

THE ASCENT OF WILBERFORCE III

or

The White Hell of Iffish Odorabad

A MUSICAL

Book and Lyrics by CHRIS JUDGE SMITH

Music by J. MAXWELL HUTCHINSON

August 1981

(Esperanto translations & the lyric of 'The Esperanto Song' by Frank Bagguley)

DRAMATIS PERSONAE:

LORD MELIOR - A Socialist Peer

The Hon. TRISTRAM MELIOR - His son

BUD FREESTONE - An American Mountaineer

DR. THORBJORN ODDLEIF - A Norwegian Scientist

DIANA CREDENCE - A Student of the Occult

DANK THANGI - A Himalayan Mountain Porter

THE YETI - An Abominable Snowman

MENSANA - A Secret Chief

The action takes place in the British Protectorate of Iffish Odorabad, somewhere in the Himalayas, in the year 1929.

SCENE ONE

At one end of the white traverse stage is the musicians' station, at the other rises the single fixed set, a snowy mountain face. Craggy, impressive, and brilliant white, it rises sharply to a peak. It is sturdy enough to be climbed by the actors and is provided with access to a small platform at the summit and an exit over one flank about half-way up.

Darkness. Strange devotional music. A slow sunrise, touching the highest pinnacle of the mountain with rosy fingers, reveals DIANA CREDENCE, an attractive young English woman with flowing hair, standing at the far end of the stage from the peak, her arms raised in worship as she sings her 'DAWN LITANY.'

She wears a flowing brightly coloured robe and headdress, figured with the sign of the Pentagram and other magical Symbols of Power. Beneath the robe, however, is seen a pair of striped flannel pyjamas; worn with woolly bedroom slippers, socks and mittens.)

01. DAWN LITANY

DIANA: **Hail to thee, Ra
Thou art risen in thy glory as the Sun.
Upright Thou art
In thy lustful voyage from these abodes of night.
Hail to thee, Bornless One
Hail to thy dreadful Light, Light, thy Light!
Kephra, Tum,
Ra-Hoor-Khuit, All Hail!**

As her song comes to a close, lights down on DIANA and up on LORD MELIOR, a vigorous and dynamic grey-haired man of fifty-five. He wears a climbing suit of rough tweed, and stands, gazing intently out at the mountain. A carpet, chair and small table indicate an interior. A telescope on a tripod stands close by. After a moment TRISTRAM MELIOR enters, a handsome, if callow, youth of twenty, much in the shadow of his famous father. He wears similar tweeds.

TRIS. 'Morning, Father.

MELIOR Quick. Come over by the window.

(They both look out at the Mountain, now blazing in the sunrise.)

TRIS. It's beautiful.

MELIOR And in six days we'll have beaten it ... Now do you see there ... *(points)* yes, just where the sun's reached. Now that pinnacle is known as 'the Monkey's Paw', and the buttress just to the left? Yes, that's the one. Well Guntermayer's Expedition of 1910 referred to that as 'the nasty bit'. I'm hoping Carlo's snapshots will show it more clearly.

- TRIS. It's magnificent! How did Wilberforce first describe it?
- (Goes to the table, picks up a volume bristling with bookmarks, finds a passage and quotes impressively.)*
- 'A mountain of some considerable size.' Apparently the natives call it Upish Ghooli.
- MELIOR Does that mean anything?
- TRIS. Yes, according to the porters' Headman, it means The Manhood of the Almighty.
- MELIOR *(After a long pause)* Filthy devils!
- TRIS. According to them it's supposed to be inhabited by some powerful spirit being.
- MELIOR It's amazing, isn't it? Show people something big or impressive and at once there has to be some sort of religious mumbo-jumbo wrapped around it. Good God, Tris, it's 1929! The 'Glorious' British Empire has been running Iffish Odorabad for fifty years and what's been our great contribution to the life of the natives? Phonographs and Missionaries! Just what they need, missionaries. If it's not demons and Buddhas, it's gentle-Jesus-meek-and-mild. I tell you, when we make the official Expedition Report to the League of Nations, I certainly won't mince my words about the Administration here. That District Commissioner! ... What a bourgeois, reactionary ... snobbish...
- TRIS. But things will change, Pa. That's why we're here.
- MELIOR You're right, of course. You're absolutely right.

02. TRIS AND MELIOR SING 'ONE WORLD'

- MELIOR **I see a world that is set free,
Where no man rules a foreign land by the gun.
Frontiers and boundaries all swept away,
I see a world made one!**
- BOTH **One World...**
- MELIOR **No more religion**
- BOTH **One World...**
- MELIOR **To cause division**
- BOTH **One World...**

MELIOR	No need to kneel and pray
BOTH	One world, one day.
MELIOR	I see a world that shares it's wealth; No rich and powerful indulging their greed. From each according to his own abilities, To each according to his needs!
BOTH	One World...
MELIOR	A world of sharing
BOTH	One World...
MELIOR	A world of caring
BOTH	One World...
MELIOR	I see it come to pass
BOTH	One world, one class.
MELIOR	I see a world that understands; A common language known on every shore. The peoples of the earth speak with one voice
BOTH	And wars will be no more!
	One World ...
MELIOR	Nation to Nation
BOTH	One World...
MELIOR	In conversation
BOTH	One World...
MELIOR	In Language shared by each
BOTH	One world, one Speech.

As the song finishes BUD FREESTONE enters. A forty year old semi-professional climber from the Midwest, he wears a thick roll-neck sweater and grey flannels. Solid and careful in his approach to climbing, he can be blunt and outspoken.

BUD Lord Melior?

MELIOR Ah. Good to see you, Bud. You haven't met my son Tristram, have you? He arrived last night with the porters. Tris, this is Mr. Bud Freestone, probably the best Himalayan man in the party, eh Bud?

BUD That remains to be seen, sir.

(Shakes hands with TRIS.)

I'm proud to meet you, your Honourableship.

TRIS. Please call me Tris.

MELIOR Yes, we don't go in for all that 'ancien régime' stuff.

BUD Well, Tris, I read about your solo ascent of Le Grand Gendarme. That was quite a climb ... have you been to the Himalayas before?

TRIS. I'm afraid not.

BUD Well, they're a lot bigger and a lot colder than the Alps, and one hell of a lot higher. In this hotel we're already higher than the summit of the Eiger. And up top there (indicates the top of the Mountain) the air is real thin; and the sky is such a dark blue you can see the stars at midday ... It's not a place for human beings.... You take your goggles off up there, even in thick cloud, and those ultraviolet rays'll fry the back of your eye-balls in five minutes.

(Turning to MELIOR and taking a large rolled up photograph from his pocket)

I just met Carlo Macharismo in the hall. He asked me to give you this.

(He hands MELIOR the photograph.)

MELIOR Glad he introduced himself. Carlo will be doing all the photography you see.

BUD Yeah, but what's he like on a rope? I don't like what I hear about Italian climbers.

TRIS. Oh he's first class. Bravura rock climbing technique; very daring. Did he say he'd be joining us?

BUD He was kind of otherwise engaged. Trying to sweet-talk that strange English girl who's staying here.

TRIS. Good old Carlo. Great ladies' man.

- BUD. Well he sure struck out this time! He was trying to get her to go to the Bazaar with him. Doing the whole Rudy Valentino production ... *(In cod Italian accent)* 'Bella Signora! I must-a see-a your eyes against-a the mountains!' And he was getting nowhere fast.
- MELIOR Come and look at this you two
- (They go across and join him)*
- It looks as if we might be able to avoid Guntermayer's Nasty Bit entirely. There seems to be a fissure leading up from 'The Monkey's Paw' ... We'd better call that 'The Monkey's Crack', and that seems to end in a ledge just below the 'Staircase of Death'. Now if the Crack will 'go', the ledge might do for Camp III.
- TRIS. There's been one thing that's been puzzling me, Pa. You're American, aren't you, Mr. Freestone?
- BUD From Austerity, Colorado. And I'll be obliged if you call me Bud.
- TRIS. Well, what did the League of Nations have to say about Bud being a member of an official League of Nations expedition when the United States have just refused to join?
- BUD No sir, that's merely the obstructionist wing of the Republican Party, led by a reactionary called Herbert Hoover, who happens to be President right now. Temporarily that's to say, until we put him out on his ass.
- MELIOR No problems really. Bud's a well known Internationalist, and I pointed out that his presence made us a truly pan-national group. That is the point after all. Our expedition is an exercise in multi-national co-operation and global fellowship. That's why I chose only climbers known for their progressive views and modern attitudes. I intend our little group to be a microcosm of what one day may come to pass; one peace ... one loyalty ... one language ... one world!
- (Applause from the rest of the party, then ODDLEIF's voice is heard off, yodelling cheerfully.)*
- One language ... My God, I'd forgotten... Oddleif!
- BUD Who?
- MELIOR Dr. Thorbjorn Oddleif, the scientific officer; Norwegian botanist; doesn't speak any English.
- BUD Aw hell. Is this really gonna be necessary?

MELIOR Absolutely. It's one of the major points of the whole expedition, and we've all had nine months to prepare ... Right gentlemen, from this moment we will speak only in Esperanto.

BUD *(to himself)* Aw shit!

DR. THORBJORN ODDLEIF enters. He is an ungainly and avuncular figure In an old fashioned knickerbocker suit, round spectacles and massive white beard. He hugely enjoys his unusual role as the expedition's tutor in Esperanto, the International Language in which Lord Melior has decreed the expedition shall be conducted. He talks rapidly with numerous expressive gestures.

ODDLEIF Bonan tagon.

ALL *(In chorus)* Bonan tagon, Doktoro Oddleif.

ODDLEIF Ŝajnas mi estas la lasta persono alveni.

(shakes hands enthusiastically with MELIOR)

Ah, Lord Melior, kiam last-tempe mi vidis vin, vi preparis manĝi la tutan konferencon vivan.

(He laughs heartily, and the others join in dutifully)

MELIOR Mi timas ke mi ekniordis pli ol mi povis maĉi. *(Presenting TRIS)* Permesu min prezenti la aliajn. Mia fib, Tristram.

ODDIEIF Ĉarmata!

TRIS. Mia patro estas parolinto multe pri vi.

ODDLEIF *(Correcting him)* Parolinta ... 'Nia patro estas parohinta ...'

TRIS. Jes, kompreneble, dankon.

MELIOR *(As BUD steps forward)* Tiu- ĉi estas Sinjoro Bud Freestone el Kolorado, Usono.

BUD *(Shaking hands with a confident smile)* Kiel vi?

ODDLEIF Bone, dankon. Kolorado? Ĉu vi scias ion pri brutbienoĵ?

(BUD remains silent, nodding and smiling politely)

Ĉu estas multaj brutbredeĵoj en Kolorado?

(BUD realises he is expected to reply)

BUD *(Hesitantly)* Mi bedaŭras. Mi ne komprenas.

ODDLEIF Ahah. *(Speaking clearly)* " Ĉu vi scias ion pri". Ĉu vi komprenas tion?

BUD Jes.

ODDLEIF La vorto brutbredejoj. Ĉu vi komprenas ilin?

BUD No, I'm sorry, I haven't come across that one.

ODDLEIF *(Wagging a finger)* Esperante, mi petas.

BUD Ne. Mi neniam *(aside)*... come across?

TRIS. *(Helpfully)* Aŭldis.

BUD Yeah, ... aŭdi ilin antaŭe.

ODDLEIF Vi devas porti Esperantan Vortaron kun vi.

(He fishes in his pocket and pulls out a small green Esperanto dictionary and hands it to BUD. Then, speaking to everyone else ...)

Ĉu ĉiujajn komprenas la vorton brutbredejoj?

(Silence. ODDLEIF is shocked)

Neniu?

(There being no reply he fishes in his pocket again and produces four more pocket dictionaries which he hands around.)

Kion diras viaj vortaroj.

(They look up the word in their dictionaries.)

Bone. Nun ripetu post mi. *(Pointing to each of them in turn)* Brutbrede...

BUD Brutbrede

ODDLEIF Brutbredas...

TRIS. Brutbredas

ODDLEIF Brutbrede...

MELIOR	Brutbredis
ODDLEIF	Brutbredos...
BUD	Brutbredos
ODDLEIF	Brutbredus...
TRIS.	Brutbredus
ODDLEIF	Brutbreditu...
MELIOR	Brutbreditu
ODDLEIF	Denove. Brutbreditu, Brutbredas, Brutbredis, Brutbredos, Brutbredus, Brutbreditu. Nun vi...
	<i>(He raises his hands to conduct the others as they obediently chant in response)</i>
ALL	Brutbreditu, Brutbredas, Brutbredis, Brutbredos, Brutbredus, Brutbreditu!
ODDLEIF	Bone

03. Led by ODDLEIF, they all sing THE ESPERANTO SONG

ODDLEIF	Belega, Ĉarmega, Sud - Ĉina fraŭlino Amegis fervore Nord - Anglan junulon; Amegi, Amegas, Aniegis, Amegos, Amegus, Ainegu. Nun Vi.
ALL	Amegi, Arnegas, Amegis, Amegos, Axnegus, Amegu. Nun Vi.
ODDLEIF-	Amanti ŝi skribis per skribo - maŝino Sed baldaŭ si noinis un tut - sensaĝulon. Ŝi skribi, ŝi skribas, ŝi skribis, ŝi skribos, ŝi skribus, ŝi skribu. Nun Vi.
ALL	Ŝi skribi, ŝi skribas, ŝi skribis, ŝi skribos, ŝi skribus, ŝi skribu. Nun Vi.
ODDLEIF	Komprenanta nek la Ĉinan nek la Esperantan lingvon, Li ne povis korespondi kun lotusa flora Ling Pon.
ALL	Do, mu petas, kara frato, Lernu nun la mondan lingvon Simpatiu kun kompato Pri lotusa floro Ling Pon
ODDLEIF	Dili ĝenta tre juna Sud - Ĉina fraŭlino Provis lerni rapide la Nord - Anglan lingvon,

'Vis lerni, 'vis lernas, 'vis lernis, 'vis lernos, 'vis lernus, 'vis lernu. Nun vi.

ALL **'Vis lerni, 'vis lernas, 'vis lernis, 'vis lernos, 'vis lernus, 'vis lernu. Nun vi.**

ODDLEIF **Sed post dek-ok monatoj la bel'junulino
Eltrovis ĝin tro malfacilan por Ling Pon
Eltrovi, Eltrovas, Eltrovis, Eltrovos, Eltrovus, Eltrovu. Nun vi.**

ALL **Eltrovi, Eltrovas, Eltrovis, Eltrovos, Eltrovus, Eltrovu. Nun vi.**

ODDLEIF **Senespere, al amiko el la insularo Fiĝi,
Ŝi per Esperanto skribis kaj proponis ge-edziĝi.**

ALL **Do, mi petas, kara frato,
Lernu nun la mondan lingvon
Simpatiu kun kompato
Pri lotusa floro Ling Pon!
Proponi, Proponas, Proponis, Proponos, Proponus, Proponu. Nun vi.
Proponi, Proponas, Proponis, Proponos, Proponus, Proponu. Nun vi.**

As the song comes to a close, with everyone noisily congratulating each other, DIANA enters. She now wears a moderately fashionable winter suit, with short skirt and cloche hat. Her manner oscillates in a rather unbalanced way between a down-to-earth, rather risqué chumminess, and an ethereal visionary fervour.

DIANA Excuse me

(They all turn and look at her)

Are you the gentlemen who are going to make an attempt on Wilberforce III?

MELIOR That's right, but I hope we'll do better than an attempt.

DIANA Who's your leader?

