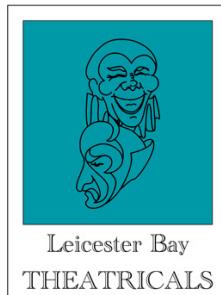


**PERUSAL SCRIPT**

# **MAGNIFICENCE**

by **John Skelton**  
Translated and Adapted by  
**Eric Samuelsen**



Newport, Maine

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**MAGNIFICENCE**

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**CAST OF CHARACTERS** (In order of appearance.)  
17 performers. Casting can be very fluid as regards gender

**FELICITY** (typically female)

**LIBERTY** (typically female)

**MEASURE** (typically female)

**MAGNIFICENCE** (should probably be male, as he is referred to as a Prince)

**FANCY**

**COUNTERFEIT COUNTENANCE**

**CRAFTY CONVEYANCE**

**CLOAKED COLLUSION**

**COURTLY ABUSE**

**FOLLY** (typically male)

**ADVERSITY**

**POVERTY**

**DESPAIR**

**GOOD HOPE**

**REDRESS**

**SAD CIRCUMSPECTION**

**PERSEVERANCE**

A note on translation:

Skelton's play is written in verse, and a wild and free flowing verse it is, generally with an AABB rhyme scheme which he violates with great enthusiasm and frequency. In addition, the original is metrically inconsistent, with trimeter, tetrameter and pentameter intermingled. Alliteration, the sounds of words, was of course tremendously important in late medieval society; meter, much less so. I have tried to capture the flavor of the original, with end rhymes, alliteration and metrical inconsistency. I have, in fact, been even freer with meter than Skelton was, to break up what could become quite sing-songy. Skelton also was free with tone and style, with a diction that ranged from high court rhetoric to gutter talk. I tried to capture the delightful anachronisms and stylistic anarchy of Skelton's language, mingling archaic expressions with contemporary slang. Although I cut the play by about a third, I did not cut any sequences and I only cut one character. And I always tried to convey the general sense of Skelton's thought, while at times ranging pretty freely away from his exact expression of those thoughts. Skelton includes one additional character, MISCHIEF, who appears and urges MAGNIFICENCE: to commit suicide. He has only a few lines in the original, and I decided, in the interest of time, to cut him and give his lines to DESPAIR.

**MAGNIFICENCE** a morality play by John Skelton. Translated and Adapted by Eric Samuels. 17 characters of flexible gender. Simple Modern Costumes, or Period Costumes. Open stage or some "Everyman" type of location. About 60 Minutes. This work has been selected by scholars as being culturally important, and is part of the knowledge base of civilization as we know it. *Magnificence* is one of the best examples of the morality play. It deals with the same topic as Skelton's satires - the evils of ambition. The play's moral, namely "how suddenly worldly wealth doth decay," was a favorite with him. Eric Samuels has adapted the play with his customary wit and unique social consciousness, and a mix of formal and

modern English. First written in the 15<sup>th</sup> Century, it is amazing how many parallels there are to our modern society. First produced at Brigham Young University, in 2002. **ORDER #3288**

**Eric Samuelsen** taught at Wright State University in Dayton, Ohio before joining the faculty at Brigham Young University in 1992. He became head of the Playwriting program at BYU in 1999. He has also taught as an adjunct faculty member in the Religion department. He retired from BYU in 2012.

As a playwright, Samuelsen has had twenty-seven plays professionally produced in Utah, Indiana, Louisiana, New York, and California. Some of his plays include *Gadianton*, which has seen three professional productions across the country, *A Love Affair with Electrons*, *Family*, *The Plan*, and *The Way We're Wired*. He is resident playwright at Plan-B Theatre Company in Salt Lake City, who designated their 2013-14 season a 'Season of Eric, including productions of six of his plays.

He is a member of the Playwrights' Circle, and the Dramatists Guild. He is three-time winner of the Annual Award in Playwriting offered by the Association for Mormon Letters (AML) and he became president of AML in 2007. In 2013 the organization awarded him the Smith Pettit Award for his lifetime work as a playwright.

He has been a staff writer for the on-line satirical magazine The Sugarbeet. He was also featured in the book Conversations with Mormon Authors, edited by Chris Bigelow. He is a noted Ibsen translator, and has also published scholarly articles on 19th and 20th century Scandinavian Theatre, and more recently, on LDS drama and film. He blogged at [Mormoniconoclast.com](http://Mormoniconoclast.com). Eric died in September of 2019 after a long battle with polymyositis. This has left a huge hole in the Theatre Community within, and outside of, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

## MAGNIFICENCE

(Enter **FELICITY**.)

