

## **A Trilogy**

### ***Three One-Act Plays***

#### ***The Dream ~ The Tower ~ The Gatekeeper***

#### **Adapted from *The Chymical Wedding of Christian Rosenkreutz***

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*The Chymical Wedding* was written in German by Johann Valentin Andreae in 1603 and was translated into English by E. Foxcroft of Kings College in Cambridge, England, in 1690.

### **The Dream**

#### **From the First Day**

#### **Characters:**

The Brother

A Lady

A Noble

The Ancient Man

The Matron

A Servant (also the Matron's Son)

Four Prisoners

**Time:** Evening, the Saturday before Easter, 1459

**Place:** Interior of the Cottage of the Brother

**Scene:** The set for all three plays is essentially the same. Down right is a six-sided platform large enough inside to accommodate three crouching actors and a few props. There is a large entrance at the back of this platform which cannot be seen from the front, and a flat door on the top which, when closed, leaves the playing area smooth. There is another smaller, irregular, moveable platform at left. At upstage right are two glimmering, deep-blue curtains – lit from behind and semi-transparent – with tiny stars suggested. These curtains form a concave shape, one slightly in front of the other at center, providing an entrance and exit space. At both sides of the curtains are

pillars, substantial in size, but not thick or large. These two pillars are wreathed with roses, which wind up to the top.

The first play takes place in the humble cottage of the Brother. Left of center is a table covered with a white cloth. On this table is a vase with four roses, containers of salt and water, and a covered dish. Upstage from this table is another smaller table on which are folded garments, a hat and a bag. Upstage center is a medieval wooden couch with pillows. (Hidden among these pillows are chains, which the Brother will wear during his dream.) At the larger table is a chair.

**At Rise:** The Brother enters from the left, carrying a plate with bread. He is in his 80's, with kind, intelligent features and full white hair. He wears a knee-length garment, tied at the waist with a sash, dark leg stockings, and soft shoes with pointed toes, such as were worn in the mid-fifteenth century. He places the bread on the table among the other festive preparations.

**Brother:** On this eve before Easter, my table is prepared. Now may I prepare in my heart a place for this small, unleavened, undefiled bread, together with my dear paschal lamb.

*He sits down at the table.*

Through humble prayer, I shall converse with my Creator and consider many great mysteries, of which the Father of Lights, his Majesty, has shown me not a few.

*He bows his head in silent prayer, but in a few moments looks up, disturbed.*

All of a sudden!...

*He rises and appears to be listening and perceiving.*

A tempest! And of such terrible and mighty a force, the hill upon which this little house stands may fly to pieces!

*He appears frightened, then becomes calm.*

This, and the like from the devil – who has done me many a spite! – is nothing new to me. I shall take courage and persist in my meditation.

*He sits down at the table and again bows his head. A **Lady** enters through the curtains at right. Her garment is sky-blue, with glimmering golden stars. She has large, beautiful wings which throughout are full of eyes. A golden trumpet hangs from her sash and she carries a bundle of letters. She touches the Brother gently on the shoulder and he starts and looks up with fear, but does not turn around. She touches him again and he turns, rises and looks at her with fear and amazement. She searches through her letters and draws out a small one, which she places reverently upon the table. Then, she lifts her trumpet and plays it, exiting back through the curtains. The trumpet is heard echoing for some time, and gradually fades.*

**Brother:** A fair and glorious Lady, whose name I saw engraved upon the trumpet! So mighty and glorious a blast did she give on her gallant trumpet, the entire hill yet echoes the sound! The letters she carried were in all languages... perhaps she'll carry them to all countries. With such large and beautiful wings, she could mount aloft and fly swifter than any eagle. I might have taken further notice of her, but she stayed so short a time, and terror and amazement so possess me!... I am at a loss in a so unlooked for adventure! How am I to advise or assist my poor self?

*He falls upon his knees.*

I beseech my Creator that nothing contrary to the happiness of my Eternal Being shall befall me.

*After a few moments of silent prayer, he rises, and trembling, picks up the letter from the table.*

The letter is weighty. Were it made of gold it would not be heavier.

*He examines the letter and notices the seal.*

Ahhh! A curious cross... I am comforted, for such a seal is little acceptable and much less useful to the devil.

*He opens the letter tenderly.*

Golden letters in an azure field!

*He reads:*

This day, this day, this, this  
The Royal Wedding is.  
Art thou therefore by birth inclined,  
And unto joy of God designed,  
Then may'st thou to the Mountain tend,  
Whereon three stately Temples stand,  
And there see all from end to end.

Keep watch, beware,  
Thy self take care,  
Unless with diligence thou bathe,  
The Wedding can't thee harmless save:  
He'll damage have that here delays;  
Let him beware, too light that weighs.

*He is visibly upset. There is a pause and with trembling hand, he places the letter back down on the table.*

I nearly fainted away, and a cold sweat trickles down my entire body, for this is the appointed Wedding! Seven years ago I was acquainted with this Wedding in a clear vision, and have long

awaited this event with great earnestness. By account and calculation of the planets, I diligently observed that this event would occur, yet could never foresee that it would happen under such grievous and perilous conditions. Before, I imagined that to be a welcome and acceptable guest, I need only be ready to appear at the Wedding, but now I see I am directed by divine providence, of which I was not certain until this moment.

*He paces back and forth.*

Nature might everywhere find a more virtuous disciple to whom to entrust her precious though transient treasures. The more I examine myself, the more I see that in my head there is nothing but gross misunderstanding, and blindness in mysterious things. I am barely able to comprehend those things which lay under my feet – which I daily converse with – much less the secrets of nature...

