

Jack, Olf

air? Filthy line of work, if you ask me.
 CHARLES. Uh-huh. Would you ... excuse us for a moment, please?
 PEASANT WOMAN. It's your church. *(The monks quickly huddle to confer. While they are preoccupied, Peasant Woman sneaks a standing prayer.)*
 CHARLES. Do you think it's him?
 MARTIN. Of course it's him.
 FELIX. We can't accuse the man without proof ...
 OLF. He's got one eye ...
 MARTIN. *Just bring him here!* We'll get to the truth.
 CHARLES. Good woman ...
 MARTIN. *(To Felix and Olf.)* In the meantime, dig a hole. *(Martin indicates the sack; Olf nods and exits.)*
 CHARLES. Your daughter's husband, is he still in town?
 PEASANT WOMAN. He hasn't stopped eating since they got in. I'm telling you, minstrels, they're pigs.
 MARTIN. Do you think were we to ask him, he might perform his services?
 PEASANT WOMAN. You'd have to pay. They don't work for free.
 CHARLES. We'd pay him well.
 PEASANT WOMAN. *(Seeing her opportunity.)* Then you might as well hire them both. My daughter's quite the dancer ...
 FELIX. *(Enthralled.)* Really? A dancer?
 PEASANT WOMAN. *And she's been known to ease the burden of the celibate on occasion.*
 MARTIN. That won't be necessary.
 PEASANT WOMAN. *(Driving home the bargain.)* Truth be told, they only perform as a pair. Either it's both or none.
 CHARLES. *(Beat.)* Very well, then: We'll see them both.
 PEASANT WOMAN. I'll go drag them from the table. *(Olf has returned with a shovel and grabbed the end of the sack to drag it out.)* What's in the sack? *(Olf begins to speak, but...)*
 MARTIN. Barley.
(Correcting himself) Miller.
 CHARLES and MARTIN. Oats! *(Peasant Woman sniffs the air with suspicion.)*
 PEASANT WOMAN. If you say so. *(To Felix.)* You'll like my

daughter. Not big bosomed but a sweet piece of flesh. *(She starts out, then stops abruptly.)* Oh. *(She walks directly up to Martin.)* I'll need that button. *(She holds out her hand. Martin looks to Charles in exasperation, but Charles nods to him. Martin removes the button from the plate and hands it to her.)* Good thing I saved the penny for Bernay. *(She pockets it.)* You can't mess around with a sick cow. *(She exits as they look after her. Blackout.)*

Scene 2

The chapter house, a few hours later. Olf enters the room carrying a shovel, followed by Jack, a smallish man wearing an eye patch and a colorful motley. Jack also carries two bags, which contain various minstrel's props, costume pieces, and musical instruments.

JACK. Pretty hot day for digging a grave. Whose is it?
 OLF. I'm not allowed to say.
 JACK. If it's outside the churchyard wall, it's got to be a thief or a murderer.
 OLF. It's a secret.
 JACK. *(Mock shock.)* You mean he doesn't know he's dead?
 OLF. Huh?
 JACK. You'd better tell him before you plant him ...
 OLF. He's —
 JACK. Nothing ticks a man off more than waking up under six feet of dirt.
 OLF. It's a secret.
 JACK. Okay ... But when you've got an irate corpse on your hands, don't say I didn't warn you. Where do we play?
 OLF. Here.
 JACK. *(Beat.)* Here?
 OLF. We can't use the chapel since the roof caved in, and the library's covered in mud.
 JACK. *(Looking around.)* Hard to generate a festive mood with a

Jack, Marie

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. 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.)

end