**FELICITY:** Here's a truly silly notion  
Men cling to with sad devotion,  
And without reason:  
This false division of the world into rich and poor, high and low estate.  
Those poor today, become rich tomorrow; wealth will have its season  
And give man's wisdom its strictest probate.  
But then sometimes, a fool, given wealth, begins quarreling straightaway.  
And throws it all away.  
Nowadays, men are so uneasily disposed,  
That wealth becomes a trial, badly endured.  
What is the cause? Well, it's already been said,  
And the remedy is also close at hand.  
For when men have wealth, they have little dread  
Of what may come after! and that's their trial, true and plain.  
But think. After a drought comes a shower of rain.  
After good weather, a storm dark and cold.  
A man may have silver, but still, he'll want gold.  
Wealth can be won, and Wisdom still smile,  
But Wealth and Felicity only last awhile. So it is. At any rate,  
Wealthful Felicity is truly my name.

(Enter **LIBERTY**.)

**LIBERTY:** By Mary and Joseph. Wealth and I were supposed to meet.  
Are you the same?.

**FELICITY:** Sir, I have heard of your fame;  
Your name is Liberty, as I understand.

**LIBERTY:** And you're Felicity. Give me your hand.

**FELICITY:** And from whence do you come, good sir?

**LIBERTY:** I'm from...No, wait. Sorry, I'm sure you'll concur. If I give out any information, it might limit  
me. That's why I'm called Liberty. If I say anything to anyone, it's like being chained to a wall, bolted in  
stocks.

**FELICITY:** Listen to how he mocks!

**LIBERTY:** Hey, I've "been "locked up! I was just in the pen!

**FELICITY:** Liberty jailed? That's way past my ken.

Unless...Could Liberty grow too large?  
For surely gentle Reason is captain of your barge?

**LIBERTY:** Not!

(*Pause.*)

Okay, what do you mean?

**FELICITY:** Well, good sir, it does seem to me...I don't want to offend,  
But Liberty, sir, is in considerable need Of restraint!

**LIBERTY:** Heaven forfend!

**FELICITY:** Now hear me out, good sir.

Liberty is something all men hold dear.  
'Tis sweet in very kith and kind.  
And yet, Liberty can also make men blind.  
By Liberty, men are prone to great excesses  
Notwithstanding your genuine successes.

**LIBERTY:** No, no, not so! Liberty's good! It's privileged from law!

**FELICITY:** Gently, my friend, your reason is raw.

**LIBERTY:** Are you fool enough to dare Disturb the sacred principle of laissez faire? Hear me out, let me conclude, There's no wealth if Liberty's subdued. And if you get wealthy, then so what? If you're not free, it all comes to naught.  
Where's fearless fun?  
Where shines the sun?  
To sport, to court,  
to playfully disport,  
to rock, roll, run or ride?  
Where's joy? You can't get rich without me, and if you do, you also can't enjoy it.

(*Enter MEASURE.*)

**MEASURE:** Do you require assistance in this altercation?

**FELICITY:** Have you heard, then, of our disputation?

**MEASURE:** Indeed. I do perceive how excellently each of you reason.

**LIBERTY:** Then Master Measure, you've come in good season.

(*They share a courtly bow.*)

**MEASURE:** Well, let's see. Shall I begin, or shall ye?

**LIBERTY:** Go ahead. You will anyway.

**MEASURE:** Ahem. Oratius recorded in a volume old:

In every condition, Measure must be sought.  
Wealth, without Measure, bears himself too bold.  
Liberty, without Measure, becomes what he should not.'  
As Alpha, so Omega; at least that's God's opinion.  
suggests to me that Measure should always hold dominion.  
When Measure is Master, Plenty doth not offend;  
When Measure is absent, well, heaven forfend!  
Without Measure at home, chaos takes over,  
But with Measure in place, all praise Jehovah!  
Measure is treasure. Now really, isn't this so?

**FELICITY:** Without question. I concur, good sir, with your Measured opinion.

*(He and MEASURE share a chuckle at this witticism.)*

**LIBERTY:** It's okay, I guess. But wait just a second, bub. Liberty "with" Measure? You wanna bind me up?

**MEASURE:** I don't mean to be unkind. But Liberty unbound?

Free to ride and run, rip and roar, no boundaries of any sort?  
That's not virtue, friend. 'Tis riot and rort.  
As frightening as a horse slipped his rein.  
But soft restraint, with a gentle wrist,  
Is truly blessed.