(All the others look at MELIOR)

MELIOR We're a completely democratic expedition so we don't have a leader, per se.

DIANA Well, I need to speak to someone in authority.

(All look at MELIOR)

MELIOR Yes, well I do seem to chair most group discussions, ha, ha, so I'm sure I can help you, Miss ... ?

DIANA *(Holding out her hand)* Diana Credence.

MELIOR *(Shaking hands)* Melior of New Waybury.

DIANA The thing is Mr. Melior...

MELIOR *(Embarrassed and muttering)* Lord ... Lord Melior, actually.

DIANA *(Unworried)* Oh terribly sorry. It's been some years since I moved in Society, and here ... *(She gestures vaguely to indicate Iffish Odorabad)* Well, I've been quite out of the world. Look, Lord Melior, I have a terribly serious and important favour to ask you.

MELIOR Anything, of course.

DIANA I want to join your expedition.

(General reaction)

MELIOR What, you mean up the mountain?

DIANA Yes.

BUD Are you serious?

DIANA Perfectly.

MELIOR But you must know that's impossible.

ODDLEIF In Esperante me petas?

DIANA I don't see that one additional climber...

BUD Lady, we're not going out for a little Alpine stroll. That's an unclimbed, 20,000 foot mountain out there.

TRIS. With a foul reputation...

BUD ... And the bones of at least six German climbers somewhere on the South Face.

ODDLEIF In Esperante!

MELIOR So you see it's a serious business, Miss Credence. We can't take passengers.

DIANA I wasn't proposing you haul me up like a sack of potatoes My father took me climbing with him in the Lake District from the time I was twelve, and in '26 I did some climbs on La Virge Noire at St. Feliciene with Alastair Crowley, and he says I'm as good as most of the Alpine Club.

- TRIS. Crowley? I've heard that name recently; some sort of court case or scandal wasn't there?
- MELIOR Chucked out of France a few months back.
- TRIS. Oh yes, that's right, 'The Wickedest Man in the World'. (*Apologetically to DIANA*) Well, that's what they call him in the papers.
- MELIOR Not far off the mark by all accounts. Black Magic; drugs, 'unmentionable vice' ... filthy goings on!
- TRIS. Pa, I think Miss Credence may be a friend of his.
- MELIOR Ah. Well, in that case I apologise.
- DIANA That's quite all right. Crowley doesn't have friends; only disciples and lovers, and I'm honoured to have been both.
- (*Silence. MELIOR coughs in embarrassment*)
- TRIS. (*Kindly*) It's really not the sort of climb for a girl, you know.
- DIANA I'm as good as a boy! And anyway, you need to have me with you.
- BUD How do you work that out?
- DIANA There are forces at large on Upish Ghooli that you know nothing about.
- MELIOR (*In alarm*) Not another expedition?
- DIANA The peak of Upish Ghooli is the seat and court of a Spirit Being of enormous power. (*Mysterious music starts*) It is the dwelling place of the Lord Mensana, one of the Secret Chiefs of the Great White ... Brotherhood ... of Light ... (*She makes a mystic gesture on each word*) The Mahatma Mensana is one of the Spirit Guardians of the Physical Sphere. He and his chelas keep ceaseless vigil from this mountain, which is one of the Elemental Watchtowers of the Universe.
- (*BUD taps the side of his head, and TRIS. nods in agreement*)
- MELIOR May we ask how you know of this er ... remarkable individual?

04. DIANA sings 'MADAME BLAVATSKI'

- DIANA **There was once a woman for whom magic letters came,
Sent by Holy Mystics, each of legendary fame.**

She must be their spokesman and their messages proclaim,
And Helena Petrovna Blavatski was her name.

In Yucatan
There's a mystic man
And he has a marvellous Master Plan
And we ought to help him all we can
Says Madame Blavatski!

TRIS. *(Aside)* She's quite jolly.

DIANA Madame Blavatski!

BUD *(Aside)* Off her trolley.

DIANA We all owe a debt
To a priest in Tibet.
He's a Yogi and sounds a perfect pet
Only no one has actually seen him yet
Except Madame Blavatski!

BUD *(Aside)* She's a riot.

DIANA Madame Blavatski!

MELIOR *(Aside)* Wish she'd be quiet.

DIANA They called her H.P.B.
Named her creed Theosophy.
She laboured night and day
Made her way
To Bombay
In 1883.

In a cave near here's
A whole gang of fakirs
Who've been sitting in silence for a thousand years,
But they danced the rumba and they gave three cheers
For Madame Blavatski!

ODDLEIF *(Aside)* *Êu vi scias îi?*

DIANA Madame Blavatski!

MELIOR *(Aside)* No, Madame Blavatski!

DIANA Though these great Mahatmas are still hidden from our sight,

Through their magic powers they perceive our human plight.
 We ignore the teachers they have sent to put us right
 Yet still they seek to turn us and the world towards the light.

There's a witch-doctor
 North of Singapore
 Who squats in a pile of elephant spoor.
 No one's ever found out what he does it for
 Except Madame Blavatski!

TRIS. *(Aside)* Looks quite charming ...

DIANA Madame Blavatski!

MELIOR *(Aside)* She needs calming!

DIANA He can lie on a towel
 And with a dreadful howl
 Pull out yards and yards of his lower bowel,
 I'd personally find that perfectly foul,
 But not Madame Blavatski!

BUD *(Aside)* All baloney!

DIANA Madame Blavatski!

BUD *(Aside)* What a phoney!

DIANA And this side of Bengal
 The most super one of all
 Is Mensana by name.
 So I came
 Heart aflame
 In answer to his call.

And the point in space
 That you're trying to chase
 Is the Lord Mensana's hiding place
 And I want to meet him face to face

ALL Like Madame Blavatski!

TRIS. Please excuse us.

ALL Madame Blavatski!

MELIOR This doesn't amuse us.

ALL **Madame Blavatski!**

BUD **Look, why choose us?**

DIANA **Madame Blavatski!**

ODDLEIF *(Presenting himself to DIANA)* Madame Blavatski? Thorbjorn Oddleif ... *(Bows)*

MELIOR *(Aside)* Oh, for heaven's sake!

DIANA *(Ignoring ODDLEIF)* Your gross vibrations are offensive to him and disrupt his work, but if you take me to him, I'll intercede for you and perhaps in his infinite kindness he will suffer you to tread the sacred snows of the summit. Without me though, your party is doomed. He will brush you from the mountain like crumbs from his beard ... Well, what do you say?

ODDLEIF Bone. Nun repetu in Esperante, mi petas ...

MELIOR *(Frostily)* You must excuse us, Miss Credence. I'm sorry we can't help you. *(To the others)* Gentlemen, I believe our breakfast is waiting and we have a great deal to do.

ODDLEIF *(Wagging a finger)* Esperante, mi petas.

MELIOR Ah yes, of course. Sinjoroj, mi kredas ke nia matenmanĝo estas preta, kaj ni havas multon por fare. Ha Ha Ha ..

ODDLEIF Ha Ha Ha *(Correcting him)* ... Por fari.

MELIOR Ah, Por fari. Dankon.

MELIOR & ODDLEIF exit followed by TRIS. & BUD. DIANA pulls a rude face at their retreating backs.

DIANA Bah!

(She walks disconsolately to the 'window' by the telescope and stands looking up at the mountain. Suddenly CARLO MACHARISMO's voice is heard, Off, in full serenade.)

CARLO *(Voice OFF)* O.. so .. le mio ' *(etc. etc.)*

(DIANA looks down in surprise)

DIANA *(To herself, annoyed)* Oh for heaven's sake!

(She moves away from the window but suddenly stops. She thinks for a moment, clearly amused by the idea that has struck her. She returns to the window and calls down to her admirer, who immediately ceases his serenade.)

Signor Macharismo?

CARLO *(Voice OFF)* Sì?

DIANA Is it too late to change my mind about visiting the Bazaar?

CARLO *(Voice OFF)* Oh, no!

DIANA Good. I'll be right down.

CARLO *(Voice OFF)* Oh, Cara bellissima!

She exits. Blackout.

05. The Instrumental 'UPISH GHOLI *is played between Scenes One and Two.*

SCENE TWO

BASE CAMP. At stage centre are pitched three, small, two-man bell tents. From one flies two flags. One reads 'Base Camp' while above it flies the flag of the League of Nations. Haversacks and boxes of stores are stacked around, among which sit MELIOR, TRIS, BUD and ODDLEIF. They wear the same clothes as in Scene One with the addition of climbing boots and the battered and disreputable felt hats beloved of all mountaineers before safety helmets became 'de rigueur'. In addition, each man carries his Esperanto dictionary. They are idly polishing crampons and alpenstocks, and seem to be waiting impatiently for something.

MELIOR *(Looking at his watch)* Kie estas Karlo?

TRIS. Li devas alveni baldaŭ.

MELIOR Legu lian noton denove.

(TRIS. takes a folded sheet of notepaper from his pocket, unfolds it and reads aloud)

TRIS. 'I am slightly indisposed and will join you later at Base Camp ... Carlo Macharismo.' It's a bit odd, isn't it?

(Hands the note to MELIOR)

ODDLEIF Esperante, mi petas.

TRIS. *(Dutifully)* Estas join stranga, ĉu ne?

ODDLEIF *(Brightly and speaking too fast for the others to follow)* Dum ni atendas un, mi volas esplori iom trans la plej proksima monteĝo. Mi kredas ke mi povas vidi kelkajn tre interesajn florojn.

(There is general protest and cries of 'Tro rapide' and 'Parolu plu mairapide'. ODDLEIF repeats his statement phrase by phrase miming the actions. The others nod and say 'Jes' as they understand each phrase.)

Dum ni atendas un ...

ALL Jes.

ODDLEIF ... Mi volas esplori...

ALL Jes.

ODDLEIF ... Iom trans...

ALL Jes.

ODDLEIF ... La plej proksima monteĝo...

(The others have difficulty with the word 'plej')

MELIOR No.

(They look up the word in their little dictionaries)

ALL Jes.

ODDLEIF ... Mi kredas...

ALL Jes

ODDLEIF ... Ke me povas vidi...

MELIOR *(To the others)* That's the eyes...

ALL Jes.

ODDLEIF ... Kelkajn tre interesajn florojn.

MELIOR Flowers ... Off you go then.

ODDLEIF *(Raising his hat)* Adiaŭ!

ALL *(In chorus)* Adiaŭ!

(ODDLEIF doffs his hat to the group and walks to the mountain face. He climbs up a little way and exits to the side half way up one flank, passing out of sight behind the set.)

TRIS. *(Dutifully)* Mi esperas ke li havos bonŝancon.

BUD How long are we gonna have to keep this up?

MELIOR *(Rather crossly)* Esperante, mi petas!

ODDLEIF *(Turning and waving as he disappears)* Adiaŭ!

ALL Adiaŭ!

BUD Look, if we have to look up the word for ridge, what's it gonna be like on a rope ... on a difficult pitch at night? What's the word for chockstone? Or abseil. How do you say 'There's verglas on the far side of the bergschrund.' Huh?

MELIOR Certe mi ne devus kiarigi...

BUD *(Interrupting angrily)* Damn it, Melior, answer me in English.

MELIOR Surely I don't have to explain the advantages for an International group in having a common language.

BUD Well what the hell's wrong with English?

MELIOR It has definitely nationalistic and Imperialist implications; and anyway, as you know, Dr. Oddleif doesn't speak...

TRIS. *(Interrupts excitedly, pointing off-stage away from the mountain)* It's Carlo!

All the others look and then rise to their feet as CARLO enters from the far end of the stage and makes his way to the Camp. He wears smart flying breeches and high boots, a soft-collared shirt, a wide-brimmed hat pulled well down, dark snow-goggles and a silk scarf tied over the lower part of his face.

MELIOR Ah; at last.

BUD Where-o the hell-o have you been-o?

(CARLO pulls another note from his pocket and hands it to TRIS who unfolds it and reads aloud.)

TRIS. 'I have laryngitis, but I am otherwise quite fit. Please excuse me if I keep wrapped up and don't talk for a few days.'

MELIOR Certe, Carlo, ni tute komprenas.

(ODDLEIF appears over the shoulder of the mountain clutching a large bunch of obscure looking mountain herbage.)

ODDLEIF *(Yodels)* Yodelayeedee. *(Shouts)* Saluton!

ALL *(In chorus)* Saluton!

BUD My God, he's standing on a cornice!

TRIS You're right. That one could-break off at any moment.

BUD *(Shouts)* Go Back! You're standing on a cornice!

ODDLEIF *(Playfully wagging an admonishing finger)* Esperante, mi petas!

MELIOR *(Shouts) Atentu! Danĝero!*

(ODDLEIF starts and looks anxiously around him, but remains standing on the same spot.)

BUD *(Frantically leafing through his dictionary)* What the hell's the Esperanto for cornice?

TRIS. *(Shouts) Vi estas en danĝero de korniko!*

(ODDLEIF looks wildly into the sky, ducks and begins to beat the air about him with his hands.)

ODDLEIF Shoo! Shoo!

MELIOR No. No. You've said he's in danger from a crow!

BUD *(Finding the word and bellowing)* Korbeltiko!

Aghast, ODDLEIF looks down at the snow beneath his feet, but at that moment there is a crack like a pistol shot followed by the crashing rumble of tons of ice breaking from the face of the mountain. ODDLEIF falls vertically from sight behind the mountain, his echoing scream dying away in the distant thunder of an avalanche. 'THE CHORDS OF DOOM' (first heard at the close of the "DAWN LITANY") ring out. Blackout.

SCENE THREE

BASE CAMP, a short while later. The climbers have constructed a large, stone cairn some way from the tents to commemorate ODDLEIF's death. The party stands in a circle around this traditional mountaineers memorial as BUD sings 'THE DEATH SONG'. One by one, each member of the party steps forward and places a final rock on top of the cairn, steps back a pace and salutes. MELIOR and TRIS give clenched fist salutes; BUD throws a U.S. Navy salute; while CARLO, the last to pay his respects, makes, a rather curious gesture. The others join BUD on the final verse, singing stirring harmonies.

06. THE DEATH SONG

BUD

**Great Mountaineers
Great Climbers of the Past,
To you we commend
The Soul of our dear friend.
Great Mountaineers
Great Climbers of the Past,
We bid him adieu,
For he now climbs with you.**

**Mallory lead him,
And Irving precede him,
Protect him we pray
On his climb to that ultimate peak.
Melchior guide him,
And Wills climb beside him.
We beg you allow him
To learn your immortal technique.**

**Mummery aid him,
And guide his glissade, in
Those Heavenly snowfields
That mortal foot never has trod.
Coolidge belay him
When footholds betray him
On some dark crevasse
In the measureless Glaciers of God.**

MELIOR

(Solemnly) I propose that we convene a group meeting. Is the motion seconded?

(ALL raise their hands)

Good. So let us deem that a meeting is now in session. As Chairman, I would like to ask how the Group feels about the future of the expedition. Do we turn

back out of respect for the dead man, or do we go on? ... I'd like to throw this open now, so...

(Silence)

Bud?

BUD Hell, we go on We didn't come six thousand miles to turn back at Base Camp, and four can get up there as easily as five.

MELIOR Tris?

TRIS I think we should go on. I'm sure Thorbjorn would have wanted it.

MELIOR Carlo.

(CARLO points vigorously towards the summit)

Well said, Carlo; and speaking now as an ex officio group member as it were, well of course we're going to go on; accepting Thorbjorn Oddleif's death as the glorious sacrifice of an individual for the greater solidarity of the group. Onwards in the name of World Peace and Understanding! Upwards in the name of the United Peoples of the World! Long Live the League of Nations!

