors? You could if our ruse succeeds.

(Sounds off. HAGGARD listens.)

The ladies have arrived. Come, Grunge – we must prepare ourselves...

(He drags GRUNGE out of one door as FANNY and LADY TARTLET and the LANDLORD enter through the other.)

(LADY TARTLET is a lady in her forties. A severe looking woman in fine clothes. RODERICK retreats nervously to the far side of the room.)

(FANNY sees him and becomes flustered. She moves downstage.)

FANNY. *(aside)* It is he!

LADY T. (*frowns*) What is it, Fanny?

FANNY. Nothing, Aunt.

(*Becomes agitated with her fan.*)

(*aside*) Nothing! Only the love of my life.

(LADY TARTLET eyes RODERICK curiously.)

LADY T. Are you acquainted with that gentleman?

FANNY. (*little whimper*) Acquainted. No, Aunt.

LADY T. He appears to have put you out of countenance.

FANNY. (*aside*) Out of countenance? I am transported, my colour rises – my bosom heaves. I shall betray myself...

LADY T. (*suspiciously*) He is a tolerably handsome fellow...

FANNY. (*aside*) Handsome? (*another whimper*) He is my sun, my moon, my love, my life. Yet I darest not speak his name.

LADY T. Niece, if you don't stop that they'll take you away in a cart.

(RODERICK approaches diffidently.)

RODERICK. (*bows*) Your servant, ma'am.

LADY T. Do I know you, sir?

RODERICK. I don't have that privilege, my lady, but I understand that bullies and brawlers have entered the tavern and I offer you my protection.

LADY T. That won't be necessary, sir. We are ladies of quality. Our refinement and breeding are our best defence. Still, I thank you. Your name, sir?

(RODERICK hesitates uneasily.)

RODERICK. My name is an honourable one though much maligned...

LADY T. But what is it?

RODERICK. It is still a beacon to men of honour.

LADY T. Never mind the beacon – what is your name, sir?

RODERICK. First or second...

LADY T. Your family name.

RODERICK. (*gulps*) Haggard.

(*A horse neighs off.*)

LADY T. Haggard!

(*She picks up a pot and throws it at him.*)

RODERICK. (*brightly*) You've heard of me?

LADY T. Yes. You are the young rascal who has pursued Fanny with protestations of affection causing her to be watched day and night.

(**BETTY** *approaches.*)

BETTY. Your rooms are ready, ma'am.

LADY T. We shall view them and then dine. In the meantime be gone, sir.

(*She exits after BETTY dragging FANNY with her.*

RODERICK *follows protesting.*)

(*A couple of regular drinkers enter and sit by the fire. These are followed shortly by HAGGARD and GRUNGE.*)

(*They are now dressed as ONE-EYED WILL and THE HOOK. Hats pulled down, cork moustaches, HAGGARD with an eye patch and a hump, GRUNGE with a hook.*)

(*They glare about them. The LANDLORD approaches timidly.*)

LANDLORD. Sorry, sir, we're about to close.

HAGGARD. You've been granted an extension.

LANDLORD. By whose order?

HAGGARD. By One-eyed Will.

GRUNGE. And The Hook.

(*The drinkers move uneasily.*)

HAGGARD. (*growls*) Now serve us, damn you or I'll cut your liver out and eat it.

GRUNGE. Aye, brandy by thunder or I'll give you a taste of this.

(*He brings the hook crashing down on the table.*)

LANDLORD. Yes, sir. At once...

(The LANDLORD hurries off.)

HAGGARD. The table by the fire, Hook.

(He is about to move off. Stops.)

What is it?

GRUNGE. *(struggling)* I've got it stuck.

HAGGARD. *(hisses)* Not again! I told you to be careful.

GRUNGE. *(hisses back)* Why did it have to be the right hand – I won't be able to unbutton my trousers.

HAGGARD. Just make sure you don't drink too much.

GRUNGE. Couldn't I put a cork on it.

HAGGARD. Certainly not. Do you want everyone to think you're a pansy, Grunge?

(He helps to free GRUNGE and they cross to the fire moving the drinkers out of the way. They sit.)

(The LANDLORD and BETTY enter with drinks. They are shaking so much the glasses rattle on the tray. They look cautiously away. HAGGARD scowls.)

What are you staring at?

LANDLORD. Nothing, sir.

