

ACT IScene 1

*Adam, on an empty stage. He is on his knees, looking up at a spotlight. A mask covers his face, and a simple shroud covers his upper body.*

ADAM:

Who is not a who, but a what, an it, a thing that skulks in shadows and lurks in the dark crevasses of the earth, lingering in burnt remains of once great castles, where the shadow of a now fallen wall would have been?

*(beat as he rises to his feet and stares directly at the audience)*

Is it me?

Perhaps. Can a man truly define himself, or is he slave to the world around him? Am I slave, or master? This question haunts me, creeps into my mind in the deep of the night. I am...intrigued by it. Would it bring me peace to surrender to this feeling? If one accepts his place as a slave, who must he appoint as master? And then, the question of power comes into play, and the ability to choose one's own destiny. Is there real power in appointing a master? Does elevating a tyrant to the throne constitute an act of choice; the choice of giving up freedom?

*He sits down and assumes the position of The Thinker.*

*Enter, a Beautiful Woman. She walks along the stage, salaciously trailing a wisp of gossamer cloth behind her.*

*As she walks, Adam's head turns to follow her passing.*

*Exit Beautiful Woman. Adam turns to face the audience.*

ADAM:

Wha-...? What...What was I talking about? Oh well, it must not have been important. Important ideas embed themselves firmly in the mind like the roots of some ancient tree, or of a particularly tenacious weed. And what I now know is important is that I get to know that alluring creature.

*He vigorously entreats the audience.*

ADAM:

Did you see? Did you see? God, I need to know everything about her. Her name, her street, her

favorite book, favorite composer, favorite-

*His hand rises to feel his mask. His shoulders slump.*

ADAM:

No. No, it's happening again. I forget. She was beautiful, is beautiful. Me? Ha. Not quite. I wear a mask to hide my visage, a shroud to hide my body. I have experimented, searched for a way to make this enough. I have draped myself in fine silks from the east, felts and wools from the furthest Americas, even in the pelts of beasts from the Antarctic. None have been enough. They all eventually ask to see underneath, and then I must watch thier faces twist in disgust at scars and the pale tissue of my body.

I have worn masks of wood, of porcelain, of molded plaster. They have ranged from the uncanny to the horrific, each a lifeless mockery of the full dimension of a human face. None have been enough. They always ask to see underneath the mask, underneath, to the tall forehead, the protruding brow, the mismatched eyes and the same pallor of skin that has long since bid farewell to its healthiest state. Still...I cannot help but wonder. A wise man once said fortune favors the bold, and it has been quite a while since fortune has smiled on me...

*Adam walks off stage.*

End Scene 1