ALL Long Live the League!

They sing 'THE MOUNTAIN IS CALLING' and as they sing, they shoulder their rucksacks, seize their ice-axes and rope up.

07. THE MOUNTAIN IS CALLING & THE WILBERFORCE THEME

ALL **The Mountain is calling, we dare not delay,
For though our path is steep,
There's an appointment we must keep.**

**The Mountain is calling, we hear and obey.
There can be no retreat
'Till we have victory or defeat.**

BUD **This is our appointed hour
To challenge Nature's dreadful power.
Fight to prove Mankind supreme
Fight to prove our dream!**

ALL **The Mountain is calling, we answer with joy
"Destroy us if you will,
But our ideals will live on still!"**

As the song finishes, they turn and begin to climb the face, moving slowly upward one at a time led by BUD with TRIS as the last man on the rope. During their ascent, 'THE WILBERFORCE THEME' is played. They climb in classic fashion; the Leader reaching a secure ledge, the Number Two climbing up to join him, the Leader moving up to a second point, the Third Man climbing up to join the Number Two who then moves up to join the Leader as the Fourth Man starts his ascent to the Third Man's position; each man carefully paying out the rope to the man above him, braced and ready to break his fall or bringing up the slack rope from below as the next man climbs up to join him, ready to take the strain should he lose his footing. Before each climber begins to move upwards he shouts "Climbing!" and when he reaches the next secure point, he yells "Pitch." in the case of the unfortunate CARLO, TRIS shouts the warnings for him, "Carlo's climbing!", "Carlo's pitch!" etc. In addition to this continual, if somewhat limited dialogue, we hear the mountaineers calling out information and instructions to one another. "Take a belay here...", "Careful the snow there's rotten...", "I'm cutting some steps for you...", "All right, I've got you...", "The gîte here's just big enough for two ..." etc. etc. Then as the music finishes, Blackout.

SCENE FOUR

CAMP II three days later. MELIOR's tent now flies a 'Camp II' pennant, and the tents are arranged in a different configuration. It is early morning. At the far end of the stage from the tents, one of the native porters is waking up beneath a heap of Yakskin bedding. DANK THANGI, the porters' headman gradually emerges. He is a villainous and verminous looking character, swathed in voluminous and ragged layers of evil brown robes, shawls and loin cloths. He favours hairy Yakskin bootees and a Tibetan style hat with ear flaps. In his belt is thrust an improbably shaped, but wicked-looking dagger. He yells across the snow to where his companion is still asleep offstage.

THANGI ཨྱམ་མེད་ !... ཁྱེད་ སྐྱེད་ཀྱི་མེད་ཀྱི་ !ཁྱེད་ཀྱི་མེད་ཀྱི་མེད་ཀྱི་ !...

(He begins to rummage beneath the Yakskins for various items of cooking gear and locates the remains of a bottle of murky yellow fluid which he surreptitiously drains, provoking much coughing and expectoration. He continues to bawl at his offstage companion and finally elicits some response.)

.....ཨྱམ་མེད་ཀྱི་མེད་ཀྱི་ !!!...

NIFI *(Voice OFF)* ཨྱམ་མེད་...

(DANK THANGI is meanwhile busy cleaning the cooking pots by the vigorous application of spit and the corner of his robes. He sings quietly to himself in the impenetrable dialect of Iffish Odorabad. The tune, such as it is, is unpredictable and meaningless, and the song is unaccompanied throughout)

THANGI ཁྱེད་ཀྱི་མེད་ཀྱི་.....ཨྱམ་མེད་.....ཨྱམ་མེད་.....ཨྱམ་མེད་.....ཨྱམ་མེད་.....
ཨྱམ་མེད་.....ཨྱམ་མེད་.....ཨྱམ་མེད་.....ཨྱམ་མེད་.....ཨྱམ་མེད་.....

(After a while, NIFI's voice joins in)

BOTH ཨྱམ་མེད་ཀྱི་མེད་ཀྱི་.....ཨྱམ་མེད་ཀྱི་མེད་ཀྱི་.....ཨྱམ་མེད་ཀྱི་མེད་ཀྱི་.....ཨྱམ་མེད་ཀྱི་མེད་ཀྱི་.....
ཨྱམ་མེད་ཀྱི་མེད་ཀྱི་.....ཨྱམ་མེད་ཀྱི་མེད་ཀྱི་ !!

(THANGI becomes increasingly engrossed in the song gradually stopping work and eventually facing off stage and conducting. The native language of their song now gives way imperceptibly to English, as THANGI begins a different wailing chant.)

THANGI Evereeee.....Bhodee..... ee

BOTH Loveamy Babee..... ee
(And now the tune becomes familiar)

BOTH But my Baby don't love nobody but mee.....
nobody but mee.....Booboop Sheedo!

NIFI (Voice OFF) Hotcha!

(The song has speeded up and ends in fine dance-band style, and they now begin to discuss it earnestly)

THANGI **ହେଉଛନ୍ତି ରଏ ଫକ୍ସ ଏବଂ ସାଭି ଓର୍ପିୟନ୍ସ.....**
Roy Fox and his Savoy Orpheans.

NIFI (Voice OFF Disagreeing) **ହେଉଛନ୍ତି ଜେରାଲ୍ଡୋ ଏବଂ ତାଙ୍କ ଓର୍କେଷ୍ଟ୍ରା.....**
Geraldo and his Orchestra. **ହେଉଛନ୍ତି ତାଙ୍କ ମାଲିକଙ୍କର ଓର୍କେଷ୍ଟ୍ରା.....**
His Master's Voice.

THANGI (Scornful) His Master's Voice? **ପାର୍ଲୋଫୋନ୍** Parlophone!

NIFI (Voice OFF Angry) **ହେଉଛନ୍ତି ମାଲିକଙ୍କର ଓର୍କେଷ୍ଟ୍ରା.....**
His Master's Voice!!!

THANGI (Furious and clutching at his dagger) **ହେଉଛନ୍ତି ମାଲିକଙ୍କର ଓର୍କେଷ୍ଟ୍ରା.....**
His Master's Voice!!!

(A nasty incident is only prevented by the slow emergence of BUD from his tent, none too pleased at having been disturbed by their row.)

BUD **ହେଉଛନ୍ତି ମାଲିକଙ୍କର ଓର୍କେଷ୍ଟ୍ରା.....**

THANGI Yes sir, Freestone Sahib, breakfast coming pronto- pronto ... (To NIFI) **ହେଉଛନ୍ତି ମାଲିକଙ୍କର ଓର୍କେଷ୍ଟ୍ରା.....**

THANGI exits muttering with his pots and pans as first TRIS then CARLO appear from their tents CARLO is completely muffled up as usual, and indeed, all the party are now more warmly dressed for the higher altitude with heavy roll-neck sweaters replacing the shirts and ties, gloves and snow goggles at the ready. Some wear woollen balaclava helmets under their hats.

TRIS (To BUD) Morning.

BUD (To TRIS) Morning.

TRIS *(To CARLO)* Morning.

BUD *(To CARLO)* Morning.

TRIS *(To CARLO)* Throat still bad?

(CARLO nods his head)

Seems to be taking it's time, doesn't it.

(MELIOR emerges into the daylight)

MELIOR *(To TRIS)* Morning ... *(To BUD)* Morning.

TRIS. Morning.

MELIOR *(to CARLO)* Morning ... How's the old 'Vox Humana,' eh?

(CARLO shakes his head)

TRIS. *(Who is standing just behind CARLO and speaks suddenly)* Better have a look at that throat, old man...

(CARLO wheels round and raises his arm to ward off TRIS' peering face. TRIS grabs him and CARLO's hat falls to the ground and to everyone's astonishment a mass of blonde hair tumbles about his shoulders.)

MELIOR The feller's got long hair!

(The mysterious blonde defiantly removes the snow goggles, pulls off the concealing scarf and peels away a false moustache to reveal DIANA.)

ALL Good God, it's a woman!

DIANA Yes, I'm sorry it had to be this way, but you left me no alternative.

MELIOR *(Outraged)* Miss Credence, I demand an explanation! Where is Signor Macharismo?

DIANA Presumably back at the hotel; probably still trying to find some clothes to wear.

MELIOR Do you mean he was a party to this deception?

DIANA Oh no. I had to tie him up and gag him.

BUD And how the hell did you manage that?

- DIANA He was fast asleep in bed, you see, and he didn't wake up until it was too late. Of course he was ever so tired; I'd made sure of that. These Italians are such show-offs ... Anyway he was terribly cross; you could tell by the way his eyes were rolling (*giggles*) but I just pinched his clothes and climbing gear; left that note for you; lay low for a bit, and then followed you up to Base Camp. Oh and I left a note on my door to say that on no account was I to be disturbed for two days. They're used to me making long meditations and so on you see, so they probably only found him yesterday.
- MELIOR What a disgusting story.
- TRIS So you and Carlo ... I say...
- MELIOR We shall have to go back of course. I hope you're pleased with yourself, young woman, wrecking this expedition.
- DIANA Why should I have wrecked the expedition? I've been climbing on the same rope as you for three days and you didn't notice anything wrong.
- BUD She has a point.
- TRIS Actually Pa, I thought she climbed jolly well.
- MELIOR Try and take a girl up Wilberforce III? We'd be laughed out of the Alpine Club.
- BUD I'm not being turned back by a woman
- TRIS. And we can't leave her here.
- MELIOR (*After a pause*) Well young woman, it seems we must give you best, but I think it's a disgraceful state of affairs when an excellent climber loses his place on an expedition simply because, in the back of beyond, he isn't prepared for the blandishments of some sort of sexually depraved religious fanatic.
- DIANA I can assure you that Signor Macharismo was perfectly prepared.
- BUD Okay Lady, welcome aboard; but you understand one thing. The moment I find my life in danger, either 'cause you don't know what the hell you're doing or 'cause you've gone all weak and womanly, that's when you can crawl back down the mountain. I'm not risking my neck anymore than I have to, just 'cause you're a girl.
- DIANA Don't worry on that score, Bud. I'm as good as a boy.

08. DIANA sings 'I'M AS GOOD AS A BOY'

DIANA -

When I was a child, my pretty dolls were quite ignored.
 Skipping ropes and party dresses left me slightly bored.
 I would try to join the boys when they were climbing trees or playing football.
 But I would come home crying, and Mother got so tired of hearing me say
 'Why won't the boys let me play?'

I'm as good as a boy.
 I'm as good as a boy.
 I'm as good as a boy
 as a boy
 as a boy
 I'm as good as a boy.

And now I've grown up, I find that things are just the same.
 Boys want me to play now, but just one silly game.
 If I try to make my mark in any field of masculine endeavour
 All you little boys get cross, because deep inside, you can tell ...
 That I can do equally well.

I'm as good as a boy.
 I'm as good as a boy.
 I'm as good as a boy
 as a boy
 as a boy
 I'm as good as a boy.

I'm as good as a boy.
 I'm as good as a boy.
 I'm as good as a boy
 With my female intuition
 I could be a politician,
 Or a leading diplomat
 I know that I could do that.
 I'm as good as a boy.
 I'm as good as a boy.
 I'm as good as a boy
 I could be a super priest
 And rise to be the Pope at least,
 Or else the sort of Ayatollah
 Anyone could follah.

Girls are taught to look so pure, and taught to talk so sweet.
 If that's not enough, then they can go and walk the street.
 How would you feel if your choice of different ways of life was that
 restricted?

**No boy worth his salt would quietly agree to spend all his life
As either a whore or a wife.**

**I'm as good as a boy.
I'm as good as a boy.
I'm as good as a boy
as a boy
as a boy
I'm as good
as a boy.
I'm as good as a boy!**

DIANA Don't look so gloomy. Everything's Tickerty--Boo. Why do you think the weather's been so good? The Lord Mensana, Supreme and Holy King in His hidden Sanctuary of Saints, knows that His handmaid has harkened to His voice and comes to prostrate herself before His Throne of Light. Thuriel! Thuriel! Azaz! Thuriel!

MELIOR No, No, No! Stop it at once! We may have to put up with you, but we certainly don't have to put up with your primitive superstitions.

DIANA What you should be worrying about, Old Top, is whether the primitive superstitions are going to put up with you...

DIANA sings a reprise of 'I'M AS GOOD AS A BOY'

DIANA **Why should I just do the things that I'm supposed to do?
Why should I give up the things that I want most to do?
You can smile indulgently, and laugh about the little girl's pretensions,
You can raise an eyebrow, confident in your superiority;
Just don't underestimate me!**

**I'm as good as a boy.
I'm as good as a boy.
I'm as good as a boy
as a boy
as a boy
I'm as good
as a boy.
I'm as good as a boy!**

**I'm as good as a boy.
I'm as good as a boy.
I'm as good as a boy
If to soldiers I was partial
I'd end up a Field-Marshal.
If I didn't like that, maybe**

I could run the Navy.
I'm as good as a boy.
I'm as good as a boy.
I'm as good as a boy
I could be a Lord Chief Justice
Noted for my great augustness.
I could be a Barrister
As good as any Mister
You'd employ...
I'm as good as a boy!

Blackout.

SCENE FIVE

CAMP III, the next day. A 'Camp III' pennant flies from MELIOR's tent. The tents themselves are set out differently. Once again dawn is breaking, and as the light gradually changes from blue to red to gold, soothing, high-altitude music plays. TRIS. is the first awake, and crawls from his tent to stand enraptured by the sunrise. He turns and climbs a few feet up the mountain face to a vantage point above the camp, and as he gazes out, across the immensity of the gulf before him, at the endless panorama of the Himalayas, he sings 'WHEN THE MOUNTAINS BLOOM AGAIN'. During the song, MELIOR, BUD and DIANA emerge one by one from their tents and join in the last choruses.

09. WHEN THE MOUNTAINS BLOOM AGAIN

TRIS. **When the frozen streams begin to flow
Snow-fall turns to gentle rain
When the world has turned away from winter
Then the mountains bloom again.
When each snowy alp is flecked with green
Where the ice alone has lain
Then the shepherd leads his flock to pasture
When the mountains bloom again.**

**When the mountains bloom again, my dear
When the mountains bloom again
I will come and take my place beside you
When the mountains bloom again.**

**Icy Tyranny still grips our land.
Proud the alien banners fly!
Cold oppression halts the march of Springtime
And the mountains barren lie.
While the purity of Alpine snows
Tyrants' marching feet profane,
Heavy hearts are dreaming of that morning
When the mountains bloom again.**

ALL **When the mountains bloom again, my dear
When the mountains bloom again
I will come and take my place beside you
When the mountains bloom again.**

TRIS **Brothers, cast aside your winter sleep,
Slaves no longer we will be.
Heed the People's clarion call of anger
Rise and set the mountains free!
Drive our masters from these Alpine snows,**

**Sweep them clean of alien stain!
Only then will come the dawn of Freedom
When the mountains bloom again.**

**ALL When the mountains bloom again, my dear
When the mountains bloom again
I will come and take my place beside you
When the mountains bloom again.**

**When the mountains bloom again, my dear
When the mountains bloom again
I will come and take my place beside you
When the mountains bloom again.**

(As the last notes die away, DANK THANGI enters, a foul rag fastidiously draped over one arm)

THANGI *(Singing)* When the mountains bloom again!

(During the scene that follows he silently serves up an unappetizing-looking breakfast on tin plates to the party, who eat as they talk.)

DIANA That's terribly pretty. Where did you learn it?

TRIS. At an International Youth Camp I went to in Germany last year.