HAGGARD. *(erupts)* Nothing! You call this nothing? I lost this in the service of His Majesty – rot him. And you call it nothing?

GRUNGE. He's very bitter.

HAGGARD. Of course I'm bitter. Not a penny in compensation these twenty years – damn your eyes.

LANDLORD. When I said nothing – I meant I wasn't staring...

GRUNGE. Oh, yes, you were. Have you never seen a man with a hook before?

LANDLORD. Well, yes – but that's a particular fine one, sir.

GRUNGE. *(proudly)* Sheffield steel.

LANDLORD. You can see its quality. Though it must be a handicap.

GRUNGE. (*fiercely*) Did you say handicap?

LANDLORD. I meant no offence.

HAGGARD. He's very bitter.

GRUNGE. Of course I'm bitter. I shall never be able to play the piano again. They soon forget. We sacrificed our vital organs for those who sleep in silken sheets. We hate the gentry.

HAGGARD. Aye. That's why we burn their ricks and ravish their daughters.

GRUNGE. He's very bitter.

HAGGARD. Of course I'm bitter. That's why we like to see their haughty cheeks grow pale and their silks and satins shake with fear. (*looks around*) In the meantime a song. It's too damned quiet. Sing up, I say.

(The LANDLORD, BETTY and the drinkers begin to sing in quavering tones. Their voices die away as the real ONE-EYED WILL and THE HOOK enter the room. They edge out of the room.)

Louder, damn you!

(GRUNGE nudges HAGGARD.)

(HAGGARD raises an eye patch to look around. Gives a start.)

(WILL and THE HOOK approach them.)

WILL. (*silkily*) We thought we'd sit with you, mates – we seem to have more in common...

HAGGARD. Take a berth, shipmates. Have some grog.

WILL. Thankee...

(THE HOOK continues to glare at GRUNGE who slips his hook under the table.)

Members of the Brotherhood?

HAGGARD. Aye.

WILL. I thought so. I'm One-eyed Will and this is The Hook.

HAGGARD. Patch Haggard and Hooky Grunge...

(*WILL shakes hands with HAGGARD. THE HOOK extends his hook. GRUNGE eyes it nervously. They shake hooks and become hopelessly entangled. Finally free themselves.*)

WILL. (*points to HAGGARD's patch*) Where did you lose yours, mate?

HAGGARD. Off Havana. Caught in a broadside on the old Barracuda.

WILL. One of Flint's men?

HAGGARD. Aye.

WILL. They were hard, were Flint's men. And you, matey?

GRUNGE. The same broadside that took his eye took off my hand. I said 'where's my hand?' He said 'don't expect me to look for it.' How we laughed.

HOOK. (*snarls*) Laughed!

GRUNGE. Only in jest.

HAGGARD. (*hastily*) And you, shipmate?

WILL. Against the Dons. We were took, hanged in chains, lashed and branded – and still we spat on them.

GRUNGE. (*getting carried away*) That was nothing. I was took, lashed, keel hauled, mainbraced and barnacled...

WILL. (*suspiciously*) What?

HAGGARD. (*hastily*) That was nought. I was lashed, thumbscrewed and racked for three days.

WILL. The rack!

HAGGARD. I came out six inches taller and still I spat on them.

GRUNGE. That was nothing – I was hanged.

(*They all stare.*)

WILL. Hanged? Then how is it that you're alive, my bucko?

GRUNGE. It came on to rain and they all went home. I was cut down by a friendly native. I still can't swallow.

WILL. (*dangerously*) Hook here doesn't believe you. He thinks you're mendicants trying to win sympathy.

HAGGARD. (*blustering*) Mendicants! How do you think he got that, by thunder? It didn't come from biting his nails.

WILL. I'm more interested in your eye, mate. May I see it?

HAGGARD. Well, I don't want to get a cold in it...

(*He raises the patch reluctantly.*)

WILL. It's very lifelike.

HAGGARD. I thought, have the best.

WILL. See how it glints, Hook.

HOOK. (*peers*) It's bloodshot.

HAGGARD. It's a ruby.

WILL. Show it to me.

(*He holds out his hand.*)

HAGGARD. I'll have a job getting it back in...

WILL. I'll show you mine if you show me yours...

(*WILL removes his eye and lays it on table.*)

(*HAGGARD leaps to his feet.*)

What is it?