*He pauses and again looks at the letter, then again paces.*

Behavior, good conversation, brotherly love for my neighbor... in these I am not duly purged and cleansed. Affections of the flesh are bent to pomp and bravery and worldly pride, not to the good of mankind. I am always contriving how I might, in a short time, abundantly increase my profit and advantage, raise up stately palaces, make myself an everlasting name in the world, and other like designs.

*There is again a pause, and he looks at the letter.*

The obscure words concerning the three Temples especially afflict me, for I do not understand them, not yet...

*Another pause.*

I could examine myself again and again and still find only my own frailty and impotency... I am in no way able to assist myself tonight, and so must find a place between hope and fear, and take myself through my usual and most secure course.

*He sits down in the chair and bows his head in silent prayer, then looks thoughtfully up.*

Perhaps if I take rest, my good Angel, by divine permission, might appear and instruct me in this doubtful affair. This has sometimes happened... and I am exceedingly amazed at the evening's events!...

*He rises, crosses to the couch, lies down and is at once asleep.*

*All lights fade out and in a few moments, the grinding and dragging of chains can be heard in the darkness. Very slowly, dim yellow-green lights come up on the left platform and dim blue-*

*violet lights come up on the right platform. The Brother rises from the couch, and finding himself in chains, crosses slowly and cautiously to the front of the left platform. His gaze is directed outwards, towards the front.*

It seems that I, and a numberless multitude of men, are fettered with chains... in a dark dungeon....

*He struggles to perceive; to remain conscious.*

There is not the least glimpse of light, and we swarm over one another like bees, rendering our afflictions all the more grievous. Neither I, nor any of the rest, I'm sure, can see one jot yet, yet I continually hear one heaving himself above the other, when the chains or fetters perhaps become a little lighter... None of us have much reason to shove the other, we're all captive wretches!

*He appears to be listening.*

Each reproaches the other with his blindness and captivity!...

*He examines his chains and attempts to loosen them; he looks around and discovers the platform, but is at once distracted as there comes the sound of trumpets and kettle drums.*

The sound revives us; we can rejoice even in our captivity!...

*A **Noble**, wearing a short garment and hat, enters through the curtains, crosses to the right platform and opens the door at the top. A vaporous mist rises up from the opening, and he looks down. The lights come up slightly on the **Brother**, who is looking up. The grinding and dragging of chains becomes more intense.*

The cover is lifted and everyone struggles. Ahhh! One heaves himself up only to be forced down again under the feet of the others! Each strives to be uppermost! How this pains me!... But I should not linger...

*He turns around and starts to climb up on the left platform, when it appears he is fighting off others. He finally succeeds in climbing up.*

I've heaved myself up upon this stone!... Though the others clutched at me, I guarded myself with hands and feet as well as I could. All suppose they shall be set at liberty, yet it may fall out quite otherwise. Above, he is amused with our struggling and lamenting.

*The **Ancient Man** enters through the curtains and crosses to the right platform. He is very old, with white hair and long beard. His garment is floor-length and he is somewhat stooped over, owing to his great age. He looks down through the open door.*

**Ancient Man:** Quiet, please! Let everyone be quiet!....

*A few moments pass.*

Quiet, please!

*Gradually, all is quiet.*

If wretched mankind would forebear  
Themselves so to uphold,  
Then sure on them much good confer,  
My righteous Mother would:

*The **Matron** enters, followed by a **Servant** (who is also the Matron's **Son**) holding a coiled rope. She too is extremely old, and dressed in dignified garments. The grinding and dragging of chains is again heard, gradually ceasing as the **Ancient Man** continues speaking.*

But since the same will not ensue,  
They must in care and sorrow rue,  
Howbeit, my dear Mother will  
Their follies oversee,  
Her choicest goods permitting still  
Too much in the light to be.  
Though very rarely it may seem  
That they may still keep some esteem,  
Which else would pass for forgery.  
Wherefore in honor of Easter  
We this day solemnize,  
That so her Grace may be increased,  
A good deed she'll devise.  
For now a rope shall be let down,  
And whosoe'er can hang thereon,  
Shall freely be released.

**Matron:** *(To the Noble and Servant)* Let down the rope seven times into the dungeon, and draw up whosoever can hang upon it!

*The grinding and dragging increase intensely.*

**Brother:** Dear Lord! Who could describe this horrible scene... the hurry and disquiet that arise among us!

*The Noble and Servant unwind the rope and lower it through the door.*

Everyone tries to get to the rope, and yet they only hinder one another.

*He gestures as though to catch the swinging rope above.*

I cannot come near the rope! To my great misfortune, I have climbed up upon this stone near the dungeon wall and cannot reach the rope, which descends to the middle!

*Again he tries to reach the rope. A bell is heard ringing, off.*

**Matron:** One!

*The Noble and Servant struggle and pull up one Prisoner.*

*(The bell) Two! (The rope comes up empty)*

*(The bell) Three!*

*The Noble and Servant this time pull up another Prisoner.*

*(The bell) Four!*

**Brother:** Many cannot keep their hold on the rope because their chains are too heavy or their hands too tender! Yet they themselves beat down the others, who might have held fast enough. And many forcibly pull off others and still cannot get at the rope. And alas, it seems we are envious of one another, even in this our great misery....

**Matron:** *(The bell) Five!*

*Here, the Brother cringes at what he perceives.*

**Brother:** The Noble and Servant are so nimble at the draught, the most part tumble over upon one another. The cord is empty... Are we to despair of redemption, or call upon God that He will have pity upon us and deliver us out of this horrible obscurity?...

**Matron:** *(The bell) Six!*

**Brother:** The rope swings from one side to the other... it seems easier to grasp. Has He then heard us?

*He catches the rope.*

I've caught it!