MELIOR Good words too.

TRIS. Oh, the N.S.D.A.P. have got some ripping songs. A lot of the best young German mountaineers are in the Party; grand fellows they are too. They've got a real belief in the future ... very progressive.

MELIOR Jolly good! First class. That's the stuff, eh, Bud? I think it's marvellous the way the young Germans are pulling themselves up by the bootstraps after the War. They're right, of course. Germany will rise again, despite the blatant victimization of the Treaty of Versailles. You know, I've often said the true revolution would come first in Germany; the scientific revolution, leading to the Scientific State.

BUD What's the N.S.D. whatever-it-was?

TRIS It's the National Socialist German Workers Party.

BUD Aren't they Fascists like Mussolini?

TRIS Oh, National Socialism is quite different from Fascism. I think they admire Mussolini for his dynamic, go-ahead way of doing things, but National Socialism's far more radical and anti-imperialist. It's a People's Movement. Of

course the N.S.D.A.P. has got a very pro-German flavour, but you can't blame them for that.

MELIOR If it's a Socialist Workers Party, that's good enough for me.

TRIS Oh yes, they've got a splendid socialist programme: Nationalisation of all major industry, complete State control of Education, a simply massive Social Welfare programme, reducing the power of the Church. All frightfully go-ahead; much more than Ramsay Mac will do at home in a thousand years.

BUD That's all fine and dandy, but how are they gonna pay for all that. Germany's broke. Hell, the whole world's broke. Back on Wall Street there's ex-millionaires dropping out of the sky like gobblers at a turkey-shoot.

TRIS. Well, my German friends would put that down to a world-wide conspiracy of Jewish bankers and financiers, and I must say they do seem to be the only ones over there who did well out of the War.

MELIOR Well, (*chuckling*) I do know what they mean. Look at old money-bags Beckstein. (*To TRIS*) He owns the whole mortgage on the Estate now you know. Now there's a chap who had a good war.

BUD Remember Marx was a Jew, and so is Trotsky. Some of our best labour organisers in the States are Jews. Jews are just like other folks ... only more so. If that's the best your buddies can come up-with in the way of economic analysis, then I'll bet Fort Knox to a can of beans it's just the same old 'Deutschland Deutschland Uber Alles' mule-headed nationalism, dressed up in fancy duds.

TRIS. I get the impression National Socialism is very internationalist. Herr Hitler, the Party Leader, seems to be absolutely committed to the idea of a united Europe.

MELIOR There you are Bud. Can't say fairer than that.

BUD It's too damn military for me.

TRIS. That's just it. They want to break the power of the armed forces in Germany: The Army and Navy are the great bastions of aristocratic privilege and wealth. Hitler and the others want to replace the old Imperial Army with a People's Militia.

BUD But it's always the same. These things start chock full of peace and freedom and equality for all, and then the military get in on the act and before you can spit they've got everyone in uniforms running around saluting each other. And then if they can't find a war some place, they just shoot up their own people. How's about Russia? That was going to be great And now look at it. Russian soldiers shooting Russian peasants.

- MELIOR Now that's really not quite fair
- TRIS. Reports of brutality over the collectivisation of land have just been completely exaggerated.
- MELIOR You can't judge the situation there by our own standards. You've got to see it in context. The Union of Soviet Socialist Republics is the Great World Experiment, and unhelpful criticism does nothing to improve matters. I'm sure the Revolutionary Government will always have the support of every progressive thinking man.
- TRIS. *(Heartfelt)* Hear, Hear.
- BUD Now hold on. I'm as radical as any man here. I'm a paid-up I.W.W. man.
- MELIOR I didn't know that.
- BUD Yes sir, I'm a Wobbly; and I lost my job for it. And I was Western States organiser of the Sacco and Vanzetti Defence Committee, and on account of that, the Denver chapter of the Ku Klux Klan tried to fire my house. It's not easy being a libertarian in the Land of the Free.
- MELIOR No-one, Bud, is doubting your sincerity or commitment for a moment.
- (Pause. Then to DIANA)*
- Well, young lady, you seem to be uncharacteristically silent on all this. A bit beneath your notice, all these earthly concerns of ours, I suppose.
- DIANA Not really. I'm a great fan of Mussolini. I think of him as a man with enormous untapped magical potential. Strong, ruthless, very Yang, an embodiment of hard, thrusting maleness...
- BUD Yeah, he's a prick.
- MELIOR Really, Freestone.
- BUD Well, I might have known she was a Fascist.
- DIANA I'm certainly not! The only other world leader I ever admired was Lenin. He was super! What power What power to unmake an Empire like that. Those Mongolian cheekbones ... I'm sure he was the reincarnation of Genghis Khan. But the trouble is that their Fascism and Communism and all the other 'isms' and 'ologies' are simply worthless. The world can be remade only by someone who has accepted the Law of Thelema. The New Aeon has already dawned. Osiris, Dionysus, Christ, Buddha, Mohammed, all are finally dead! Horus, Ra-

Hoor-Khuit, the Crowned and Conquering Child is come with Force and Fire! ... But they don't know that you see. The stupids won't listen, and so them, and you, and the rest of mankind will shrivel and die and I ... don't ... care ... tuppence.

MELIOR I'm not quite sure what you're really talking about, but it seems a rather callous sort of attitude to take about the human race. You must care about your fellow man. It's your duty as an educated Englishwoman to try and improve the lot of those less fortunate than yourself.

DIANA Why?

MELIOR. Because it's the proper thing to do; the decent thing. Everywhere one turns one sees injustice; the rich man and the beggar, the master and the servant. Why should this be? We are all created equal...

DIANA Before God?

MELIOR Not before anybody I don't believe in God. God was invented by the rich and powerful to explain to the poor and oppressed why they were treated so badly ... 'Don't complain, it's all God's fault, but he'll make it up to you when you're dead, as long as you're good, and work hard, and don't cause trouble.' And so it's gone throughout history ...(Pause. He continues quietly) Do you know, when I was a child, we maintained a domestic staff of thirty. And my father used to treat them like dirt quite frankly. I... (*Embarrassed*) I never knew where to look ... He'd throw plates of food across the room if he wasn't happy with it. That sort of thing. There were always the most dreadful rows. He badly horsewhipped a groom once and had to buy him off to stop him going to the magistrates. None of the servants would talk to me; just 'Yes, Master Arthur. No, Master Arthur'. I thought they hated me. I can remember being frightened that one day I might be killed as revenge on Papa ... It turned out, of course, that they were just scared stiff in case they upset me or something and I told my father. They didn't hate me at all. They were sorry for me (*Getting back into his accustomed manner*) You see, people are basically good, and decent, and sensible. People want to lead peaceful, sensible lives. How many people actually wanted the Great War? Maybe one in a million, but that didn't stop it happening. No, we have to have a political system founded on Common Sense; that's the innate sense and reasonableness that is common to us all, the basic good sense of the Common Man.

(THANGI having collected most of the breakfast things, has been hovering at MELIOR's elbow for some time trying to collect the cutlery with which he is gesturing. Now he catches MELIOR's eye)

(Impatiently) What is it? ! ... *(Hands over his plate, etc.)* The People will support those policies and laws their Common Sense tells them they ought to support. Fair Play! Equal rights for Foreigners... and women!

TRIS. The Common Ownership of the Means of Production...

MELIOR Well done...

BUD Complete Disarmament...

MELIOR Good...

TRIS. Sharing things equally between everyone!

MELIOR First class...

BUD The abolition of Inherited Wealth...

MELIOR *(With a marked lack of enthusiasm)* Thank you, Freestone.

DIANA The sacred Law of Thelema says you're wrong. *(Declaims)* 'Do what thou wilt shall be the whole of the law' Not do what thou ought...Love is the law, love under will.' Not love under common sense. Your True Will has nothing to do with common sense. Common sense is disgusting.

BUD Where in hell's name did you pick up all this crazy stuff?

DIANA In the Magical Order of the Rosy Star, at the hand of its Outer and Visible Head.

BUD And who's that?

DIANA He is ToMegatherion, the Great Beast of the Apocalypse, whose Number is six hundred and sixty and six, the Number of a man, the man known in the world as Aleister Crowley.

BUD Him again.

TRIS. The man who taught you to climb.

DIANA And the man who helped me find my True Will.

BUD Which is?

DIANA *(Quoting)* 'To attain the knowledge and conversation of my Holy Guardian Angel', and my H.G.A. is the Lord Mensana, which is why He's brought me here. *(Brightly)* And you're helping me too, so you're all perfect sweethearts.

TRIS Crowley must be quite a character.

10. In answer, DIANA sings THE GREAT BEAST

DIANA How to describe him
 And how to explain to you
 What forces drive him
 And what he's achieved.
 Painter and novelist,
 Champion chess-player,
 Poet of genius,
 Senior Mason,
 A man in whom people believed.

But the Gods came down
 And they filled him with a dreadful fire.
 They said "Crowley,
 You're Holy'.
 There's to be a new religion
 Which you are going to inspire,
 And men will bow down and worship
 The Great Beast
 Great Beast
 Great Beast!

(A howl, off stage)

The Dying God
 Of Christianity must be destroyed
 The new saviour
 Will deprave ya'!
 For the lusts of the flesh
 Are only there to be enjoyed.
 No one enjoys them more than
 The Great Beast
 Great Beast
 Great Beast!

DIANA Holy Magician
 Whose mind has been given
 In total submission
 To terrible powers.
 Lecher and pederast
 Guru and teacher
 A cad and a drug-addict,
 Saintly philosopher
 Oh, I could go on for hours.

I suppose that some
 Of the sort of things the Beast has done
 We're used to calling
 Appalling,
 But the fact remains
 He is God Almighty's Chosen One,
 And so I go where he leads me,
 The Great Beast
 Great Beast
 Great Beast!

(A howl, off stage)

But the world at large
 Still doesn't seem to understand
 The power of Magic
 It's tragic!
 The papers call him
 "The man that we'd most like to hang"
 "The Wickedest Man in the World",
 The Great Beast
 Great Beast
 Great Beast!

MELIOR Yes, well if everyone's finished eating, we'd better move out.

BUD Yeah, this weather's too good to last.

MELIOR Now, there's just one thing before we go. I am less than happy with the
 messing arrangements at the moment. There seems to be an unspoken
 understanding that the Western members of the Expedition and the local
 participants, that is to say the native porters, are to eat and sleep separately.
 Now this smacks of the sort of racial and social elitism that is completely
 contrary to the aims and ideals of this expedition. I propose, therefore, that we
 mess round one campfire and change the sleeping arrangements so that each
 tent is shared by one European and one Porter.

BUD I'm sorry Melior, but I'm not sleeping with those guys. They got fleas and they stink like a hoghouse in August.

MELIOR That's not their fault.

TRIS. No, of course not, Pa, but it's jolly unpleasant all the same.

BUD I want to put it to the vote. Who wants to sleep rolled up with a Porter?

(MELIOR raises his hand) And who wants to leave things as they are?

(All the rest, raise their hands)

MELIOR Hmm. Very well. But at least we can ask them to take their meals with us. I'm sure they'd appreciate the gesture...

(The party, led by MELIOR, move to the other end of the stage where DANK THANGI is squatting round his cooking pot, and observing his employers' approach with profound Eastern suspicion. MELIOR greets him with breezy camaraderie.)

Morning... Morning. What's your name?

THANGI Dank Thangi.

MELIOR Jolly good. Well, Dank, what's for breakfast, eh?

THANGI Bits of goat, Sahib.

MELIOR Mmm. Smells delicious ... Mind if I try some?

(THANGI looks at the others helplessly as MELIOR squats down with him, but not wanting to be thought standoffish by his unwelcome guests, dips into the pot with his right hand and pulls out a steaming gobbit of doubtful looking meat. MELIOR starts to follow suit and THANGI stares in wide-eyed horror as he dips his LEFT hand into the pot. There is a sudden uproar as THANGI leaps to his feet and storms about, clearly having difficulty in preventing himself from being sick.)

THANGI *(Shouting)* ဟိန္ဒူလေး ဘဝနီ !!

MELIOR *(Alarmed)* What on earth's the matter?

THANGI သူ့အဖေကို ဘဝနီနီ အပြစ်တင်နေတာ !!

TRIS. What's he saying, Bud?

THANGI ဟိန္ဒူလေးတွေကို ဘဝနီနီ အပြစ်တင်နေတာ အဘယ်ကြောင့် !!

BUD Says you're a dirty bastard ... *(shouts back at THANGI)* ဘဝနီနီ ဘာ !!

THANGI ဟိန္ဒူလေးတွေကို အပြစ်တင်နေတာ အဘယ်ကြောင့် အဘယ်ကြောင့် !!

MELIOR And what does that mean?

BUD He says that all Sahibs should be voluntarily repatriated...

THANGI *Ames Huz sez all...*

BUD ... whether they like it or not.

MELIOR What's got into the fellow?

(THANGI makes a great effort to control himself, approaches MELIOR and thrusts his left hand directly under MELIOR's nose.)

THANGI This hand is not for eating with. It is for doing other things with ... Now Porters have got no breakfast.

MELIOR Oh I see. Well I'm terribly sorry, but my hands are really perfectly clean.

(He holds them out for inspection like a small boy)

ThANGI *(With distaste)* That is because you are washing all the time ... We're not enjoying any more of that *(indicating the pot)* ... You must have another think coming

MELIOR *(Confidentially and fumbling for his wallet)* Well, now I'm sure we can put things right ... Let's see now ... How would ... er...

(He extracts a greasy and tattered lffish Odorabadian banknote and puts it in THANGI's waiting palm. Pause. THANGI does not move. MELIOR hastily lays another note on top of the first. THANGI brightens up immediately and pockets the money.)

THANGI More goat, Sahib? ... I shall wait 'till elevenses, but the other porters eyes won't worry about what their mind hasn't seen.

(He starts stirring the pot.)

DIANA Did you really mean all that about sending all the Europeans packing?

THANGI No, no, Memsahib. I say this when I was in a terrible bate, with hot flushings to the head in righteous indignation. No, I think that Sahibs and Memsahibs and all the little Sahibs are... *(searches for the 'mot juste')* very colourful. Yes, and they have opened many shops that are open late on Holy Days and this is very useful. Often I am having argy-bargy with other porters, and I am saying 'What would the hospitals and motor-buses be doing without them' And this is stumping them *(With mounting excitement)* Oh yes. And of course you have that hot music! I love that swinging jazz! Harry Roy... The primitive beat of Ambrose and his Orchestra... Vodio-dio-do! They are the cat's whiskers.

(Roguishly) You must admit now, all you white people, you've got that natural sense of rhythm!... *(Sings)*
 'Can't you hear those dancing fee-eet....
 Forty-second Street'. Hotcha-matocha!
 Oh, that latest hot waxing... *(Sings)*
 My baby's in love with Mister Sandman
 She doesn't want to stay up late.
 There's a golden moon,
 We could sit and spoon,
 But she has a previous date. Yes...
 My baby's in love with Mister Sandman.
 She's just his sleepytime girl,
 But a goodnight kiss
 From this drowsy Miss
 Still puts my heart in a whirl.

The climbing party have quietly made their escape during this unaccompanied preview of a song which will make a full appearance later in the show. As THANGI finishes his rendition, complete with soft-shoe shuffle and going down on one knee for an Al Jolson finish, the others have collected their ropes and ice-axes and are standing at the foot of the mountain face. As MELIOR speaks, they rope up.