HAGGARD. Sorry, mates – I suddenly feel three sheets to the wind.

(*He exits hurriedly.*)

GRUNGE. He hasn't got his land legs yet...

(*GRUNGE follows HAGGARD out of the door.*)

(*WILL and THE HOOK roar with laughter.*)

(*Their laughter dies away as FANNY and LADY TARTLET enter and sit at a far table set for supper. They eye them lecherously.*)

(*RODERICK enters and crosses to WILL and THE HOOK.*)

RODERICK. (*low voice*) You look perfect.

WILL. What?

RODERICK. Absolutely revolting – the pair of you.

WILL. Damn your eyes, do you know who we are?

RODERICK. And the voice – so in character. I've never heard a more unpleasant one.

WILL. (*half rising*) What!

RODERICK. But when are you going to start the ravishing?

WILL. (*stares*) Ravishing.

(*He nods towards the ladies.*)

RODERICK. We haven't got all night. Get over there before they start eating. Get over there and get on with it.

(**RODERICK** moves off.)

(**WILL** and **THE HOOK** look at each other, shrug, and cross to the ladies.)

WILL. Ahoy, my dainties.

LADY T. Leave us, sir. We are ladies of quality.

HOOK. We like them best.

LADY T. Desist – we are not your dockside wenches.

WILL. (*bows*) Allow us some delicacy, ma'am. First a glass of wine. (*he takes a glass*) Then we'll dance a measure...

HOOK. And then the ravishing...

FANNY. Help! Will no one save us?

(**RODERICK** bounds back into the room.)

RODERICK. Have no fear, Fanny – Roderick's here. You have my protection.

(**WILL** and **HOOK** stare at him in astonishment.)

Leave, sir – before I close your other eye – and tell your friend with the surgical appliance to do the same.

HOOK. (*puzzled*) But I thought this was your –

(*Before he can finish* **RODERICK** has seized him by the throat, shakes him up and down, stamps on him, picks him up and throws him out the door.)

WILL. (*gasps*) You've done that to The Hook?

RODERICK. And I'll serve you the same, you dastardly cur.
(*points at door*) Now, go.

(*WILL hesitates then looks cowered and slinks away just as HAGGARD has described.*)

FANNY. My hero.

(*She falls into his arms.*)

(*LADY TARTLET separates them.*)

LADY T. How can we thank you, sir?

RODERICK. It was nothing.

LADY T. My brother will hear of this. You must dine with us.

RODERICK. A pleasure, ma'am.

LADY T. In the meantime, Fanny is near to swooning.

FANNY. (*whispers*) I must loosen my stays, aunt.

LADY T. We must retire and recover ourselves. Afterwards you may join us at our table.

(*The ladies exit,*)

RODERICK. Oh, happy day.

(*HAGGARD and GRUNGE poke their heads around the door.*)

HAGGARD. Have they gone?

RODERICK. Who?

HAGGARD. One-eyed Will and the Hook.

RODERICK. Look, don't come back in here – you'll spoil –
(*stops*) One-eyed Will...

GRUNGE. And The Hook. They've just been in here...

RODERICK. (*totters*) You mean...they were...they were the real...

GRUNGE. One-eyed Will and The Hook.

RODERICK. And I...

HAGGARD. Put them to flight. Don't faint now, Roderick.
The birds have flown. And you are a hero. It was a brilliant stratagem.

(*Sounds of chanting off.*)

What's that hullabaloo, Grunge?

(GRUNGE crosses to window.)

GRUNGE. There's an angry mob outside. They've assembled a barrel of oil, a pile of feathers, and a long pole...

HAGGARD. What are they chanting?

GRUNGE. Tar and feather them and ride them out of town.

HAGGARD. They don't mean us, surely.

GRUNGE. They're waving their fists.

RODERICK. *(looks around)* And there's no one here but you and Grunge...

HAGGARD. It's our disguise – once we reveal ourselves they'll be amused at the jest. Come, Grunge.

(They cross to the window. They remove their hats, wipe off their moustaches. HAGGARD removes his eye patch and GRUNGE his hook. They wave.)

(There is a gasp from the mob.)

(The chanting begins again.)

What are they chanting now, Grunge?

GRUNGE. Tar and feather them and ride them out of town.

(They all stare at each other and dash for the door.)