*Lights black out. Moaning, grinding and pulling increase in the total darkness. As the lights fade slowly up, the Brother can be seen climbing up out of the right platform on the end of the rope.*

**Brother:** Beyond hope, I come out, uppermost above all the rest!

*He staggers out onto the platform.*

**Matron:** *(The bell)* Seven!

*The Noble and Servant pull up two more Prisoners with the help of the Brother, who is unaware of a bit blood running down over his forehead. Soon, he and the other Prisoners are standing together.*

**Noble:** Most came up on the last draught.

**Brother:** Let us rejoice!... Ahhh! *(He notices the blood)* I received a wound on my head, by a sharp stone, I believe. But I for joy regard it not!....

**Matron:** Let the rope be laid away!

*The Servant exits with the rope through the curtains. The Ancient Man stirs, looks at his Mother, and nods, smiling.*

**Ancient Man:** My Mother wishes me to declare her Resolution to the Prisoners.

*He crosses to center and addresses the gathering.*

Ye Children dear  
All present here,  
What is but now complete and done,  
Was long before resolved upon:  
What e'r my Mother of great Grace  
To each on both sides here has shown,  
May never discontent misplace;  
The joyful time is drawing on,  
When everyone shall equal be,  
None wealthy, none in penury.  
Who e'r receiveth great commands  
Hath work enough to fill his hands.  
Who e'r with much hath trusted been,  
Tis well if he may save his skin.  
Wherefore your lamentations cease,  
What is't to wait for some few days.

*He gestures towards the door and the Noble closes it, while the trumpets and kettle drums are again heard, but hardly above the bitter moans and the grinding and pulling of chains of those remaining below. Gazing upon the closed door, and listening to the cries below, the Brother's eyes fill with tears. The Ancient Matron sits down on the couch, and the Servant enters through*

*the curtains. He carries a yellow-gold tablet and a quill, and a bag with several pieces of gold. He gives the tablet and quill to the **Matron**, and retains the bag.*

**Matron:** Tell me now, the number of redeemed.

*The **Servant (Son)** whispers in her ear and she writes this on the tablet.*

**Matron:** And now the names.

*She gestures to the **Noble** and he takes the tablet and quill and gives it in turn to each **Prisoner**, who signs his name. When this is done, the **Matron** rises and crosses to the **Prisoners**, viewing each in turn, lingering somewhat longer before the **Brother**, who still visibly laments for the others. Then she returns to the couch.*

**Matron:** Ah, how heartily am I grieved for the poor men in the dungeon. I would to God, if only I could release them all.

**Ancient Man:** My dear Mother, it is thus ordained of God, against whom we may not contend. In case we all of us were Lords, and possessed all the goods upon the Earth, and were seated at the table, who then would there be to bring up the service?

*The **Matron** nods sadly in agreement.*

But the joyful time is drawing on,  
When everyone shall equal be,  
None wealthy, none in penury.

**Matron:** Ah, yes!... Well, however, let these be freed from their fetters.

*The **Noble** and **Servant** set about this, and lastly the **Brother** is released. The **Noble** and **Servant** exit through the curtains with the chains. The **Matron** rises from the couch and the **Brother** crosses to the **Matron** and bows, also glancing at his companions.*

**Brother:** I thank God that through you, He has fatherly vouchsafed to bring us out of such darkness into the light.

*The others also bow to the **Matron**, who appears pleased.*

**Ancient Man:** Lastly, to each a piece of gold for remembrance, and to spend by the way.

*He gives each a piece of gold from the bag.*

**Brother:** (*Gazing at the coin*) On the one side a rising sun, and on the other, mysterious letters.

**Ancient Man:** Wherewith, everyone has license to depart.

**Matron:** With but one intimation: that you to the glory of God shall benefit your neighbors and reserve in silence what you have been entrusted with.

**Prisoner:** This we promise to do.

*The four **Prisoners** exit through the curtains. The **Brother** starts to walk, when, with a sudden cry of pain, he falls back onto the right platform.*

**Brother:** The fetters have wounded my feet! I cannot well go forward!...

*The **Matron** laughs.*

**Matron:** Come here, my son.

*He rises and limps towards her.*

Let not this defect afflict thee, but call to mind thy infirmities, and therewith thank God, who has permitted thee even in this world, and in the state of thy imperfection, to come into so high a light. Keep these wounds for my sake!...

*Trumpets sound and the **Matron** and **Ancient Man** exit through the curtains. The **Brother** watches them as they exit, then turns slowly and looks about him. Lights fade out.*

*They come up again on the **Brother**, asleep on the couch. He awakens slowly at first, then suddenly, arising quickly from the couch.*

**Brother:** A dream?... Only a dream? Yet, I am troubled, for all is so strongly impressed upon my imagination! Could it be morning?... I am yet sensible of the wounds on my feet! And on my head....

*He crosses to the table, limping at first, and picks up the letter. He feels the weight of it, then places it back down.*

Did I not beseech my good Angel to instruct me in this matter? Howbeit, by all these things, I well understand that God has vouchsafed that I should be present at this mysterious and bidden Wedding!... (*He raises his hands in prayer*) I give thanks to His Divine Majesty and beseech Him that He will further preserve me and daily fill my heart with wisdom and understanding, and at length graciously, without my desert, conduct me to the desired end. (*Glancing at the smaller table*) I shall prepare myself for the way...

*He puts on the Wedding garments.*

My white linen coat... a blood-red ribbon bound crossways over my shoulder and girded round my hips. And onto my hat... the four red roses. I might the sooner by this token be taken notice

of amongst the throng. Now for food... *(he picks up the bag)* bread, salt and water. By the counsel of an understanding person I have at other times used these... not without profit. Now, I believe I am ready.