MELIOR Now, just at the head of this couloir there's a crack that we think will 'go', and that leads off about a rope's length to the right where there's a pretty sound looking ledge just below the Staircase of Death, which'll probably do for a bivouac on the descent. The Staircase looks pretty severe but there's some decent rock pitches on the lower part. Bud?

BUD Yeah.

MELIOR You can lead up there

11. THE WILBERFORCE THEME (REPRISE) *is played and they begin to ascend the face in a similar way to the end of Scene Three, crying 'Climbing!' and 'Pitch' interspersed with comments and instructions:- "Watch out there's a patch of verglas here." "Give me some more rope, I've got to traverse a little way." "Belay me with your axe." Etc., etc. As the last of the Europeans disappears from sight, DANK THANGI enters almost hidden beneath a colossal pile of crates, bags, boxes and bundles roped together on his back and supported by a head-band. He yells 'Climbing!' and RUNS effortlessly up the mountain face, turning at the top to shout 'Pitch-y!' to his unseen companions below, before vanishing over the mountainside.*

SCENE SIX

THE WILBERFORCE THEME continues to play. It is now evening, and gradually we hear the voices of the climbers approaching. Finally the party enter, still roped up and obviously exhausted after a long day's climb. There is a general chorus of congratulations as they un-roped and take off their rucksacks.

MELIOR Well done, everybody.

TRIS. Well done, Bud. Good climb, Pa.

MELIOR *(Looking around)* Yes, this will suit us nicely.

The music changes and slows as he places a Camp IV pennant on one of the tents and crawls inside. DIANA vanishes into another tent, while BUD & TRIS. relax on the snow; leaning on their rucksacks and contemplating the spectacular, Technicolor sunset. After a pause the music changes again and BUD begins to sing 'MY BABY'S IN LOVE WITH MR. SANDMAN'. As the central bridge passage begins, MELIOR & DIANA emerge to listen and on the third verse, they begin to dance; a restrained, formal and expert slow-foxtrot.

12. MY BABY'S IN LOVE WITH MR. SANDMAN

BUD **My baby's in love with Mister Sandman.
She doesn't want to stay up late.
There's a golden moon,
We could sit and spoon,
But she has a previous date. Yes...**

**My baby's in love with Mister Sandman.
She's just his sleepytime girl,
But a goodnight kiss
From this drowsy Miss
Still puts my heart in a whirl.**

**Don't have a chance
To further our romance,
She just takes forty winks each time I try.
If she sits on my lap She just wants to take a nap,
'Cos that lover-man
With the magic sand
Has sprinkled a pinch in her eye.**

**My baby's in love with Mister Sandman.
He meets her every time she goes to sleep.
That Dreamland Don Juan
Realises he's won,**

'Cos she's dreaming while I'm counting sheep.

**My baby's in love with Mister Sandman.
My case is hopeless, you'll agree,
So I'll climb the stairs to bed
And lay down my weary head
And I'll ask the Sandman, when he goes back to the Land of Nod,
If he'll send a little Sand-girl here for me.**

Suddenly there are wild yells off stage an DANK THANGI (now without his pack) enters at a run. He is very agitated.

THANGI Sahibs! Sahibs! The Demon, Sahibs ... The Demon has found us!

MELIOR What are you yelling about?

THANGI The Demon, Sahib. We have seen the Demon of Upish Ghooli, so we must all go down double-quick.

MELIOR I have no idea what you're talking about.

THANGI I myself, and Nifi Palooting, and the others, Sahib, we have just seen the Demon. We all go now, yes?

MELIOR Certainly not!

THANGI Oh hurry, Sahib, before the shades of evening fall.

MELIOR There are no such things as demons, Dank Thangi, and neither you nor I are going anywhere tonight. Tomorrow, you and the other porters will remain here while we begin the final assault.

THANGI Oh, but it was all hairy, Sahib; with the big toothy-pegs and glittering eye; most unprepossessing You're not wanting to bump into him on a dark night I'm telling you.

MELIOR This is all tommy-rot, and I won't have it.

BUD *(To THANGI)* You heard the man.

THANGI The Demon of Upish Ghooli has eaten Oddleif Sahib, and now he will eat you. But he won't eat porters 'cause we bugger off toot-sweet whatever you say. So you pay us now, please, 'cause we never clap eyes on you again.

MELIOR *(To the others)* Well, what do you think?

BUD If you'd have let me bring my thirty-eight they'd soon be a damn sight more scared of us than they are of this spook.

TRIS. If they want to go, I don't see how we can keep them against their will.

MELIOR It'll mean carrying large packs on the descent or abandoning most of the gear ... Well, I suppose it can't be helped. *(To THANGI)* Very well you foolish man. *(Pulling out his wallet)* Let's see four days less than the agreed period ... *(Counting on his fingers)* I make it about five hundred chang that we owe you.

THANGI *(Positively)* Eight hundred.

MELIOR Five hundred.

THANGI Eight hundred!

MELIOR Very well, six hundred.

THANGI *(Shouts)* Eight hundred!!

MELIOR But you're leaving four days early.

THANGI *(Beside himself with rage)* EIGHT HUNDRED !!!

MELIOR *(Growing somewhat alarmed)* Seven hundred.

THANGI *(Twitching apoplectically and grasping the hilt of his knife)* AAGGHH !!!!

MELIOR *(Quickly)* Seven hundred and fifty.

THANGI *(Instantly all smiles)* Done - jolly-good-show. So sorry you all going to die.

(MELIOR hands the money to THANGI who counts it.)

MELIOR Now be off with you.

(THANGI continues to hover deferentially)

What's the matter? Changed your mind, eh?

THANGI *(Politely)* Sahib; service charge not included, Sahib.

MELIOR We're not paying any service charge, Dank Thangi. You are deserting your comrades, and when we have climbed to the summit of this mountain we shall return to the valley and tell the story of how the brave mountain porters of Iffish Odorabad became frightened of their own shadows and ran away like children.

THANGI *(Kindly)* Very nasty demon, Sahib. Dank Thangi not lie to you.

MELIOR For the last time, Sahibs do not believe in demons.

THANGI *(Shouting angrily)* Then they got shit for brains!

(THANGI Exits)

MELIOR Really, Tris, you might have found us some more intelligent porters.

TRIS. Well I think Dank Thangi is jolly bright really.

MELIOR Oh do you?

TRIS. Well he managed to get about twice as much money out of you than they should have had.

MELIOR's attention is caught by DIANA who, on THANGI's exit, had taken her ice-axe and begun to scribe a circle in the snow around the camp.

MELIOR And what, may I ask, are you doing?

DIANA I'm going to perform a short banishing ritual.

MELIOR *(Exasperated)* I see, how perfectly splendid.

DIANA The point is, you see, a Hidden Master like Mensana - His will be done - often summons Elementals to run errands or do simple tasks, and the porters almost certainly saw one of those.

BUD One of those what?

DIANA An Elemental, Bud; an astral being existing mostly in the Second Sphere. Not very highly developed, you see. Some of them are quite benevolent; they're the gnomes and fairies of folk-lore, but others can be quite nasty if you don't know how to handle them, and they become known as demons or vampires. They won't hurt anyone so close to a centre of Karmic Power, but this one might scare the pants off you chaps if you see it, so I'm just going to set up a sort of spiritual 'keep off' notice.

MELIOR *(With heavy sarcasm)* Well, please don't bother on my account, Miss Credence. I should be delighted to welcome any demons or vampires of your acquaintance who may care to drop by ... And don't overtire yourself either, because, if the weather only holds, we could reach the summit late tomorrow evening. So remember, there'll be no comfortable tent for you tomorrow night, young lady, just a bivouac sack hung on a couple of pitons on a tiny ledge about

a thousand feet below the summit ... That is, of course, if it isn't already occupied by the gnomes and fairies!

(He stomps off into his tent.)

DIANA *(Chuckling delightedly)* He's such a dear.

She continues with her ritual; completing the Magick Circle and, singing 'THE BANISHING RITUAL' as she 'vibrates' the Names of God at the four Cardinal Points of the circle At the end of the Ritual, performed in the dying, crimson rays of the sun, there is a Blackout.

13. THE BANISHING RITUAL

DIANA

**lao Isis
lao Apophis
lao Osiris**

Je! Agla! Jod! Hoi! Azaz!

**Baphomet, Babalon,
Ra-Hoor-Khuit ,Uriel,
Pan, Tetragramaton!**

**Baphomet, Babalon,
Ra-Hoor-Khuit ,Uriel,
Pan, Tetragramaton!**

**Baphomet, Babalon,
Ra-Hoor-Khuit ,Uriel,
Pan, Tetragramaton!**

**Baphomet, Babalon,
Ra-Hoor-Khuit ,Uriel,
Pan, Tetragramaton!**

**Light, Light, thy Light!
Ward from here
All that which we fear!**

SCENE SEVEN

CAMP IV, later that night. Unearthly blue moonlight. The tents are illuminated from within but after a pause the lamp inside Melior's tent is extinguished. DIANA enters quietly and makes her way to the remaining tent, which glows like a strange, golden beacon.

DIANA Are you awake, Tris?

TRIS. Yes.

DIANA I'm rather worried about the expedition.

TRIS. Oh, come in. *(She crawls inside the tent)* I'm sure everything's going to be all right ... and you're really doing awfully well ... As long as the weather doesn't break...

DIANA I'm not sure ... Oddleif's death and then the porters being scared off by some manifestation or other I'm worried that we've offended the Shining Ones in some way. Perhaps Mensana wanted me to try and come to him under my own steam; and I'd hate anything else to happen ... Will you help me try and put things right?

TRIS.
or Er...yes, of course ... but you do know I don't believe in any of this er ... magic Secret Chiefs or anything, don't you?

DIANA Oh that doesn't matter a bit. What I want you to do is terribly easy.

TRIS. Oh, right ho then ... what is it?

DIANA Just take me.

TRIS. Where?

DIANA No, 'take me'. Have your way with me.

TRIS. *(Alarmed)* What, now? Here?

DIANA Yes ... Do you not find me attractive?

TRIS. Yes ... er, of course. It's just that I didn't realise you felt the same way about me.

DIANA I don't. No offence old thing, but my occult initiation has progressed to the point where I can regard the act of love solely as a Magical operation. Using the techniques of the Tenth Degree of our Order, I intend to use our sexual

climaxes to create an aetheric link with Mensana, so that I can beg him to forgive the blasphemy of our attempt to reach the summit ... All right?

TRIS. *(Seriously)* Er ... now look here, we're going to need all the rest we can get over the next couple of days ... I'm not sure this is altogether a good idea.

DIANA What a lot of Victorian ideas there are in that pretty head of yours. Look; the normal conjunction of male and female principals; that is to say Lingum in Yoni, creates massive amounts of Prana, the life-force. You'll bound up that cliff, lover, like a young goat ... And now do hurry up, I'm getting ever so cold. Goodness, Tris, I didn't imagine you'd be so bashful.

TRIS. Well the fact is ... er ... to be perfectly honest er ... I don't have much, er ... that is to say, I haven't actually ... er ... ever...

DIANA *(Excited)* Tris, you're not a virgin? ... But that's absolutely wonderful! You've never been with a woman? ... Isis, Pan and Shiva! What an offering to lay upon his altar! ... And it could have so easily been Bud or your father . . . Now don't worry about a thing. Most people find it ever such fun *(Soothingly)* ... now, there ... *(Pause)* yes, that's right ... there ... that's not so bad, is it? no ... no, that's nice isn't it ... yes, of course it is ... *(Pause)* oh, yes ... yes ... you're doing ever so well ... now if you just ... that's it Oooh...

TRIS. Sorry, I...

DIANA No, that's marvellous ... oh, yes ... yes!

(She begins to chant, gradually getting faster)

Parasama Ramaluti
Parasama Ramaluti
Parasama Ramaluti
Parasama Ramaluti
Parasama Ramaluti'.
Parasama Ramaluti!!
Parasama Ramaluti!!! Aah!. ... Aaaah!!

TRIS *(In extremis)* Oh, it's true! ... It's true! You are as good as a boy!

The Instrumental 'UPISH GHOOOI' is played. The light in the tent is extinguished. All is quiet, and soft music plays. After a few moments, however, the music changes dramatically when, what seemed to be a large mound of snow, high on the moonlit mountain face, stirs itself, rises to its feet, and reveals itself as THE YETI, which, eyes glowing like hot coals, moves down towards the sleeping camp. The YETI is a giant, snow-white ape, humanoid in stance and movement, but bestial and fearsome to look at; a truly Abominable Snowman. It notices the tents, cocks its huge head to one side and sniffs the air. Then, as it prowls around the tents in the blue half-light, it 'sings' [14. THE YETI SONG](#) in a bloodcurdling and wordless series of grunts

and roars, gnashing its fangs and beating on its chest in a monstrous display of territorial aggression. Its song ended, the monster shambles off into the night. The two tents remain darkened, their occupants clearly still sound asleep. Blackout.)

SCENE EIGHT

The next morning, and the party have just begun their final assault on the mountain. They are high above CAMP IV and their tents are not to be seen. Roped together as usual, they are slowly making their way up the face, and for this final stage of the climb all wear white arctic coveralls with fur-trimmed hoods and snow-goggles. The WILBERFORCE THEME plays and the light filtering through the gathering snow clouds is sulphurous and uncertain. As BUD, leading the rope of climbers, nears the top of the face he is suddenly confronted by the monstrous shape of the YETI who appears on the top platform, observes the climbers below him and roars a warning, beating his chest in threatening display.

MELIOR My God!

TRIS. What is it?

BUD Jesus!

MELIOR Back down slowly, Bud.

The whole party slowly begin to retreat down the face, their eyes fixed on the monster above them, who begins to follow them, moving with ease down the icy cliff.

TRIS. Look at the size of it!

DIANA It's coming down after us.

MEL I OR Easy. Don't startle it.

BUD Ready with your ice axes ... That ... is a Yeti!

One by one the climbers are reaching the foot of the mountain face. THE YETI follows and eventually monster and mountaineers confront one another; the climbers grouped together, frantically untying their ropes and holding their ice axes at the ready, THE YETI a few yards off, peering at them curiously, hooting warily to itself, and occasionally stamping the ground.

DIANA What is it?

MELIOR Fantastic!

BUD Some sort of gorilla.

TRIS. No. Much too upright. Head's all wrong.

MELIOR I don't think it's going to attack.

BUD It's not a chimp or an Orang-utan. It's too damn big.

MELIOR A new species. What marvellous luck!

DIANA He doesn't seem afraid of us.

MELIOR Why should he be? Probably never seen a human being before. Hasn't learnt to fear us ... He's just curious, aren't you boy? ... Good boy

(He makes encouraging noises and gestures at THE YETI who retreats slightly and scoops up a hand-full of loose snow into the air.)

Magnificent !... Diana?

DIANA Yes.

MELIOR Did you bring Carlo's camera?

DIANA Yes.

MELIOR Get it rigged up, can you.

(DIANA opens her pack and produces a large, hand-held, bellows Kodak which she opens up and prepares to use.)

BUD By God I wish I'd brought that pistol.

TRIS. *(Shocked)* Bud!

MELIOR Sometimes, Freestone, your attitude is quite appalling.

(THE YETI has started to lose interest in the humans and begins to move away.)

TRIS. He's going away.

ALL Here boy ... good boy ... good boy!

They call and whistle as if taking a small puppy for a run. THE YETI turns back, bearing his teeth and growling his response. DIANA hands the camera to MELIOR who begins to take photographs of the beast.

MELIOR Right. Got you! ... and another...

BUD They're not going to believe the size of it. It's all snow. There's nothing to show the scale.

MELIOR You're right ... Tris, open a tin of pemmican.