**FELICITY:** Unto your rule I will annex my mind.

**LIBERTY:** I'd like to. I guess. No. I am loathe  
To make such an oath.  
Cut the garment out of broad enough cloth  
So it doesn't pinch and bind.  
I gotta be me.  
I gotta be free.  
No matter what, I have my free will.

**MEASURE:** Will is no skill.

**LIBERTY:** You're too clever by half, you're tricking me!

**MEASURE:** Magnificence approaches.

**LIBERTY:** He'll tell you how he needs us three.  
Wealth, and Measure, and sweet Liberty.

*(Enter MAGNIFICENCE.)*

**MAGNIFICENCE:** Let me assure you of my reputation and fame. To anyone who wishes to know me, I am Magnificence. Good Measure, my friend. Who are these gentlemen?

**MEASURE:** Sir, though you are a noble prince of might Yet in this man, Felicity, you may find delight.  
And this other gentleman is Liberty.

**MAGNIFICENCE:** Welcome, friends, you are both unto me. But I interrupted your conversation.

**MEASURE:** Whereas you have them to me assigned,  
I trust I may give such orders So that Wealth "with" Measure be combined  
And Liberty, "under" Measure; me captain, and him the soldier.

**FELICITY:** Your commands, good sir, I will not forsake.

**LIBERTY:** Okay, okay, fine fine fine.

**MAGNIFICENCE:** Then, may I say, you are all servants of mine.

By Measure, I warn you, we think to be guided.  
It is my pleasure that you should know  
Measure and I shall not be divided.  
For Measure is Moderation, Perspective, Balance,  
Neither Miserly Want, nor given to Extravagance  
In whose appearance I have such delight  
Measure shall never depart from my sight.  
So, Liberty, see that Measure be your guide.  
I'll use you only by his advisement.

**FELICITY:** Then with you, noble sire, shall Prosperity be resident.

**MEASURE:** How altogether agreeable. All of one mind. No flatterers here, nor any so wicked That this fabric of fortune could be unpicked. Now that you've made me chief ruler I will endeavor to order everything Your nobleness and honor concerning.

**LIBERTY:** Okay. But all I got to say is, Watch out. All this high falutin' soaring Talk is gonna get awful boring. Don't fear fun. Play in the sun, Give yourself over to free Liberty. By me, you'll be free To do what "you" please!—

**MEASURE:** Ahem. Sir. Yet beware that word 'please.' Liberty in some ways "is" good for you. "If" a course of Measure intervenes. If you don't want to fall too far behind your best you! As happens to men in this world every day! (For without Measure, excess breeds excess) Well, again, to truly succeed!

**FELICITY:** What he says is as true as the Creed! When Measure is too long absent Everyone laughs Liberty to scorn! Wealth and wit are like a thread badly worn: Pull too hard, and see fabric torn!

**MAGNIFICENCE:** And nobility promptly forsaken. Measure, take Liberty away with you, And rule him after the rule of your school.

**LIBERTY:** You must take me for some kind of fool!

**MEASURE:** Did you not just agree to precisely this?

**LIBERTY:** Thanks just the same, I'll give it a miss.

**FELICITY:** You make me laugh, so inconstant.

**MAGNIFICENCE:** Rule Liberty, friend. That's my intent.

**MEASURE:** I obey your express commandment.

(*Exit MEASURE, LIBERTY.*)

**MAGNIFICENCE:** What a wanton creature, this Liberty.

Do you mark how unwilling he was to abide  
The rule of Measure, notwithstanding we  
Deputized Measure him to guide?  
By Measure all passions are pacified.  
Think you not so, my friend Felicity?

**FELICITY:** And thus it may always be.

**MAGNIFICENCE:** Otherwise, you could not with me endure.

**FELICITY:** Endure? Not in the same room with punishment's pain.

Unless Measure be present, you'll never Felicity retain.