(Curtain)

Scene Three – The Great Lover

(The Tartlets' london house. Evening.)

(LADY TARTLET 's withdrawing room. The room has the appearance of a boudoir. Chaise-longue, tables and chairs, drinks tray. On the wall a fierce picture of **LORD TARTLET.**)

(Doors off, stage right and left. Downstage left are french windows.)

(Noises off, voices, laughter, clink of glasses.)

(FANNY enters breathlessly followed by **RODERICK.** He embraces her.)

FANNY. Roderick, you must not.

RODERICK. *(ardently)* Must not?

FANNY. Follow me here. This is my aunt's boudoir. She would not approve of us being here alone.

RODERICK. But your aunt favours me.

FANNY. But not my father. He will not hear of our engagement. I am to marry the son of a brewer with fifty thousand a year.

RODERICK. Then may he drown in his own vat, the dog.

FANNY. What is to be done, Roderick?

RODERICK. We must elope.

FANNY. Elope!

(She moves downstage.)

I am transported.

RODERICK. We must elope tonight.

FANNY. Tonight!

(She becomes busy with the fan.)

But it cannot be. My aunt occupies the adjoining chamber and is a light sleeper. And Lord Tartlet is confined to the ground floor with gout, dropsy and the windy spasms.

RODERICK. Even so we must risk all, Fanny.

FANNY. Oh, foolish youth. When I saw you across the room tonight nervously fingering your pommel I knew you planned some desperate act.

RODERICK. Tonight, Fanny – we shall enter the gates of ecstasy.

FANNY. That's done it.

(She sits.)

But, Roderick, how can we enter the gates of ecstasy when my aunt sits before them like the gorgon?

RODERICK. Tonight Perseus shall slay the gorgon.

FANNY. You, Roderick?

RODERICK. Not I. Longstock the poet will slay the gorgon – not with a sword but with honeyed words and blandishments.

FANNY. Longstock! In truth she has talked of no one else since she met him. Is he here?

RODERICK. He is out there now.

(Laughter off.)

Amusing the company with his bon mots and amusing sallies.

FANNY. I can't wait to meet him, although I must confess I've read nothing he's written.

RODERICK. You won't – he hasn't written anything.

FANNY. What?

RODERICK. But you have met him. *(lowers voice)* Longstock is my father.

FANNY. *(stares)* It is a stratagem.

RODERICK. Indeed. You must place a few simple possessions in a bag and drop them from your chamber window – then emerge as though taking the night air. In the meantime Longstock will divert Lady Tartlet.

FANNY. Roderick, this is madness. Lord Tartlet has spies everywhere; even those eyes in the portrait seem to follow me about the room.

RODERICK. That's the sign of a good portrait when the eyes follow you about the room – there's nothing to be afraid of, Fanny.

FANNY. But Lord Tartlet can be violently jealous and he has a short way with rivals.

RODERICK. How so?

FANNY. He has them beaten by ruffians, put in a sack and thrown from Tower Bridge.

RODERICK. Fear not – my father intends to charm the old fool. Now go and prepare...

(He follows her to the door.)

FANNY. No, stay – we must not be seen together...

*(She exits leaving **RODERICK** alone in the room. He studies the portrait moving this way and that to see if the eyes follow him. **LADY TARTLET** enters the room followed by **HAGGARD**. **HAGGARD** is dressed soberly with a flowing necktie.)*

LADY T. Tish! You go too far, sir.

(Taps him with her fan.)

But I must say you are vastly amusing.

*(She sees **RODERICK**.)*

Roderick, what are you doing here?

RODERICK. *(smoothly)* Looking for you, Lady Tartlet. But stay, am I in the presence of Longstock the poet?

HAGGARD. *(modestly)* You are, sir.

RODERICK. At last. I've long been an admirer of your work, sir.

HAGGARD. You're too kind.

RODERICK. Pray, may I stay for a moment and listen to the gems of your conversation?

HAGGARD. I'm afraid not – my conversation is private.

RODERICK. Then I'll withdraw. Your servant.

HAGGARD. And yours.

*(**RODERICK** bows and exits.)*

FINISH READING THIS SCRIPT

Visit our website to purchase the full script or to explore other titles.

www.samuelfrench.com

www.samuelfrench.co.uk

To stay up to date on all that we are doing, follow us on social media:



*Titles for licensing are subject to availability depending on your territory.