TRIS. Right. I understand.

(He opens his pack and extracts a tin of preserved meat which he attacks with a tin-opener.)

BUD No wonder the natives think there's something up here.

MELIOR *(To DIANA)* There's your Grand Panjandrum, young lady. There's your Great Secret Demon ... Isn't the reality better than your fairy stories?

(TRIS having opened his tin, slowly advances on THE YETI holding it out before him.)

TRIS. *(Soothingly)* Here you are, old fellow ... nice pemmican...

DIANA Be careful, Tris.

BUD Yeah, don't get too close.

TRIS. You won't hurt me, will you old fellow. *(To the others)* Pa's right. He's got no reason to attack us. Fundamentally non-aggressive ... He'll only attack in self-defence.

MELIOR Like Mankind itself ... basically good! ... Go on Tris.

THE YETI is both fearful of TRIS's approach and attracted by the smell of meat, but after a series of slow advances and sudden retreats punctuated by threatening snarls, he eventually sticks a huge finger into the proffered tin and samples the delicacy within.

TRIS. Here boy ... Good boy ... *(To the others)* It's not an ape. The head is almost humanoid, the hands as well ... It can probably use tools.

MELIOR The missing link! *(Gleefully)* By God this'll be one in the eye for those damned fundamentalist bishops ... *(to TRIS while looking through the viewfinder of the camera)* Just a little further round and I can get both of you in.

THE YETI has now tasted the pemmican and finding it to his liking, is extending his finger for another helping. TRIS edges round so that he is not obscuring MELIOR's view and for the first time, takes his eyes off THE YETI and turns to the others, striking a slight attitude for the camera.

TRIS. How about that Pa? Family portrait.

MELIOR *(Taking the photograph)* Got it! ... Homo sapiens and Homo ... yes, why not ... Homo melior.

THE YETI, seeing TRIS's attention has wandered, suddenly seizes the tin-can and, as TRIS turns, startled, brings the other huge fist down in an appalling blow to the top of his head. TRIS begins to sink to the ground, but before he can fall, THE YETI has grasped his head with both hands and with a sickening wrench to one side, breaks his neck. DIANA screams piercingly. THE YETI beats his chest and bellows in triumph. 'THE CHORDS OF DOOM' ring out as MELIOR and BUD rush at the creature with ice-axes raised. It exits at a run, pausing only to recover the tin of pemmican and then vanishing round the side of the mountain face. The chase is not pursued, and all three rush to the body. BUD feels for a pulse, shakes his head and puts his hand on MELIOR's shoulder. Blackout.

SCENE NINE

Later the same day. Back at CAMP IV. As in Scene Three, the climbers have gathered about a cairn which they have raised in honour of their fallen comrade. They sing 'THE DEATH SONG' and one by one step forward to place a final stone on the cairn, which is only two thirds of the size of Oddleif's Memorial. The formalities are particularly solemn and heartfelt; the survivors (particularly, of course, MELIOR) singing and making their last salutes with genuine emotion.

15. THE DEATH SONG - FIRST REPRISE

BUD **Great Mountaineers
Great Climbers of the Past,
To you we commend
The Soul of our dear friend.
Great Mountaineers
Great Climbers of the Past,
We bid him adieu,
For he now climbs with you.**

MELIOR **Whymper advise him,
Familiarise to him
Your own matchless routes
Up the mountains that crown the Beyond.
Paul Preuss support him,
Charles Hudson escort him
To that last great Base Camp
Where yesterdays climbers have gone.**

The song ended BUD and DIANA move to MELIOR. BUD shaking his hand in gruff sympathy, DIANA kissing his cheek. MELIOR is obviously deeply shocked by TRIS's death. His voice is dull and he seems not to notice the others.

MELIOR *(In a sad parody of his usual lecturing style)* The effects of grief on the human intellect are really most curious. I am actually experiencing great difficulty in believing that my son has in fact ceased to exist. I have the feeling almost a conviction - and quite illogical - that in some way his personality has actually survived the destruction of the physical organism ... And, of course, that cannot be the case.

DIANA But he does survive, Lord Melior. He's merely translated to another sphere.

MELIOR *(Not hearing her)* For the first time for ... oh, I don't know how long ... since my school days, I find myself doubting things ... obvious things; self-evident truths. The whole of my career has been devoted to the cause of logic and enlightened thought. Everything I've done; my work with the Peers for Progress group of the House of Lords; and for The Internationalist Quarterly; the Esperanto League; the Troops out of Egypt Movement and the Public Schools Anglo-Soviet

Aid Committee, all of them directed towards rationality and freedom from unreasoning beliefs and prejudices... And yet ... at this moment I desire nothing more than to kneel before an all-powerful, all-loving Deity and to be told with divine and absolute authority that my son is in heaven and all's well with the world, and that the whole infinite and immutable unfolding of the universe will continue on schedule; and that I'm not to bother my head about it.

(DIANA & BUD quietly exit.)

16. MELIOR sings 'FOUR PAILS OF WATER AND A BAGFUL OF SALTS'

MELIOR **Four pails of water and a bagful of salts.
Four pails of water and a bagful of salts!**

**That is all we are,
That is all a man comprises.
Chemicals alone
With no spirit, soul or ghost.
Nothing so bizarre!
And no amount of faith disguises
What is true is what we fear the most.**

**Nothing can survive,
Save the things men leave behind them;
Any other case
Would be really too absurd!
If thoughts remained alive,
Surely modern science could find them?
But no; the Soul is nothing but a word.**

**All the wonders man achieves emerge
From cerebral tissue.
Chemical reactions' ebb and surge
Form that thing that is you.
It's a sad philosophy,
But better sad than wrong.
Face the truth instead;
When you're dead, you're dead
When you're gone, you're gone
Now he's gone, he's gone.**

Four pails of water and a bagfull of salts.

**That is all he was;
All that Tristram represented
And that sounds just as mad
As saying he will never die!**

Fools will clutch at straws
Truth must not be circumvented.
'As the tree falls, so does that tree lie'!

Now that sounds so odd,
But once I would have preached it brightly.
Now questions appear
I rationally can't ignore.
Nothingness or God,
Which of them seems more unlikely?
Once I could have answered clearly,
Now I only think I'm nearly sure.

The melody continues softly as snow begins to fall. MELIOR slumps, head bowed in his camp chair. Long pause. BUD re-enters and gently raises him to his feet and helps him into their tent. Lights slowly fade to blackout.

SCENE TEN

Late the same night, the two tents huddled together against the gale force winds which have begun to howl across the mountain. The snow is now falling heavily and the stage is almost dark. The terrible roar of an avalanche reverberates in the distance. From within one of the tents DIANA's voice is heard calling.

DIANA Bud? ... Lord Melior? ... Bud! Lord Melior!

BUD *(Drowsily, from inside the other tent)* What is it?

DIANA I have to say goodbye.

MELIOR *(Still half asleep)* Hello?

BUD What are you talking about?

DIANA I'm going on by myself. I am to blame for what has happened. I should never have allowed you to continue.

BUD Shudup and go to sleep!

DIANA I am going on to my Master now; tonight. I have heard his Voice in the wind and avalanche, and I must answer. You must both go down the mountain. You are not to try and follow me ... I'm leaving now. Farewell, you have been kind to me...

MELIOR Diana, please. Let's talk about this in the morning:

DIANA Goodbye, I will speak of you in my prayers.

BUD *(To MELIOR)* Stupid bitch!

(He emerges from the tent)

MELIOR Wait! Diana! Don't be so foolish.

(He also begins to emerge)

BUD There's a goddamn blizzard blowing out here!

Suddenly DIANA leaps from her tent. In the half light it can be seen that she is naked.

Jesus Christ!

MELIOR *(In horror)* Oh my God, you've got no clothes on. Get back inside! You'll die!

BUD *(To MELIOR)* Mountain crazy. Look at her eyes.

(DIANA raises her arms and begins to chant the tune of her 'DAWN LITANY'.)

Try and grab her!

Both men make a dive at her but she eludes them and rushes from the stage still singing wildly. MELIOR makes as if to follow her but is restrained by BUD.

MELIOR Quick. We must get after her.

BUD It's no good Melior, she's gone. We couldn't find her. Look at it out there!

MELIOR But we must. We can't let her die.

BUD She's probably gone down the Khud by now, but even if she's still on the ice-field ... she's got no fucking clothes on! She'll die in two or three minutes.

MELIOR *(Suddenly an old man)* All these poor people dead, Freestone ... and Tris ... I'm going out. I must...

BUD You're not, you know. And if I have to sock you on the jaw to stop you, I will, Peer of the goddamn Realm or not!

MELIOR But think of her dying out there

BUD Think of me dying out there! If you start crawling around out there now you'll go over the edge quicker than spit; and then what'll I do? You know you can't reverse some of those pitches solo, so that's me dead too ... *(quieter)* anyway even if we did find her; what do we do with a screaming, crazy person five-sixths of the way up a twenty-thousand foot mountain?

(Another avalanche thunders down somewhere in the darkness.)

Avalanche below ... Come in man.

(He starts to get MELIOR back inside their tent)

MELIOR Where will it end, Bud? ... Where will it all end?

Blackout.

SCENE ELEVEN

(The next morning. The blizzard has abated but the sounds of a savage thunderstorm echo around the little camp, which is lit from time to time by flashes of lightning. BUD and MELIOR have built another cairn to commemorate DIANA. It is, alas, only a third of the size of the memorial raised in honour of ODDLEIF. Nonetheless an abbreviated version of 'THE DEATH SONG' is sung yet again and the etiquette of a mountain fatality correctly observed.)

THE DEATH SONG - SECOND REPRISE

BUD &
MELIOR

**Mummery aid her,
And guide her glissade, in
Those Heavenly snowfields
That mortal foot never has trod.
Coolidge belay her
When footholds betray her
On some dark crevasse
In the measureless Glaciers of God.**

MELIOR I never really told her what a good mountaineer she was. I'm sorry about that.

BUD Listen to that! Two thousand feet lower down the face and we'd be in the middle of it.

MELIOR I suppose we can't go down yet.

BUD Damn right ... *(significantly)* In fact, looks as if the higher you go the clearer it gets ... probably sunshine at the summit.

MELIOR You're not suggesting we go on?

BUD Well it would be better than freezing our asses off here.

MELIOR I can't Bud; not after everything.

BUD Why not? We're both in good shape and there's just the summit ice-fields to go. There'd be no need to bivouac, we'd be back here by nightfall... Dammit, Melior, after what this mountain's dished out to us aren't you dying to bust its ass? That'd make some kind of sense out of this cockeyed mess.

MELIOR *(Weakly)* It would be madness.

BUD I can just see the headlines if we give up now. *(Quotes from imaginary newspaper)*... 'Three die in Himalayan Mountain Horror... Controversial Peer's expedition ends in disaster!... The failure of Lord Melior's so-called

International Peace Expedition to Wilberforce III must surely prompt us to ask whether the time has yet come when those of different nationalities can be expected to work together as an effective and harmonious team ...'

MELIOR Stop! Stop!

BUD So, it's not good ... How about ... 'Triumphant Mountain Ascent! ... Wilberforce III conquered by International Peace Expedition!... Lord Melior's Mountaineers of Many Lands overcome tragic loss of life as three perish in heroic assault on Himalayan peak...'

MELIOR *(With decision)* You're right ... You're absolutely right. We've got to go on. Now more than ever. Our cause is greater than ourselves.

(Both sing a brief reprise of 'THE MOUNTAIN IS CALLING' and the scene comes to an end.)

THE MOUNTAIN IS CALLING - FIRST REPRISE

BOTH **The Mountain is calling
We answer with joy
"Destroy us if you will,
But our ideals will live on still!"**

SCENE TWELVE

Later that day. Snow is still falling. BUD and MELIOR are high on the summit ice-fields (the tents are no longer to be seen). The 'WILBERFORCE THEME' plays. BUD and MELIOR are not roped together, but BUD is attached to a rope leading upwards and away from the mountain face until it disappears into the flies someway downstage. Both are moving slowly upwards, BUD leading, when with a sudden roar a small avalanche of blocks of ice falls from above onto BUD. Without uttering a sound he falls backwards and swings from the end of his rope out over the stage. He hangs limply, obviously unconscious.

MELIOR Bud !... Bud!!.... Bud!!!

The lights slowly fade to blackout. Music plays. The lights fade up again. Hours have passed on the mountain. MELIOR is huddled on a ledge dozing while the inert form of BUD hangs far out from the cliff face. Suddenly BUD stirs and regains consciousness. He speaks slowly and his voice is slurred as if he was drunk.

BUD (Quite quietly) Melior?...Melior.

MELIOR (Jumping to his feet, suddenly wide awake) Bud!

BUD I've been asleep, haven't I?

MELIOR Yes, you must have caught a bump on the head. Can you climb up the rope?

BUD I can't move my hands ...(giggles) I guess they've got too cold.

(He stiffly holds up his hands close to his face)

Hey, they're kinda blue...

MELIOR You lost your gloves, Bud. Try and rub them together.

BUD I've been asleep, haven't I?

MELIOR (Sharply) Bud, listen! I'm going to throw you a rope and haul you in. Do you understand?

BUD (Trying to salute) Yo! Cap'n.

MELIOR uncoils a rope and throws it to BUD. It misses. He makes several attempts and BUD tries to catch the rope between his frozen arms in a fuddled sort of way, giggling at each attempt.

MELIOR (Desperate) Try Bud! Try!

BUD Hiya!, Hiya! Hiya! Win yourself a Kewpi doll... Hey, Melior, quit throwing that thing at me. I'm gonna have me a little shuteye...

MELIOR No, Bud, no! You mustn't fall asleep. Wake up! Wake up d'you hear!!

BUD But I'm so warm and comfortable here. I'm warm all over, and I'm real sleepy ... Aren't you going to sing me to sleep?

MELIOR *(Frantic)* Bud! Bud!!

(BUD slowly sings a brief reprise of 'MY BABY'S IN LOVE WITH MR. SANDMAN' to an eerie accompaniment)

MY BABY'S IN LOVE WITH MR. SANDMAN - REPRISE

BUD **My baby's in love with Mister Sandman.
My case is hopeless, you'll agree,
So I'll climb the stairs to bed
And lay down my weary head....**

BUD's voice has grown weak and now it falters. Suddenly his head falls forward on to his chest. He makes no further movement.

MELIOR Bud? Can you hear me Bud? ... No, I don't suppose you can ... *(Long pause)*
Bud? Look, I think I'm going to go on now. I won't get all the way down again on my own I don't suppose, but I'd like to have had a look at the top anyway. You do understand, don't you? Well I'd best be pushing on, eh? *(Pause)* Goodbye Old Man.

He turns and slowly begins to climb higher up the face. Blackout.

SCENE THIRTEEN

The summit of Wilberforce III, some hours later. Snow no longer falls. In dead calm, and a strange white light, MELIOR,. clearly in the last stages of exhaustion, drags himself up the last few feet to the summit.. Quiet, eerie music plays and as MELIOR finally stands upright on the summit platform, the awesome voice of MENSANA, amplified and echoing, is suddenly heard.

MENSANA Stay, Melior! With impious tread your foot profanes the virgin fastness of this place!

MELIOR *(Duly startled)* Hello ... who's there?

MENSANA I am Mensana.

MELIOR *(Recognising the name)* Mensana? ... Who are you?

MENSANA I am called of men 'The Shining One', 'Lord of the Iffish', 'Great Demon of the High Place'...

MELIOR *(By now becoming frightened)* Where are you? How do you know my name?