(*Enter FANCY.*)

**FANCY:** Oh, go jump in a lake. Please your grace, this guy is so lame. Let me show you the truth.

**MAGNIFICENCE:** Go on, forsooth.

**FELICITY:** Just a moment, sir. Who are you? From whence do you come? How came you to interrupt our master's tale?

**FANCY:** Wo, chill, dude. Benedicite. Where are you saying?  
You callin' me a grafter? You think I'm a pill?  
I'm pale enough, you think: I'm drunk. Or, maybe, I'm ill.  
Or some yattering chattering Jack 'o the vale?

**MAGNIFICENCE:** That's red, not blue, that you're bleeding.

**FANCY:** Yet I'm a man of noble breeding.

**FELICITY:** Very well. Explain.

Why is our language so vain?

**FANCY:** Sure thing. Listen up. You left something out.

Measure and Liberty, yadda yadda yadda: that's not what it's all about.  
Without Largesse, nobleness can't reign.  
Let me say it again:  
Without Largesse, Worship has no place,  
For Largesse purchases pardon and grace.

**MAGNIFICENCE:** Sir, I beseech you, what is your name?

**FANCY:** You had to ask. Largesse, whom all good Lords love.

**FELICITY:** Largesse? That's you? Increase of noble fame?

**FANCY:** That's me, guv.

**FELICITY:** Good heavens above!

Then with Magnificence you must dwell.

**MAGNIFICENCE:** You think so? Let's think on this well.

Largesse is a good thing, if tempered with Measure.

**FANCY:** Largesse is that which "good" kings advance. Now, I "was" on my way to King Louis of France.

**FELICITY:** Why name him so specifically?

**FANCY:** Since he died, I haven't been used so...pacifically.

Now, your grace, why do you so carefully consider?

Sit back and watch me deliver.

**FELICITY:** You're a careless page!

**FANCY:** There aren't many wise men my age.

I swear, Mags, these pompous old phonies

Have got you squarely by the cojones.

**FELICITY:** In faith, brother Largesse, you have a merry wit.

**FANCY:** In faith, good brother, I don't give a—!

**MAGNIFICENCE:** Watch your language, sir. I don't believe You "are" Largesse. I perceive a heedless spirit in you.

**FELICITY:** As do I! Explain yourself now, you...you . . .

**FANCY:** Oh dear, oh my. You find my tongue too loose.

At least I don't call myself 'swan,' when I'm only a goose.

**MAGNIFICENCE:** Wise men eat the fish. You just wade in the pool.

**FANCY:** Well, I won't call you, sir, a fool.

But I have seen wise men perform foolish deeds.

**MAGNIFICENCE:** Shake yourself, dog. Shake off water and weeds.

With us, good sir, you shall not dwell

If you, with your lord, can so pertly prate.

Bow to your betters!

**FANCY:** I have a letter. Sad Circumspection sends you this, closed under seal.

**MAGNIFICENCE:** This letter is welcome, with hearty affection. Why didn't you give it to me before?  
How does he? Is he well?

**FANCY:** Sir, thanks be to God, he's fully healed.

**MAGNIFICENCE:** Wealth, get you home, and commend me to Measure.

**FELICITY:** Nothing else?

**MAGNIFICENCE:** Nothing, but fare thee well.  
And that he keep good watch over Liberty. Be gone.

**FELICITY:** Your pleasure, your grace, will shortly be done.

**MAGNIFICENCE:** I shall come to you both, I believe, this afternoon. I pray you, Largesse, here to remain  
While I learn that this letter contains.

*(Exit FELICITY. Enter COUNTERFEIT COUNTENANCE.)*

**COUNTERFEIT COUNTENANCE:** What, Fancy? Fancy!

**MAGNIFICENCE:** Who's that? I thought I heard someone cry Fancy.

**FANCY:** No. Something I'm working on. A poem, if it please you.

**COUNTERFEIT COUNTENANCE:** There once was a Fleming named Hansy'  
Whose trousers were suddenly antsy. . .

**MAGNIFICENCE:** Someone called out Fancy from behind!

**FANCY:** Really, trust me, it was all in your mind.  
Now, about this letter.

**MAGNIFICENCE:** I'll look at it closely when I have leisure.  
If you're a friend of his, I would fain do you both some good.

**FANCY:** May the Lord preserve you in that mood!

**MAGNIFICENCE:** Where was it delivered to you? Tell me.

**FANCY:** From far beyond the sea. From Pountesse.  
I barely got out alive, too. What a mess!

**MAGNIFICENCE:** How so?

**FANCY:** Right now, I'd be in heaven, singing psalms  
If I hadn't been able to grease a few palms.  
Death, or some lesser fears;  
I thought, at the very least, I'd lose both my ears.