*He falls to his knees.*

I beseech God to vouchsafe me a good outcome, and in the presence of God make this vow: if anything through His grace shall be revealed to me, I will employ it neither to my own honor nor authority in the world, but to the spreading of His Name, and the service of my neighbor.

*He rises.*

With this vow, and good hope, I depart from my home.

*He starts to exit, then remembers the letter on the table, turns back, places it into the bag, and exits.*

**End of first drama**

# The Tower

## From the Fifth and Sixth Days

### Characters:

The Brother

Three Companions

A Youth

An Old Man, the Warden of the Tower

Lady Alchemy

Young King

Young Queen

**Time:** Almost a week after Easter, same year

**Place:** The Tower of Mount Olympus

**Scene:** The set is the same as for the first play, the right platform in the same position; the smaller platform up-left. There is a copper cauldron with spoon on the left platform. The small table, covered with a white cloth, holds glass jars of various colored liquids, one jar being empty. There is a tray filled with minerals and herbs, and a mortar and pestle. As well as through the blue curtains, the characters enter and exit right and left.

**At Rise:** The **Brother** and two **Companions** are busy at work in the laboratory. One stirs liquid in the cauldron, another grinds herbs in the mortar; the **Brother** is placing caps on the jars. They are all wearing black garments.

**1<sup>st</sup> Companion:** So, this great Tower of Olympus is situated upon an island exactly square.

**2<sup>nd</sup> Companion:** Surrounded by a firm, thick outer wall.

**First:** With an inner wall round the actual Tower.

**Brother:** And this Tower itself appears as though seven round Towers had been built one by another, with the middlemost somewhat the higher.

**Second:** And the whole seven stories high.

**First:** Here we are at the very bottom, with little recreation, for this is nothing but a laboratory.

**Second:** Where we are fain to beat and wash plants and precious stones, extract their juices and essences, put them into glasses, and deliver them to be stored.

**First:** Our Lady Alchemy is so busy with us, so full of her directions, that she knows how to give us employment enough.

**Brother:** Yes, here we are fain to be mere drudges. Yet, as I understand it, we are achieving all that is necessary for the restoring for the beheaded bodies.

*There is a pause, then th third **Companion** enters through the curtains with a small copper kettle. He pours red liquid from the kettle into the remaining empty jar.*

**3<sup>rd</sup> Companion:** In another apartment, they are washing the bodies with diligence.

**Brother:** I believe we're almost done here.

*The last jar is capped; the contents of the mortar stirred into the cauldron; the laboratory tidied. Presently, a **Youth** enters with a tray containing cups of broth and a wine bottle and mugs. These he serves to the laborers. The **Youth** is dressed in a knee-length somber garment.*

**First:** Broth.

**Third:** And a little draught of wine.

**Brother:** As we've already well observed, we are not here for our pleasure.

**Second:** We did enjoy the sacred Wedding feast, yesterday at the Castle.

**Third:** Yes, the play, the banquet and merriment.

**First:** Until we were given the black mourning garments.

**Second:** And the six Royal Persons beheaded, and the axe-man as well.

**Brother:** It seemed to me indeed a most bloody Wedding. Seven beheaded.

**Third:** And afterwards, with no delay, to this isle by ship, and to this laboratory.

*They finish the brief meal and the **Youth** exits with the items on the tray.*

**First:** I suppose we are to content ourselves with sleeping on the ground.

*The four lay down on the ground, and three fall asleep, but in a few moments, the **Brother** rises.*

**Brother:** I am not very much troubled with sleep, and shall walk out into the garden, as far as the wall.

*Lights fade out on the set and come up on the right platform, with effects suggesting foliage. The **Brother** climbs up onto the platform.*

**Brother:** The heavens are very clear... I can drive away the time contemplating the stars. The moon shines very bright; the sea is exceeding calm. Here is a good opportunity for astronomical observation. (*He looks upward thoughtfully.*) There is this very night a conjunction of the planets, the like of which is not otherwise to be observed so suddenly! (*A clock is heard chiming twelve times.*) Midnight. (*He starts.*) From afar I see... seven flames! They pass over the sea and betake themselves to the top of the spire of the Tower... there they settle. (*A pause as he looks out.*) I am somewhat afraid, for the winds arise and begin to make the sea tempestuous. The moon is covered with clouds. My joy ends with fear... I shall betake myself again to the Tower.

*He crosses back to the laboratory and is seen in dim light.*

Whether the flames tarried or passed away, I cannot say, and in this obscurity I dare not venture out again.

*He lays down and falls asleep. Lights fade out. In a few moments they come up again and one of the **Companions** rises and wakes the others, who rise slowly in turn.*

**First:** The sixth day....

**Second:** What events might we expect today?

**Third:** I am of the opinion that the six royal bodies shall be enlivened together.

**First:** I must contradict you, for the decease of the ancients is not only to restore life, but to bring increase, too, to the young ones.

**Second:** Perhaps they were not put to death at all, perhaps others were beheaded in their place.

**Brother:** We might surmise a long while and still come to no conclusions.

*An Old Man, the **Warden** of the Tower, enters. He wears long, dark, dignified garments, with a hat tied to his sash. He carries a small chest or case.*

**First:** The Warden of the Tower.

**Warden:** Good morning!

*He examines the cauldron, the tray of minerals and herbs, and the jars.*

You have so behaved yourselves, that I have no fault to find with your work.

*He places the case on the table and the jars into the case. Meantime, the **Youth** is busy entering and exiting, bringing two coiled ropes, a ladder and a pair of wings, which are placed on the ground. [These props should be light and flexible, though heavy and burdensome to the characters.]*

**Warden:** My dear sons, one of these three things must each of you this day constantly bear about with him. Now it is free for you either to make a choice of one of them, or to cast lots about it.