MENSANA *(Menacingly)* Do not presume to question me lest I am moved to anger and unmake you with a breath! Kneel, manikin, in reverence, Kneel!

(MELIOR, thoroughly unnerved, obeys)

Now, Melior, straightway confess to me your faith.

MELIOR Faith?

MENSANA *(Impatient)* Your church, your god, the object of your worship ... Speak!

MELIOR I'm an atheist. I don't have any religion.

MENSANA But do you seek to pierce the Veils that part the solid world of fact and form and seen and measured things, from that dark universe of immaterial Being which holds all mysteries of Life and Death?

MELIOR *(Regaining his nerve somewhat)* If you mean mystical dabbling and the occult and so on, no.

MENSANA *(Rather less impressively)* Theosophy?

MELIOR No.

MENSANA Seances? Yoga? Christian Science?

MELIOR No. No. No!

MENSANA *(Dubiously)* Are you sure?

MELIOR *(Angry)* Yes!

MENSANA *(With a resumption of dignity)* Then will you worship me? I, Lord of Lightning!...

(There is a sudden violent flash of lightning and crash of thunder.)

...Raiser of the Tempest!...

(Sudden howling wind. MELIOR struggles to keep his balance)

...I, Mensana!!

(Repeated flashes of lightning. The wind and thunder reach a dreadful climax)

MELIOR *(Prostrate and shouting above the din)* Stop it Stop it! . . This is all all tosh and Mumbo- Jumbo and I won't have anything to do with it!

The storm is suddenly stilled. The topmost pinnacle of the mountain splits asunder to reveal MENSANA sitting crosslegged, enshrined in an envelope of bright blue light. He wears brilliant white robes wound tightly about him, leaving the arms bare in the manner of oriental monks. He is clearly a European, though most of his face is obscured by a long black beard. His hair reaches almost to his waist and a large blue gem sits on his forehead. This perfect image of an Himalayan Holy man is somewhat marred however by the large horn gramophone which sits by his side, while his voice, no longer amplified, is decidedly incongruous. He speaks in the marked accent of a German who has learned his English in America. He is very relaxed and affable.

MENSANA That's great! Hey I'm sorry about all that stuff, but it's what people expect, you know. You did real good! The big voice usually gets 'em every time. Hey you're some big rationalist you know that?

MELIOR *(Astonished)* Who are you?

MENSANA Mensana *(Indicating his aura self-deprecating)* 'The Shining One'. I'm one of the Seven Mahatmas; the Hidden Masters, you know? I live here.

MELIOR *(To himself)* My God, Diana was right...

MENSANA She's one mixed up kid, huh? Still, she's okay; she knew I was up here at least.

- MELIOR Look ... Mensana, or whoever you are...do you mean to tell me that this business about the Secret Chiefs controlling the destiny of mankind is all true??
- MENSANA No, no, we don't control nothing! We just keep pretty close tabs on what's goin' on. Then we got all the guys out in the field and they're the ones allowed to help out a bit.
- MELIOR I don't understand.
- MENSANA They're the guys who done their time on the tops of mountains and stuff bein' Hidden Masters, you know? And now they're back in the world 'unaufgedeckt', how-do-you-say-it 'incognito', and they ... help out a bit.
- MELIOR Help who out a bit?
- MENSANA You know what I mean, they help mankind and stuff when you're all screwing it up as usual. They fix it so that the right thing happens to the right guy at the right time. Yeah?
- (MELIOR is still looking hopelessly out of his depth. MENSANA realises he is not following.)*
- Zum teufel! ... Look we all got these what-do-you-call powers of magic, so they can fix things so it's like an accident see, so nobody knows about it.
- MELIOR So you can do . . .miracles as it were?
- MENSANA Sure we do miracles-as-it-were; all the time. It's one of the only advantages of the job.

17. He sings 'THE SECRET CHIEF'S SONG'

- MENSANA **Ten thousand years ago we got things rollin'
By finding a caveman out hunting a meal.
We made him trip over a stone with a hole in
So that he got the idea of the wheel.**
- That's all we can do And it's true
Like I said to you
Just a helping hand
Carefully planned
So they never knew
Or they could be struck
By bad luck
If we took the view
That would be their due
Coming to**

Them.

We helped the Turks capture Constantinople
In 1453 it seemed for the best,
'Cos the hundreds of scholars who lived there were no fools
And left with their books to enlighten the West.

That's all we can do
And it's true
Like I said to you
Just a helping hand
Carefully planned
So they never knew
Or they could be struck
By bad luck
If we took the view
That would be their due
Coming to
Them.

History seems
Just so strong
And so big
And so long
Things must be
Pre-ordained.

There's one moment though
If you're there
And you know
Just a touch
Or a word
And it's changed

The things that we do to make history
Are just those little things one ignores.
A Secret Chief gets no applause.

All summer Napoleon lingered in Moscow
Then two months too early the weather turned grim.
We sent down the snow 'till he thought that he must go
And that was the end of world conquest for him.

That's all we can do
And it's true
Like I said to you
Just a helping hand

Carefully planned
 So they never knew
 Or they could be struck
 By bad luck
 If we took the view
 That would be their due
 Coming to
 Them.

Only last year my immediate superior
 Found young Doctor Fleming researching disease.
 My boss stuck his thumb in a dish of bacteria
 Up pops penicillin, which the bright fellow sees.

That's all we can do
 And it's true
 Like I said to you
 Just a helping hand
 Carefully planned
 So they never knew
 Or they could be struck
 By bad luck
 If we took the view
 That would be their due
 Coming to
 Them.

We must be mad
 To adhere
 To that, when
 Just one blow
 Would free man-
 Kind with ease.
 The hours are bad
 Just a year
 Off each cen-
 tury, and no-
 One says Thank
 You or please.

It's not that I want to be worshipped.
 Don't wanna be feared or adored.
 It's just that I do get real bored!

MELIOR

That's all very well, er ... Mensana, but what's it all in aid of? What end do you creatures have in view?

MENSANA That ain't so easy. We're not allowed to discuss policy. The Boss; *(Points upwards)* you know, Upstairs; he's very hot on security.

MELIOR It all sounds horribly elitist to me.

MENSANA Sure we're elitist. You can't get much more elite-er than what we are.

MELIOR I thought so. Supernatural reactionaries, that's what you are; propping up the Old Order with parlour tricks! Fiddling about with peoples' minds; engineering little coincidences; well it's not fair! Why can't you keep your ... astral noses out of our concerns? It's none of your business. I might have guessed the Spirit World would be hopelessly bourgeois. If God existed, he'd vote Tory! It's no good, you know. You're trying to stand against the tide of History Well, we shall see who will win.

MENSANA Oh, that I can tell you. You will.

MELIOR Really? ...

MENSANA Sure. Leastways, one day your beliefs will be accepted by near enough everybody in the world.

MELIOR *(Fervently)* Oh, if only I was sure that was true.

MENSANA Hey, you wanna see into the future?

MELIOR That's not possible.

MENSANA Sure it's possible. Wouldn't be much of a Mahatma if I couldn't do stuff like that. You want I should go ahead?

MELIOR Yes ... yes ...

MENSANA Okay. Just remember you asked for this you know. Here we go now...

(He flexes his fingers like a concert pianist, composes himself, places one finger on the blue jewel in his forehead; closes his eyes, raises the other hand in a mystic gesture and begins to strain with magical effort. At first things do not seem to be going well.)

Scheisekerl!

(He breaks his concentration, repeats his starting procedure and begins again)

Komm schon ... komm schon ... *(Pause)* Got it! Ja, here she comes...

(There is a crack of thunder. Blackout. In the darkness we hear the SOUNDS OF THE FUTURE a complex sound collage of noises, music and sounds from our past (and MELIOR's future). This builds inexorably in volume and intensity as the 'date of reference' of the sounds passes through the 30's, 40's, 50's, 60's and 70's in the course of half a minute or so, to an absolute maelstrom of sound which comes to a sudden end, all the House lights come full on, and MELIOR confronts his audience for the first time. He is appalled.)

There is your future ... There is your world!

MELIOR No! No! It isn't going to be like that. Say it isn't true, Mensana. Say it isn't happening...

MENSANA *(Lowering his hands and opening his eyes)* It isn't true. It isn't happening.

(House lights off. The vision is at an end.)

MELIOR They were horrible, quite horrible.

MENSANA But it will be true, and it will happen.

MELIOR It wasn't supposed to be like that. Not like that at all. It was going to be good and true and beautiful ... *(With a sudden effort)* Well I don't believe it! It's a trick. I don't believe you're what you say you are. If you're a Spirit Being, why have you got a German accent?

MENSANA Still shows, huh? *(He picks up a gramophone record)* I been doin' this correspondence course on gramophone records *(he reads from the label)* 'Colloquial English for Advanced Students, Baliol College, Chicago.'

MELIOR Yes, but that doesn't explain why...

MENSANA I am German. My name used to be Willi Hofmannsthal. I was a Chartered Surveyor in Frankfurt, but I also did the mountaineering and I was with Heinz Guntermayer's expedition in 1910.

MELIOR But they all died.

MENSANA Well not me buddy! I got to the top; and there was this crazy old guy who said he was called Mensana and he was a Hidden Master or some such. Then he said I was going to be a Hidden Master instead of him, and then he disappeared on me! I been up here ever since.

MELIOR But that's twenty years ago.

MENSANA Twenty years? Shucks that's nothing. I only just qualified. It's a big break for me, you turning up like this. I know a guy; he's one of the Mahatmas you know?

Well he pulled duty near the South Pole, and he's sitting up to his neck in the snow for about two thousand years. Then finally, after he's figured he's going to be there 'till hell freezes over, this explorer staggers in. He's wandered off from his expedition to die or something; Captain Oats, that's the guy. Boy was my buddy glad to see him. What's more he turned out to be real good Secret Chief material. Anyway, so I figure I got real lucky, you turning up to relieve me so quickly and all.

MELIOR What do you mean, 'relieve you'? I don't understand.

MENSANA Oh boy, you ain't got the picture yet, have you? Verdamt! It's my fault. Look this is kind of embarrassing. You gonna have to be the new Secret Chief up here. You gonna be Mensana, and I am going back to the world and have a bit of fun for a few hundred years.

MELIOR *(Horried)* What?

MENSANA Look, it's a real career opportunity for you, believe me. And you'll do real good, I can tell.

MELIOR *(In a panic)* I can't stay up here ... I won't! I'm coming down with you...

MENSANA Hey, don't get mad you know. You won't be able to leave. The High Up's won't let you. You're in the Organisation now and they're calling the shots.

MELIOR But I'll die ...

MENSANA Gee, that's right. *(Laughs)* I forget what I'm doing with all the excitement, and there you are slowly dying of exposure. I fix you up now...

(He adopts his position for doing magic, one finger touching his jewel, eyes closed hand raised.)

Ja... Ja... Das ist gut...

(MELIOR is instantly surrounded with an envelope of red light. MENSANA relaxes, pleased with himself. MELIOR begins to revive immediately and starts to remove his gloves, hood and balaclava helmet.)

Feels better, eh?

MELIOR Yes ... Yes, that's wonderful. I was just about all in.

MENSANA Hey, you got a real nice aura now. You're a little bit superhuman already. Now you won't need food or nothing like that ... Look don't feel bad about it. You'll be grateful in the end. You got the gramophone. I got some great records here. You like dance music? Me, I love it. I got lotsa Harry Roy and the Original

Crichton Lyricals, and the Bert Ambrose Band you know? Well, Mensana, I better get my ass in gear. *(He rises to his feet.)*

MELIOR And what are you going to do now? Go back to being, what was it, a Chartered Surveyor in Frankfurt?

MENSANA You gotta be crazy! A Chartered Surveyor? In Frankfurt? You ever been to Frankfurt? I'm a Hidden Master. I know the Secret of the Universe and all that.

MELIOR What is it, the Secret of the Universe?

MENSANA I ain't gonna tell you, you find it out for yourself soon enough; but I'll tell you this for nothing, you got a big surprise coming ! ... No, I tell you what I'm gonna do. I'm gonna be the Leader of a Dance Band. How do you like the sound of this; 'Willi Hofmannsthal und sei Swingmakers'.

MELIOR Very catchy.

MENSANA Yeah, I reckon I do music for a couple a hundred years now. I think I get pretty hot stuff in the finish.

MELIOR Yes, well being immortal must be very convenient.

MENSANA So ein dummkopf! You really don't know nothing, do you? You're immortal too, you dummy. So's everybody else. Hey, but don't take my word for it. I do some Hocus Pocus and you can ask your expedition people about it. All those guys; they're all still floating around here some place. You gotta see this trick. It's a killer ...

(Once more he prepares himself for what is clearly going to be energetic magical activity. After much straining he gives up and begins again, muttering to himself angrily.)

Das nutzt nichts! Hol es der Taufel! ... Noch einmal ... Komm schon!... Ja, Ja ...

(From around the sides of the mountain enter TRIS, ODDLEIF, DIANA & BUD in stately procession. They are bathed in an unearthly radiance and sing a grand reprise of 'THE MOUNTAIN IS CALLING'.)

THE MOUNTAIN IS CALLING - SECOND REPRISE

ALL **The Mountain is calling,
We dare not delay,
For though our path is steep,
There's an appointment we must keep.**

We must soon return,

each one to find a place on earth,
 Once more to suffer gladly the indignity of birth.
 Mountaineers on slender ropes of Matter, Space and Time,
 We must have a mountain to climb....

MENSANA *(Excitedly to MELIOR)* Hey, you wanna hear what my band's gonna sound like?

(He rapidly adopts his magical pose and briskly counts in an invisible group of musicians)

Ein... Zwei ... Ein, Zwei, Drei, Vier!

Suddenly from nowhere comes the sound of a complete Dixieland jazz band playing a riotous uptempo instrumental version of 'THE MOUNTAIN IS CALLING'. MENSANA removes the blue jewel from his brow, and jams it delightedly into MELIOR's forehead before capering down the mountain to join the phantom climbers in a high stepping dance routine. MELIOR remains above. Over a final slow 'cakewalk' finale the entire cast sing a final chorus and take their bows.

18. JAZZ BAND FINALE

ALL **The Mountain is calling
 We answer with joy
 "Destroy us if you will,
 But we will climb on, climb on still"...**

THE END...

...BUT THE AUTHOR URGES YOU TO CONTINUE BELOW TO READ SHORT FICTIONAL BIOGRAPHIES OF THE EXPEDITION MEMBERS. THESE WERE WRITTEN AT THE REQUEST OF THE CAST OF THE FIRST PRODUCTION AT THE TRAVERSE THEATRE IN 1981.

LORD MELIOR

ARTHUR GEORGE PLANTAGENET, Third Baron Melior of New Waybury. Born 1874. Castle Melior, Norfolk. Educated Eton and Oxford.

1898: Joins Conservative Party.

1900: Member of ill-fated 'El Dorado' expedition to Amazon; great loss of life among native porters.

1905: Marries American heiress Molly Vanderbagg. Resigns from Conservative Party, joins Liberal Party.

1908: Leads expedition to discover the source of the Ameebo River in Central Africa; fails, but discovers and names the Melior Malaria Swamps; great loss of life among native porters.

1914: Appointed Special War Commissioner to the Bongo Territories, British East Africa.

1916: Controversy over his expulsion of missionaries and introduction of compulsory gym.

1918: Lady Melior killed in Assagai attack. Melior returns to England and inherits major stockholding in the Vanderbagg Meat Packing Corporation of Chicago. Resigns from Liberal Party, joins Labour Party.