**MAGNIFICENCE:** By your sooth? Is this the truth?

**FANCY:** Oh, yeah. They kept such a watch;  
No way to slip by.  
Their guards were top-notch.  
They nabbed me.  
Crabbed at me.  
Called me a spy.  
Threatened to put out my right eye.  
Then just nick the left one so my vision was bleared,  
While another bloke prepared to shave off my beard!  
The hairs on my head, they said they would pluck  
Said they'd turn me into Friar Tuck!

**MAGNIFICENCE:** You must have been afraid.

**FANCY:** Well, sir, I prayed.  
And then I paid.  
The merciful intercession of Trinity Three,  
Plus judicious bribery  
Was what set me free.  
See, it was Largesse that saved my life,  
Largesse, that calms the harshest strife.

**MAGNIFICENCE:** I can see that's true, now and then.

It's surely not so for all times and men.

**FANCY:** Of course not. It only works for those who are rich,  
Like, say, you, for example. That's why I had the itch  
To come here. To this place, face to face,  
To your grace.  
And everyone I talked to as I walked, day after day, all this way,  
Said you were one whose great nobleness  
Would exceed all the world, if you just had Largesse.

**MAGNIFICENCE:** Interesting. Yet consider Measure. The merry mean.

**FANCY:** And an almond is a merry bean.  
Look, Measure is fine in a merchant's stall.  
He doesn't fit in a royal hall.  
You don't feed princes on rye and oats  
Nor do they pinch and peck for farthings and groats.  
This what they say about you, from the Pope to the Kaiser:  
Him! A parsimonious scrimping scavenging scrumping young miser.'  
It's really a shame.  
A bit of Largesse could redeem your good name.

**MAGNIFICENCE:** In faith, Largesse, welcome to my palace, friend.

**FANCY:** I'll serve you to the bitter end.

(*Exit MAGNIFICENCE.*)

**COUNTERFEIT COUNTENANCE:** Psst! We need to talk!

**FANCY:** Go to the devil, blockhead.

**COUNTERFEIT COUNTENANCE:** How long do I have to wait?

**FANCY:** By our patron Saint Dismas, I'll be with you straight! Shut up and stop all this blundering!

(*FANCY: exits.*)

**COUNTERFEIT COUNTENANCE:** You can hardly blame me for wondering.

(*To Audience.*)

Fancy has snared Magnificence Under this clever Largesse pretense. Now they've stepped out, to heighten suspense.

Let me, in Suessian rime and doggerel verse  
Tell you about me, let you know the worst.  
For Counterfeit Countenance I am known,  
The world is full of my folly.  
With pleasant smiles, and manner jolly  
I'll say whatever I need to.  
I'm someone you should pay heed to.

(*This next section could perhaps be a rap.*)

A knave will counterfeit a knight  
A vagabond prompt a Lord to fight  
A fairy will bespell a sprite,  
A minstrel mimic men of might,  
A tapster make the sober tight  
And then my job is to bring them right  
To Tyeburn gallows hanging height!  
I have my counterfeiting ways  
Hide lewd thoughts with pious gaze  
Win a friend with flattering praise  
Then plagiarize his class essays.  
Do D-plus work and still get A's  
Yo, that's how you get ahead nowadays  
I counterfeit best in the law of the land  
Greenbacks grease a police hand:  
'You say what I want on the witness stand.'  
Sold the man sugar, deliver sand,  
Work it all out according to plan

Then walk out before the crap hits the fan.  
Counterfeit kindness, think deceit,  
You can get away with murder if you do it discreet  
Check it out, I'm trusted whoever I meet,  
At home in a board room, cool and loose on the street,  
Never get carded, never save a receipt,  
Always attacking, never retreat,  
No matter what the weather I don't never feel the heat.  
Counterfeit virginity's my very best scam  
Long as I act modest, I can be what I am,  
Shave my head like a monk, it's according to plan  
Say I'm serving a mission,' then do what I can  
Keep it sweet, keep it neat, a seducer's flim-flam  
Counterfeit coyness leads to wham, bam, thank you ma'am.  
Counterfeit preaching and believe the contrary  
Counterfeit sadness and laugh like a coterie  
Counterfeit conscience, practice debauchery  
Counterfeit holiness, let's hear it for hypocrisy!  
Counterfeit wisdom, embrace foolery  
Counterfeit Countenance, it's practically compulsory.