*The four confer.*

**First:** We will choose.

**Warden:** Nay, let it rather go by lot. (*He removes his hat from the sash.*) Each must draw, and whatever you happen upon, that shall be yours.

*They draw papers from the hat.*

**First:** Rope.

**Third:** Rope.

**Second:** Wings.

**Brother:** Ladder.

*They return the papers to the hat.*

**First:** The ropes are the best.

**Brother:** I've chanced on the ladder, which afflicts me, for it is long and weighty, and I must be forced to carry it, whereas you both can handsomely coil your ropes about you.

**Warden:** As for the wings... (*He attaches them to the second Companion.*) Well now, they might have grown upon you! Now, all things must be carried off.

*Everything on the set, including the table, is removed by the characters (the chest carried by the **Warden**) who exit and re-enter, except for the **Brother**, who remains grappling with his ladder.*

**Warden:** I shall leave now, and shall lock the door fast after me.

*He exits.*

**First:** I can imagine no other, but that we are imprisoned in this Tower.

*A light beams on the right platform and a voice is heard, off.*

**Lady:** Good morning! Please... come up!

*They all look up over the platform.*

**Brother:** It's our Lady Alchemy.

**Second:** A round hole is uncovered in the ceiling.

**Third:** She looks down at us. We're to climb up.

**First:** We're truly in an evil plight with these ropes.

**Brother:** You have the wings. You'll be up instantly.

*The second **Companion** climbs up on the platform, gazes upwards and slowly lifts his arms in an expansive, wing-like gesture. The light beams on him and fades out on the rest of the stage. It then slowly fades on him and the stage is in total darkness.*

*The lights fade up and the platform door opens. The second **Companion** helps the first and the two the third. The top of the ladder then appears at the opening, and the **Brother**, pulling the ladder behind him, climbs out and closes the door.*

**Third:** The climb was not achieved without blisters.

**Second:** This second room appears to be the whole breadth of the Tower itself.

**Third:** With vestries.

**First:** Paintings and images.

**Second:** Organs, fountains, clockworks.

***Lady Alchemy** enters. She has a tall, regal appearance and is dressed in white and gold.*

**Lady:** Welcome. First, we must pray for the life of the King and Queen.

*They bow their heads silently for a few moments; the **Lady** first looks up and observes front and the others follow.*

**First:** There is brought in and placed in the middle of the room a wonderful thing of longish shape.

**Second:** A fountain.

**Brother:** But I can well observe that the bodies lay in it, for the inner chest is oval shaped, and so large that six persons might well lie in it one by another.

**Lady:** You are to follow me. You will be given torches, and are to stand about the fountain in a special order. Substances are to be dissolved and turned into a liquor...

*They exit. Lights fade out. After a pause, they fade up again on a bare stage. The **Brother** and second **Companion** enter, looking weary.*

**Brother:** It vexes me not a little we are fain to take so much toil, even to this the sixth room, yet I can well judge there must be some special reason for it; the Old Man must have something to do.

**Second:** There has been opportunity to pass away our time now and then.

**Brother:** And think of our experiences.

**Second:** In the third room... the golden globe hanging by a chain, and nothing but windows and mirrors. Although the sun beat only upon one door, in all quarters of the room there was nothing but suns, the whole refracted upon the globe.

**Brother:** Inside the globe, which we sundered with a diamond, was the lovely great snow-white egg.

**Second:** We stood round about this egg as jocund as if we ourselves had laid it.

**Brother:** Our mourning clothes seemed somewhat reproachful to our mirth.

**Second:** In the fourth room, the great copper kettle filled with yellow sand, in which the egg was placed.

**Brother:** Our egg needed no cracking, for the bird soon freed himself and showed himself very jocund.

**Second:** The food brought him was nothing else than the blood of the beheaded, diluted again with prepared water, by which the bird grew fast under our eyes.

**Brother:** In the fifth room...

*He opens the door of the platform and they peer down.*

There is the kettle where we bathed the bird. He was mighty well pleased with the cool, milky bath, drinking it and pleasantly sporting in it, but when it began to heat from the lamps beneath, we had enough to do to keep him there.

**Second:** He lost all his feathers and was as smooth as a newborn child.

*They close the door.*

And here, we were troubled to find the same little altar as in the Castle, with skull and serpent, goblet, book, sphere and clock.

**Brother:** He took a good draught from the goblet and pecked upon the white serpent, and soon after laid his head submissively upon the book and willingly suffered it to be smitten off. Howbeit, he yielded not one drop of blood, till he was opened on the breast, and then the blood spun out so fresh and clear as if it had been a fountain of rubies. His death went to the heart of us, and yet we might well judge that a naked bird would stand us in little stead.

**Second:** The body then being burned –

*The other two **Companions** enter.*

**First:** Our work is done. Our Lady has put away the box of cypress wood, where we laid the ashes of the bird.

***Lady Alchemy** enters.*

**Lady:** My Lords, we are here in the sixth room, and have only one more before us, in which our trouble will be at an end, and then we shall return home to our Castle. Now I would heartily wish that all of you, as you are here together, had behaved yourselves in such sort that I might have given you commendations to our most renowned King and Queen, and you have obtained a suitable reward. Yet, contrary to my desire, I have amongst you these (*pointing to the **Brother** and second **Companion***) lazy and sluggish laborers. Yet, I am not willing to deliver them up to punishment. However, that such negligence may not remain wholly unpunished, I am purposed that they shall only be excluded from the future seventh and most glorious action of all the rest. And so too they shall incur no further blame from their Royal Majesties.

