

cadaver in the room.

OLF. That's Saint Foy. (Pause. Jack is a little thrown, or perhaps shaken.)

JACK. Well, then, we'll keep all the merriment over here ... (He sets down his bags and starts removing objects: juggling clubs and balls, a lute or small guitar, etc.) Where's my light? (He finds a window with light shining in and places his props accordingly, muttering to himself as he sets up. Olf watches in fascination for a few moments, then.)

OLF. I wanted to be a minstrel once.

JACK. Didn't we all, my friend. Didn't we all.

OLF. But I wasn't good enough.

JACK. What could you do — sing, dance? (Olf shakes his head.) Tell a joke? (Olf gives a "so-so" gesture with his hand.) Juggle.

OLF. Only one thing at a time.

JACK. Yep, that's a couple tricks shy of an act. (He goes back to setting up.)

OLF. I decided to become a monk instead.

JACK. Good career move.

OLF. To witness a miracle.

JACK. Yeah? How many have you seen?

OLF. Not a one. But I hope I do someday; I really hope so.

JACK. (Confidentially.) Don't take this the wrong way, but you've got a better chance of making it as a minstrel. (Marie enters, wearing a colorful costume with hat and face paint. She is followed by Peasant Woman.)

MARIE. (To Jack.) This. Was a bad idea.

PEASANT WOMAN. (To Olf.) Where's the abbot?

MARIE. Mother ...

OLF. They're in the vestry. (Olf opens the door to lead her out.)

JACK. What are you doing?

PEASANT WOMAN. I'm gonna haggle your fee.

JACK. No you're not — I've done it myself for thirteen years.

PEASANT WOMAN. Believe me, you don't know the clergy — they're murder. (She leans into Marie confidentially.) Pray.

MARIE. What?

PEASANT WOMAN. The cow's sick. Might as well get one in before they hit you up for a penny (To Olf.) Come on, let's talk business. (She exits, followed by Olf.)

# Jack, Marie

JACK. You had to bring your mother along ...

MARIE. We shouldn't have come here in the first place. Look, just promise me you'll play nice, okay? No snide remarks about the church? I don't care if you think they're crooks; they're clients till we get out of here.

JACK. Hey, I'm a professional.

MARIE. You. Are a pagan with an attitude problem. (Marie crosses to the altar, kneels, and begins praying. Jack paces through their routine.)

JACK. Okay, I figure we'll start like always: intro, intro; juggle juggle bow; tell a few jokes ha ha bow; sing ... (He notices her.) Marie — we've got a gig here ...

MARIE. Better to be safe.

JACK. It's a pile of bones on a dirty red cloth. (He pulls her to her feet.)

MARIE. I wasn't finished!

JACK. (Crossing her.) "Amen."

MARIE. Jack ...

JACK. Now: I'll do the hellos, throw some balls, tell "The Priest and the Pig" —

MARIE. No.

JACK. People love that joke.

MARIE. Not here they won't.

JACK. It's a timing thing. You wait till they're drunk.

MARIE. Let's do "The Lark and the Dove" instead.

JACK. Ma-rie ...

MARIE. It's pretty.

JACK. It's a love song.

MARIE. So?

JACK. So these guys become celibate at the age of six. What do they know about love?

MARIE (Singing.) "Sad sings the lonesome mourning dove ..."

JACK. I'll do the "hey ho nonny nonny" song.

MARIE. Come on, Jack, sing the response:

JACK. Something they can tap their toes to.

MARIE. "Glad sings the lark that finds his love."

JACK. Hey. Ho. Nonny. Nonny. I'll sing, you dance.

MARIE. (Beat.) Fine. (She walks away.)

JACK. Oh, come on. *(He goes to her.)* Let's just get through this, take the cash, and we're on our way. Okay? No more motley, no more mothers, no more monks. Just us.

MARIE. Then let's have them marry us.

JACK. Uhhhh ... not today.

MARIE. Why not?

JACK. It's ... not the right place.

MARIE. It's a church!

JACK. Exactly, it's commonplace here. We'll get married in Paris.

MARIE. In Dijon you said we'd do it in Bernay; in Bernay you said here, / and —

JACK. And you said your mother loved minstrels, so we're even. *(Peasant Woman enters.)* Speak of the devil. *(He finishes setting up his props.)*

PEASANT WOMAN. Good thing I came along. They wanted to pay you in books. *(To Marie.)* What a stupid line of work. You should've married what's-his-name when you had the chance.

MARIE. *(For the hundredth time.)* Pierre.

JACK. *(Half to himself.)* "Pierre," / "Pierre," "Pierre," "Pierre" ...

PEASANT WOMAN. At least he had money.

MARIE. We didn't have the chance, remember?

JACK. *(To Peasant Woman.)* Ever since we got here it's "Pierre" this, "Pierre" that. If Pierre was so great, why didn't she marry him? MARIE. He died.

JACK. *(Beat.)* Oh. *(Beat.)* Well, then, he wasn't such a great catch, was he? *(Charles enters, followed by Martin and Olf, who carries a stool.)* Hoo boy, show time ... *(Jack scrambles into position, as does Marie. Peasant Woman moves into position to watch. Olf sets down the stool for Charles, who sits. Martin sits on his stool.)* Ah, welcome, gentlemen, brothers in Christ. Prepare to be tickled, dazzled, and delighted. My name is Jack, this is Marie, now let's have a juggle to fill you with glee. Hey! *(Jack grabs juggling balls or clubs and begins to juggle in a vigorous but unextraordinary fashion, accompanying his tosses with little outbursts of awe. Pointedly, to Marie.)* A little tambourine, please? *(She accompanies his more daring passes. Finally he brings it to a flashy finish and bows deeply, awaiting thunderous applause. There is none. He stands upright.)* Thank you, thank you. A joke!

MARIE. *(Warning.)* Jack ...

JACK. *(Launching in.)* A widower goes to his confessor, says, "Forgive me, Father, I've gotten so lonely the past six months I've taken to screwing one of my pigs." "That doesn't sound too bad," says the priest, "as long as you keep the commandments." "Well that's just it," says the man, "this morning she tells me she's married!" *(He looks about expectantly. They are totally unresponsive. Dryly.)* I thought there was only one corpse in the house.

PEASANT WOMAN. Quit jabbering and let her dance!

JACK. *(He clears his throat.)* My ... mother-in-law. Would the gentlemen care for a song and dance?

OLF. I would. *(Martin hits him.)*

CHARLES. *(Gesturing for them to begin.)* Please.

PEASANT WOMAN. Pay no attention to this boob; she's the one with the talent. *(Jack picks up the lute or small guitar and accompanies Marie while she dances. The dance should be simple and rather innocent, but may have a gentle allure.)*

JACK. *(Singing.)*

Hey ho, alas lackaday,

Alas, lackaday, lackaday hey ho;

Hey nonny nonny, derry down derry down,

Hey ho nonny nonny derry down.

Lackaday (lackaday), Hey ho (lackaday),

Alas (lackaday), hey ho — oh:

Hey nonny nonny, derry down derry down,

Hey ho nonny nonny derry down!

*(He bows again with a flourish. Marie curtsies. The monks are silent. Then.)*

MARTIN. What was that?

JACK. What.

MARTIN. "Alas lackahey ho nonny"?

JACK. I think it's Spanish. *(Olf nods wisely.)*

CHARLES. You dance prettily, madam.

MARIE. Thank you, Your Grace.

MARTIN. Is that all you do?

MARIE. I know a song about a lark and a dove.

PEASANT WOMAN. *She's very versatile, don't you worry. (They*