1920: Leads joint British and Russian expedition to the Antarctic; discovers and names the treacherous Melior Sound; tragic loss of Soviet Steamship 'Tolstoy' carrying rescue expedition.

1922: On the death of his father, succeeds to the title, and estates in Sussex, Hampshire, Norfolk and Caernarvon. Resigns from Labour Party, joins Communist Party.

1925: Leads an unsuccessful attempt on the unclimbed East Face of the Obergürgle in the Bavarian Alps; great loss of life among Alpine Guides, pack animals and tourists.

1927: Refuses the Gold Medal of the Royal Geographical Society in protest over British recognition of the Chinese Nationalist Government of Chiang Kai-Shek.

Publications include: *'We Sought El Dorado'*,
'Up the Ameebo with Rod and Gun',
'Comrades on Ice',
'Obergürgle - The Hard Way',
'Foxhunting - a Marxist Critique'
'Fun With Ropes - Simple Mountaineering for the Intelligent Artisan'.

One son - Tristram.

TRISTRAM MELIOR

The Honourable TRISTRAM PLANTAGENET MELIOR. Born 1906. Castle Melior, Norfolk.

- 1914: Cheam Preparatory School; Head Boy, Captain of Rugby.
- 1919: Wins scholarship to Eton; Head Boy, Captain of the Eleven; known as 'The Fags' Friend'; President of Pop; Founder of Natural History Soc.
- 1924: Wins open scholarship to Oxford to read Natural Sciences. Captain of the Eleven, also a Blue in Rugby, Chess and Lacrosse.
- 1925: Founds University Labour Club and invites Aneurin Bevin and George Lansbury to speak. The Boat Club and the Conservative Association break up the meeting. He is de-bagged and thrown into the Isis.
- 1926: During the General Strike refuses to join the rest of the undergraduates driving buses and maintaining public services. De-bagged and thrown into the Isis. Goes to Cardiff to offer his services to Miners. On arrival at Miners HQ in his Lagonda, there is an initial misunderstanding and he is de-bagged and thrown into the Taff.
- 1927: Achieves First Class Honours Degree with Distinction. Wins the Upcott Prize for Biology but refuses the award in protest against the breaking off of diplomatic relations with the U.S.S.R. De-bagged and thrown into the Isis.

BUD FREESTONE

CLEVELAND JEFFERSON LINCOLN FREESTONE Born 1885. New Huddersfield, Wyoming, USA.

- 1899: Leaves school at fourteen to work on local cattle ranches. Takes up competitive rodeo riding. Reads *'The Ragged Trousered Philanthropists'* and begins study of the works of Proudhon.
- 1903: Champion Cowboy at Cheyenne Rodeo. (Suffers compound fracture of left leg.)
- 1904: Attempts to organise an 'International Union of Cowpokes and Ranch Hands'. Dismissed from his job; other ranchers refuse to employ him. Turns professional rodeo rider.
- 1905: Champion Steer Wrangler, Montana State Fair Rodeo; dislocates pelvis. Champion Bull-rider, Denver Rodeo (Multiple fracture of clavicle.)
- 1906: Attempts to organise a National Rodeo Artistes Association, and is barred from further competitions.
- 1907: Meets the celebrated Himalayan explorers Dr. & Mrs. William Hunter Workman and is employed as their guide on a climbing trip to the Big Horn Mountains of Wyoming. Rapidly assimilates classical mountaineering techniques and climbs Mt. Tranquil, 16,200 ft. (Sustains Barton's Fracture of right wrist).
- 1908 - 1912 Accompanies the Workmans on three expeditions to the Himalayas. Ascents include Jam Pogo, 18000 ft (sprained knee) and Bugga Long, 21,000 ft. (subcoracoid dislocation of left shoulder).
- 1914: Member of first party to climb Mt. Union, Washington State. Erects a red flag on the summit. Is subsequently expelled from the American Alpine Club and arrested for subversion.
- 1917: Joins Marine Corps and is sent to France with the American Expeditionary Force.
- 1918: At the battle of Chateau Thierry, destroys four enemy machine-gun nests single-handed (uninjured). Awarded Distinguished Service Cross. At Soissons, later the same year, captures sixteen German Staff Officers, a field gun and four-and-a-half tons of condensed milk. Awarded Congressional Medal of Honor (hay fever and piles).
- 1923: Achieves national celebrity when he makes the first ascent of The Grand Knob in Pinnacles National Park. (depressed fracture of skull, Potts fracture of right ankle, ruptured spleen and Athletes' Foot).
- 1926: Opens the Mt. Dreadful Climbing School near Fort Badwater, Colorado.

Unmarried.

CARLO MACHARISMO

CARLO GABRIELE MACHARISMO: Born 1889. Monte Risotto, N. Italy.

1910: Commissioned as 2nd Lieutenant in Bersaglieri Mountain Troops (the celebrated 'Running Regiment'). Brief affair with Elenora Duse.

1912: Gold Medal for shooting at Stockholm Olympics; placed 75th in Marathon. Promoted to 1st Lieutenant.

1913: Marries Maria Della Lasagne, age 16. Makes the first ascent of the Matterhorn in running shoes.

1915-1918: Serves with distinction in Austro-Hungarian Campaign. Intelligence Officer during defence of Gonzo peninsula. As a result of his brief affair with Mata Hari, Austrian Army captures Gonzo peninsula. Macharismo is transferred to General Staff and promoted to Captain.

1919: Joins Gabriele D'Annunzio's Volunteer Force and pilots his own sea-plane in air raids on Fiume. D'Annunzio dedicates to him the ode '*I heard the brilliant beating of your piston...*'

1920: Gold Medal for Fencing at Antwerp Olympics; (unplaced in Marathon). On first day of Italian hunting season, bags a record 47 swans, 150 song thrush, 70 nightingales and a parrot. Promoted to Major. Brief affair with Isadora Duncan.

1922: Joins Mussolini's march on Rome; arrives early due to running. Brief affair with Zelda Fitzgerald.

1923: Breaks World Altitude Ballooning record and is created a Papal Knight.

1924: Following the birth of Maria's fourteenth child, he is advised to give up running on medical grounds. Resigns commission in Bersaglieri. Brief affair with Clara Bow.

1925: Drives in victorious Bugatti Motor Racing Team. Wins British Grand Prix at Brooklands. Brief affair with Gertrude Lawrence. Decorated by Mussolini.

1927: On Safari in West Africa, bags the last ten known specimens of Reinhardt's Gazelle and becomes the first man to run up Mt. Kilimanjaro.

Four sons:- Carlo, Nero, Tiberio, Diocletian.

Ten daughters:- Gabriela, Michaelangela, Leonarda, Mussolina etc.

DR. THORBJORN ODDLEIF

THORBJORN KNUT ODDLEIF: Born 1881. Fjelhainmer, Norway.

- 1899: Enters the Royal Frederik University, Oslo, to read Natural Sciences. Spends vacations climbing in the Jotunheimen Mountains. Ascents include Galdhøpiggen (8,097 ft.) and Snöhetta (7,500 ft.)
- 1905: Graduates with First Class Honours. Takes position as research fellow in the Botanical Faculty.
- 1910: Publishes his doctoral thesis 'En Inniedende Oppsiktsvekkende og Slignordpols Flerpoider litt om Fjellpiggknop *Gaudelpus erectus*' (A Preliminary Account of Subarctic Polyploidy in the Alpine Toadweed *Gaudelpus erectus*).
- 1912: Becomes interested in the work of Polish philologist L.L. Zamenhof, the inventor of Esperanto, and begins a study of the language by correspondence course.
- 1914: Appointed Reader in Botany. Publishes 'Materiell det er Fag og gjødselpytter sproblems en Blomster Fjellpiggknop *Gaudelpus prostatium*' (Material for a study of taxonomic problems in the Flowering Alpine Toadweed *Gaudelpus prostatium*). Becomes first President (also Secretary and Treasurer) of the International League of Esperanto Speaking Botanists.
- 1916: Marries Ulrica Geyser, Norway's first radical feminist writer, in an Esperanto ceremony.
- 1919-1920: Spends a Sabbatical year in a tent on the remote island of Öxö, 'The Isle of Toadweed'. Publishes the highly acclaimed 'Ligger på den Fag og skogen blomsterstanden men den Lofoten' (Notes for a study of certain Plant Communities on the Lofoten Islands).
- 1921: Appointed Professor of Botany. Is the Centre of some controversy when he attempts to deliver the Nordahl Lecture in Esperanto.
- 1922: Launches a company for the commercial exploitation of Toadweed. Publishes 'Piggknop; Vår Liten Grønn Venn' (Toadweed; Our Little Green Friend). Faces complete financial ruin.
- 1924: Makes an extended expedition to the Himalayas and publishes the brilliant and massive 'Monogriffel og de FjellVannpest, Ramsldk I Slurves og Nepall' (Monograph of the Mountain Warts, Bladders and Slimes of Nepal).
- 1926: On a return expedition to the Himalayas, he disappears and is found wandering in the last stages of exhaustion some weeks later. His claims of finding a hidden valley full of unknown plant forms are treated sceptically by the scientific community and the publication of his paper 'Om en oyensynlig ubeskrivelen Jette - Blomster Fjell-piggknop

Gaudelpus odliefex' (On an apparently undescribed Giant Flowering Alpine Toadweed *Gaudelpus odliefex*) provokes a storm of criticism. Resigns his Professorship.

1927: Begins the translation of all his scientific works into Esperanto.

One son:- Floris Knut

One daughter:- Flora Boedecea

DIANA CREDENCE

DIANA CONSTANCE CREDENCE. Born 1904. Leamington Spa.

1914: The Convent School of the Poor Little Sisters of Our Lady of Dolours, Eastbourne. Expelled.

1917: Rodean. Expelled.

1921: Madame Linski's Finishing School, Geneva. Asked to leave. Declared persona non grata by Swiss Government.

1922: Announces engagement to Bernard 'Towser' Moncrieff.

1923: Announces engagement to Viscount 'Bootsy' Cran.

1924: Announces engagement to Prince Carl-Heinz of Hesse-Darmstadt. Arrested at the Casino, Baden-Baden, for offences against Public Decency. Announces engagement to Sonny Bunker, 2nd Trumpet with Dixie Darling's Kings of Jazz.

1925: Enters the Buddhist Nunnery at Lung Sox, Korea. Asked to leave. Announces engagement to His Beatitude Lo Ki, Abbot of the Buddhist Monastery at Lung Sox, Korea. Deported by Korean Government.

1926: Meets Aleister Crowley at an orgy at the Polish Consulate in Tunis. Is initiated by him into the Magical Order of the Rosy Star.

1927: For a brief period in Paris, holds the post of Scarlet Woman to the Beast 666, Crowley's official consort. Abandoned by Crowley following an argument over his proposed ritual sacrifice of her pet ocelot 'Pussykins'. Arrested for shop lifting; deported from France.

1928: Enters Happyvale Sanatorium, East Grinstead, for treatment for cocaine addiction. Asked to stay.

READ ON FOR ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS OF 'THE ESPERANTO SONG' AND THE SECTIONS OF ESPERANTO DIALOGUE.

'THE ESPERANTO SONG'

lyric of this song was written by FRANK BAGGULEY,
Music by Maxwell Hitchinson

This is Frank Bagguley's own translation from the Esperanto.

A most beautiful, most charming South-Chinese lady (miss)
Greatly loved fervently a Northern English young man.
To love, I love, I loved, I will love,
I would love, Love! (Now you)

Lovingly she wrote by means of typewriter
But soon she called him "complete simpleton".
To write, she writes, she wrote, she will write,
She would write, Write! (Now you)

Understanding neither Chinese nor the Esperanto
He could not correspond with lotus flower Ling Pon.

So, I pray, dear brother,
Learn now the world language!
Sympathise with compassion
About lotus flower Ling Pon.

A diligent very young South-Chinese young lady
Tried to learn rapidly the North-English language.
To learn, I learn, I learnt, I will learn,
I would learn, Learn! (Now you)

But after eighteen months the beautiful young lady
Discovered it too difficult for Ling Pon.
To discover, I discover, I discovered, I will discover,
I would discover, Discover! (Now you)

Desperately (without hope), to a friend (man) from the Fiji Islands
She by means of Esperanto wrote and proposed marriage.

So, I pray, dear brother
Learn now the world language!
Sympathise with compassion
About lotus flower Ling Pon!

To propose, I propose, I proposed, I will propose,
I would propose, Propose! (Now you!)

ENGLISH VERSIONS OF THE ESPERANTO SCENES
(Originally translated into Esperanto by FRANK BAGGULEY)

1. SCENE ONE, FROM ODDLEIF'S ENTRANCE

ODDLEIF Good morning.

ALL Good morning, Dr. Oddleif.

ODDLEIF I seem to be the last one to arrive. Ah, Lord Melior ... When I last saw you, you were about to eat an entire conference alive!

MELIOR I fear I bit off more than I could chew...Let me introduce the others ... My son, Tristram.

ODDLEIF Delighted.

TRIS. My father has told me a lot about you. (*ODDLEIF corrects his pronunciation.*)
Yes, of course, thank you.

MELIOR This is Mr. Bud Freestone from Colorado in the United States.

BUD How do you do.

ODDLEIF Delighted. Colorado? Do you know anything about ranching?

(BUD remains silent, smiling politely.)

Is there much ranching in Colorado?

(BUD realises he is expected to reply.)

BUD I'm sorry, I don't understand what you said.

ODDLEIF Ahha. "Do you know anything about ..." Do you understand that?

BUD Yes.

ODDLEIF The word "ranching", do you understand that?

BUD (*In English*) No, I'm sorry, I haven't come across that one.

ODDLEIF In Esperanto, please.

- BUD No, I'm sorry, I haven't ... *(aside in English)* Come across? *(TRIS gives him the word)* ...come across that one.
- ODDLEIF You should have an Esperanto Dictionary with you *(Gives BUD a dictionary)*
Does everyone else know the word "ranching"...? No one? *(Gives out the other dictionaries)* Look it up in your dictionaries. *(They do so)* Right, now repeat after me. "To ranch, I ranch, I ranched, I will ranch, I would ranch, ranch!" Now you...
- ALL To ranch, I ranch, I ranched, I will ranch, I would ranch, ranch!

(ODDLEIF starts the Esperanto Song.)

2. SCENE TWO, FROM THE BEGINNING

- MELIOR Where is Carlo?
- TRIS. He must get here soon.
- MELIOR Read his note again.
- TRIS. *(In English)* 'I am slightly indisposed and will join you later at Base Camp ... Carlo Macharismo'. It's a bit odd isn't it?
- ODDLEIF In Esperanto, please.
- TRIS. It's a bit odd, isn't it?
- ODDLEIF While we are waiting for him, I would like to explore a little way beyond the next ridge. believe that I can see some very interesting mountain flowers.

(General protest and cries of 'Too fast' and 'Speak slower')

While we are waiting for him....
I would like to explore....
a little way beyond....
the next ridge...

(The others have to look up the word 'ridge')

I believe...
that I can see...
some very interesting mountain flowers...
Goodbye.
- ALL Goodbye... *(He exits.)*

TRIS. I hope he has some luck.

BUD *(In English)* How long are we going to have to keep this up?

MELIOR In Esperanto, please!

ODDLEIF Goodbye!

ALL Goodbye

BUD *(In English)* Look, if we have to look up etc. ... etc ... on the far side of the bergschrund. Huh?

MELIOR Surely I don't have to explain.....

ALSO, MELIOR'S FIRST SPEECH TO CARLO

MELIOR Certainly, Carlo we understand completely.