**Second:** We esteem ourselves the most unhappy of men...

*They wipe tears from their eyes. **Lady Alchemy** laughs and exits, followed by the other two **Companions**.*

**Second:** Perhaps our **Companions** were glad of this our misfortune.

**Brother:** How it afflicts me our Lady should laugh at our tears.

**Second:** And our anger.

**Brother:** And impatience.

*The Youth, smiling, enters.*

**Youth:** Be of good cheer! You may follow me up the winding stairs, leaving your burdens at the door. The Warden and Our Lady shall have more work for you there. Obey them in whatsoever they command you, and do not remit your former diligence.

*They all exit. The lights fade out. As they fade up, the Warden is seen entering through the curtains. He carries a small, white satin bundle and a piece of white velvet. He places the velvet on the platform and the satin bundle very gently upon it. The Brother and second Companion re-enter, free of ladder and wings. The Companion carries a goblet and the Brother a small eyedropper. They see that the Warden has his head bowed in prayer and cross down left.*

**Second:** Well, we did not remit our former diligence.

**Brother:** Despite the trick we were served.

**Second:** She is still laughing at us.

**Brother:** What are other two about?

**Second:** Still busy at the furnace, and still believing they have been preferred before us.

*The Warden lifts his head and crosses to them.*

**Warden:** And I heartily congratulate you both, for you were truly chosen by our Lady. Yet... *(he laughs)* I can well understand the affright you received. My dear sons, learn that man never knows how well God intends him. Now, to our work....

*They cross to the right platform.*

I remind you again, you are most earnestly forbidden to speak of what has occurred in this seventh room; of how we moistened the ashes with our prepared water and set it upon the fire till it was well heated, casting it thus hot into two little forms. The forms are now cooled.

*He gently opens part of the white satin. Lights increase in intensity upon the satin and dim on the rest of the stage. The Young King and Queen, wearing gold and white, enter through the curtains and step up on the left platform, where they remain very still.*

**Brother:** Two beautiful, bright and almost transparent little images, the like of which no man has ever seen.

**Second:** So exquisite a sight!...

**Warden:** Instill the blood of the bird into the mouths of the fair babes, drop by drop.

*The **Brother** does this, drawing liquid from the goblet.*

**Brother:** The increase in size to the eye!

**Second:** Each has silken, curly hair.

**Brother:** Why, Venus is nothing to them!

**Warden:** Give them no more liquid, or they will grow too large.

*The lights dim on the platform and come up on the **Young King** and **Queen**, but the **Brother** follows the gaze of the **Warden** and the **Lady** upwards over the right platform.*

**Brother:** Above, the door at the very top opens... a bright stream of fire shoots down... shoots down a kind of tube into heavenly trumpets placed upon the mouths of the babes. Three times for each babe....

*The lights dim on the platform. The **Lady** removes the satin, loosens it and places it in front of the left platform.*

**Warden:** Cupid awakens them.

*The **Young King** and **Queen** awaken and step down from the platform onto the satin. **Lady Alchemy** crosses to them and kisses their hands.*

**Queen:** I feel somewhat faint.

**King:** How amazing! Have we slept then, from the very hour in which we were... beheaded?

**Warden:** With most profound reverence!... Congratulations!

*The lights slowly fade out.*

**End of second drama**

# The Gatekeeper

## From the Seventh Day

### Characters:

The Brother

The Warden

Young King

Young Queen

The Gatekeeper

The King

A Page

Atlas

Lady Alchemy

**Time:** A Week after Easter, same year.

**Place:** The Tower and the Castle.

**Scene:** The stage is bare; the right platform in the same position as for the first two plays, and the smaller platform down left.

**At Rise:** The **Brother** enters through the blue curtains. He is wearing a yellow knee-length garment over which is a golden fleece – a sleeveless outer garment with woolen underside and edges, and gold brocaded outer material – and a hat. He appears anxious, but in looking around, he relaxes. He sits on the edge of the right platform.

**Brother:** After eight o'clock I awoke and quickly made myself ready, being desirous to return again to the Tower. But the dark passages were so many and various that I wandered a good while before I could find the way out. The same happened to the rest, too, till at last we all met again in the nethermost vault, and habits entirely yellow were given us, together with our golden fleeces. At that time, our Lady Alchemy declared to us that we were Knights of the Golden Stone, of which we were before ignorant. Giving much thought to the meaning of this order and its obligations and vows, we betook ourselves to breakfast....

*He rises as three characters enter through the curtains: the **Warden**, carrying a golden medal, and the **Young King and Queen**.*

**Warden:** Today the sea is calm, and it will be a singular pleasure to sail back to the Castle.

**Young King:** The ships are twelve in number, and six are the Warden's, freighted with well-appointed soldiers, and also, musicians in great number. Our flags are the twelve celestial signs, and you are to sit in Libra with the Warden.

**Young Queen:** The pleasure of sailing will be surpassed by the Warden's discourse. He knows how to pass away our time with wonderful histories.

**Warden:** But before we embark, this token.

*He presents the medal to the **Brother**, who reads it on both sides.*

**Brother:** Art is the servant of Nature... Nature is the daughter of Time.

*He pins the medal to his hat.*

**Warden:** Enterprise nothing beyond and against this token of remembrance.

**Young King:** I am told that, after we leave the ship, we are to ride with *the* King, each of us bearing a snow-white ensign with a red cross.

**Brother:** Indeed! This is an honor, and I most unworthy.

**Warden:** We are made use of because of our age.

**Brother:** Ahhh...

**Warden:** To the ships.

*The **Warden** and **Young Queen** exit; the **Young King** delays the **Brother**.*

**Young King:** You are the one who can redeem tokens at the Gate?

**Brother:** Yes...

**Young King:** (*Laughing*) Henceforth, there need be no ceremony: you are my Father. With what have you redeemed tokens?

**Brother:** With water and salt.

**Young King:** I wonder, who has made you so wise?

**Brother:** *(After a thoughtful pause)* On the second day, I had before me a choice of three ways, and began inwardly to lament, for it troubled me that I might choose the wrong path. Weary, I drew out my bread, and a snow-white dove came down to share it... but her enemy the raven also perceived it, and darted down to force away her meal. Together they flew south, and I after them. I chased the raven away and delivered the dove, but then observed that I had already entered onto a path and could not turn back, nor retrieve my bag and bread. So I proceeded on, though the way was often rugged. At the first Gate, I purchased a token with water, and at the second Gate, with salt.

**Young King:** It must needs be that God has vouchsafed you a singular happiness.

*They exit and lights fade out. They fade up on the right platform and the **Gatekeeper** enters and stands by this platform. He wears a long, sky-colored garment and has a rolled document. He is an older man, shrewd in appearance, though refined. The lights next fade up on the stage, somewhat dimmer, as the **King** enters through the curtains and stands up left. He is a young man with a gentle countenance and wears white and gold, with a gold crown. The **Brother** enters from the right.*

**Brother:** Ah, I arrive once again at the first Gate, and here is the same Gatekeeper from whom I earlier purchased a token.

**Gatekeeper:** I most humbly beseech you to deliver this supplication to the King and to mention to him my ingenuity towards you.

*The **Brother** takes the supplication, but, perplexed, hesitates. Lights fade up as the **King** steps to center and the **Brother** crosses to greet him.*

**Brother:** Your Majesty, please tell me the Gatekeeper's situation.

**King:** He was a very famous and rare astrologer and always in high regard with the Lord his Father. But having on a time committed a fault against Venus and beheld her in her bed of rest, this punishment was therefore imposed upon him: that he should so long wait at the first Gate till someone should release him from thence.

**Brother:** May he then be released?

**King:** Yes, if anyone can be found that has as highly transgressed as himself, he must stand in his stead, and the Gatekeeper shall be free.

*The **Brother** very sadly gives the **King** the supplication. He then crosses right, and the **King** crosses down left and unrolls and studies the document.*

**Brother:** His words go to my heart, and my conscience convinces me I am the offender, for on the morning of the fifth day, I espied Lady Venus in her bed of rest. In flew little Cupid, who demanded what spirit brought me thither, and I with trembling answered that I had lost my way in the Castle....

*A **Page** enters through the curtains carrying a bench and a small box. He places the bench left and the box upon it, then exits. **Atlas** then enters carrying two benches, which he places up center, so that the three benches form a semi-circle. **Atlas** is an old man with white hair and beard, but is extremely strong in appearance. He wears a white tunic which bares one shoulder, and a wide golden belt. The **Young King and Queen** enter through the curtains and sit down upon the left bench. The **King** summons **Atlas** to him and the two look at the supplication. Then **Atlas**, with the document, crosses to the **Gatekeeper** and the two exit.*

**Young Queen:** *(To the King)* What might this letter signify?

**King:** Take no notice of it, we shall discourse on other matters.

*The **King** crosses and sits on the center bench and **Lady Alchemy** and the **Warden** enter through the curtains. They bow before the **King**.*

**Lady:** Your Majesty, I highly commend the diligence shown by the Lords, and the pains and labors they have undergone, and hope they might be royally rewarded, and I permitted to enjoy the benefit of my commission.

**Warden:** All that our Lady Alchemy has spoken is true, and it is but equity that we should both on both parts be contented.

*The **King** gestures and the **Warden** and **Lady Alchemy** sit down, and the **Brother** steps forward.*

**King:** Each may make a wish and accordingly obtain it, for it is not to be doubted that those of understanding will make the best wish.

*He gestures and the **Brother** crosses and sits next to him. As the four silently confer, the **Young King** opens the box and sets out what resembles a game of chess.*

**Young King:** Now we shall play this game, not unlike chess, yet it has other laws: virtues and vices are set against one another.

**Young Queen:** I know this game.

**King:** We each have equal numbers of gallant and wicked pieces. Here, greed has made a move against your side.

**Queen:** Generosity responds. Gluttony passes through your defenses.

**King:** Sacrifice counters.

*They move the pieces silently for a few moments.*

**Queen:** Impatience.

**King:** Steadfastness and endurance... Cowardice.

**Queen:** Courage.

**King:** Laziness.

**Queen:** Diligence...

**King:** My rapacious warrior throws your kingdom into disarray.

**Queen:** But I have the most virtuous of all, my martyr.

**King:** Checkmate.

*Atlas re-enters and the **King** rises to greet him. The **King** and **Atlas** confer silently for a few moments, and the **King** gestures to the **Brother**, who crosses to them.*

**King:** (*Giving the **Brother** the supplication*) Please, read the supplication.

*As the **Brother** reads the document, the other four characters appear not to hear or respond. The **Warden** and **Lady Alchemy** are by now watching another game.*

**Brother:** First, he wishes the King prosperity, then remonstrates “that the time is now accomplished, wherein according to the royal promise he ought to be released, because Venus has been uncovered by one of his guests; his observations could not lie to him. If his Majesty would please make a strict inquiry, he would find that she had been uncovered, and in case this should not prove to be so, he would be content to remain before the Gate all the days of his life. Then, he sues in the most humble manner, that upon peril of body and life he might be permitted to be present at this night’s supper; he is in good hopes to spy out the very offender and obtain his wished freedom.” This is expressly and handsomely indicted, by which I can well perceive his ingenuity, but it’s too sharp for me, and I could well have endured never to have seen it... But can he not be helped through my wish, that he might be released some other way?

**King:** No, for there is a special consideration. However, for this night we may well gratify him in his desire.

*The **Page** nods and exits. All exit left. Lights fade out. In the dim light, the **Page** re-enters carrying a white cloth and small cross, two books (one large) and a quill pen. He places the*

*cloth on the right platform, and cross, book and pen on the cloth. He then steps center with the large book, and lights fade up on his figure as he opens and reads:*

**Page:** You, my Lords and Knights, shall swear that you shall not work out of any spirit other than the one revealing itself in nature, and shall see man's work as a continuation of nature's work.

You will not place your work in the service of human desires, but will allow these desires to be used for works of the spirit.

You shall serve men lovingly, so that between man and man the spirit can be manifest.

You are not to be led astray by anything of worth the world can give you, aside from striving for the worth the spirit can confer upon all human labor.

You are not, like bad alchemists, to fall into the error of confusing the physical with the spiritual. Bad alchemists think that means for prolonging life are the highest good, forgetting that the physical has value only if a rightful manifestation of spirit.

*He exits. Lights fade out.*

*They fade up on the stage as **Atlas** enters and sits down on the left platform, where, elbow on knee and hand on chin, he supports his heavily burdened head. The **Brother** enters.*

**Brother:** Tonight's meal was the noblest of all, with merriment and recreative and profitable discourses.

**Atlas:** And afterwards, the articles and vows most ceremoniously conducted, his Royal Majesty noting how carefully the Lords attended their duty.

**Brother:** At the last article – that we should not be willing to live longer than God would have us – we could not help but laugh. Perhaps it was placed after the rest as a conceit.

**Atlas:** Yet ratified with the others in our little chapel. *(He rises and crosses right)* Everyone must here sign his name.

**Brother:** First I shall, to the honor of God, leave my golden fleece and hat here as an eternal memorial.

*He removes and folds these and places them on the right platform; they both kneel and pray silently for a few moments, then they rise and **Atlas** gives him the book and pen.*

**Brother:** Each has written what to each seems truly good.

*He writes in the book, then returns it to the altar. He crosses to the center bench and sits down; Atlas crosses back to the left platform.*

**Brother:** Cupid was not present at the banquet.

**Atlas:** The disgrace which has happened to his Mother has somewhat angered him.

**Brother:** The supplication was an occasion of much sadness, for the King was in perplexity how to make inquisition among his guests, the moreso because they, too, who were yet ignorant of the matter, would come to knowledge of it... So he caused the Gatekeeper to make his strict survey and showed himself as pleasant as he was able.

**Atlas:** At length all began once more to be merry. Have you thought of your wish? For the King will soon give audience to each wish.

**Brother:** I thought nothing could be more praiseworthy and in honor of the order than the demonstration of some laudable virtue. And none at present could be more famous or cost me more trouble than gratitude. Wherefore, not regarding that I might well wish something dear and agreeable to myself, I vanquish myself and conclude, even at my own peril, to free the Gatekeeper, my benefactor.

*The King and Warden re-enter and the Brother and Atlas rise.*

**King:** Now, having read the supplication, did you observe at supper, or suspect anything concerning the offender?

**Brother:** Through ignorance, I fell into the mistake referred to by the Gatekeeper, and offer myself to undergo all that I have demerited.

*The others are astonished.*

**Warden:** We wonder mightily at so unhopd for a confession. Please, step aside just a moment.

*The Brother crosses down left as the three confer. Atlas then gestures to him.*

**Atlas:** Although it is grievous to his Majesty that you, whom he loves above others, have fallen into such mischance, it is not possible for him to transgress his ancient usages. He knows not how else to absolve you, but that the other must be at liberty and you placed in his stead. Yet he hopes that some other will soon be apprehended, so you might be able to go home again. However, no release is to be hoped for till the marriage feast of his future Son.

**Brother:** This sentence nears costs me my life... yet I shall take courage, for there is no remedy.

*Atlas exits.*

It is but equal that I should show myself grateful to the Gatekeeper. Therefore, I return thanks for the sentence and am willing gladly to suspend some inconvenience for his sake, who has been helpful to me in coming to so high a place. But if by my wish anything might be effected, I wish myself home again, and that he by me and I by my wish might be at liberty.

**King:** However you might well wish him free, the wishing cannot stretch so far. Yet it is very pleasing to me that you have behaved yourself so generously, though I'm afraid you might be ignorant into what a miserable condition you have placed yourself through your generosity.

*Atlas re-enters with the Gatekeeper.*

*(To the Gatekeeper)* You are pronounced free. Now we shall see to the wishes of the others....

*Atlas and the Gatekeeper exit; the King remains, though unobserved by the Brother.*

**Brother:** I must finish my life under the Gate! What should I yet undertake? Wherewith to spend the time? Well, I am now old, and according to the course of nature, have few years more to live. Then this anguish and melancholy life will easily dispatch me, my gatekeeping will be at an end, and by a most happy sleep I'll quickly bring myself into the grave. Still, it vexes me that I have seen such gallant things and must be robbed of them; before my end accepted to all joy, and forced so shamefully to depart... I suppose the others have been conducted into their lodgings. But I most wretched man have no one to show me the way.

*The King crosses to him.*

**King:** Since this is the last time you shall see me in this manner, behave yourself according to your place, and not against the order.

*The King embraces and kisses him.*

You are to be escorted by the Warden and Atlas into a glorious lodging....

*They exit.*

*The Page enters with the book, opens it and reads:*

**Page:** Here are wanting about two leaves in quarto, and he (the author hereof) whereas he imagined he must in the morning be Gatekeeper, returned home.

*He closes the book and exits. The lights fade out on the stage, then very slowly on the right platform, cross, book, golden fleece and hat.*

**End of Triloggy**