*(Perhaps the rap could end here.)*

To counterfeit best, so the friars have taught me,  
Is to practice something called counterfeit charity.  
The grace of God, faked. False benedicite:  
'For the poor!' You take everything, and then charge a fee.  
To get away with everything, just count

*(Crossing himself.)*

One, two, three.

*(Enter CRAFTY CONVEYANCE and FANCY.)*

**CRAFTY CONVEYANCE:** What? Counterfeit Countenance!

**COUNTERFEIT COUNTENANCE:** What? Crafty Conveyance!

**FANCY:** Hey! Are you two acquainted?

**COUNTERFEIT COUNTENANCE:** We've been known to hang out, you bet. But Fancy, old friend,  
where've you been?

**FANCY:** Hanging out. Hanging in.

**CRAFTY CONVEYANCE:** We made Magnificence eat a fly.

*(Sings, perhaps)*

There was a young monarch who swallowed a fly.

I don't know why he swallowed a fly; Perhaps he'll die.

**COUNTERFEIT COUNTENANCE:** You lie!

**FANCY:** It's true. He doesn't know who's who or what's what.

**COUNTERFEIT COUNTENANCE:** I want me a piece of that. We should hang out together, we three.  
Give me your hands.

**FANCY:** I will. I've seen this guy destroy whole lands.

**COUNTERFEIT COUNTENANCE:** Have you kept the name you used to have?

**FANCY:** He changed his, and I changed mine.

**COUNTERFEIT COUNTENANCE:** To what? Something fine?

**FANCY:** Largesse. Sir Largesse to you. He made me a knight!

**COUNTERFEIT COUNTENANCE:** Such a big man, and so deprived of height.  
Who did you say you were?

**CRAFTY CONVEYANCE:** Surveyance.

**FANCY:** But isn't it great? What do you think?

**COUNTERFEIT COUNTENANCE:** Friend, you are one familiar fink.  
I couldn't counterfeit better, I think.  
But what happened to the letter?

**FANCY:** That letter was well thought.

**CRAFTY CONVEYANCE:** Without it, we were caught,  
We needed it, see,  
To help us get through to Liberty.

**COUNTERFEIT COUNTENANCE:** You'd have thought of something.

**FANCY:** Not with Measure king.

**COUNTERFEIT COUNTENANCE:** Is he still meddling?

**CRAFTY CONVEYANCE:** He's like some kind of bad disease,  
That brings our scheming to its knees.

**FANCY:** I say, lads, what's your pleasure?  
What do we do about Measure?

**COUNTERFEIT COUNTENANCE:** Let's put our heads together.

**CRAFTY CONVEYANCE:** Think of a counter-Measure.

(Enter *CLOAKED COLLUSION*.)

**FANCY:** (*Sees him.*) Okay. Nobody move. Who's that?

**CRAFTY CONVEYANCE:** Friend or foe?

**COUNTERFEIT COUNTENANCE:** Ah. I was hoping you'd show.

**CLOAKED COLLUSION:** Who are these twain?

**COUNTERFEIT COUNTENANCE:** Fancy Small-brain.

And Crafty Conveyance, do you know him?

**CLOAKED COLLUSION:** Yes, by Saint Sim. Three hounds, and one hare:

Whose purse are you hoping to share?

**CRAFTY CONVEYANCE:** Cloaked Collusion?

**CLOAKED COLLUSION:** That's me. Hey, it's cool. I'm used to confusion.

**FANCY:** What are you wearing? A cloak? Oh, my eyes!

A vestment?

**CLOAKED COLLUSION:** Call me master of disguise.

To business, gentlemen. What's the plan?

**COUNTERFEIT COUNTENANCE:** Sir, these two

Are in with Magnificence

They'd like me there too

So, basic common sense...

**CLOAKED COLLUSION:** This Magnificence, he has treasure?

**CRAFTY CONVEYANCE:** Oh yeah. But his spending is limited by Measure.

**CLOAKED COLLUSION:** Measure!

(*A gesture of contempt.*)

Measure dwells where you two dwell?

Better that he were in hell.

But where is our old friend Liberty?

**COUNTERFEIT COUNTENANCE:** Captive.

**CLOAKED COLLUSION:** How can that be?

**COUNTERFEIT COUNTENANCE:** Don't ask me! They're the ones living with him!

**CRAFTY CONVEYANCE:** Don't blame me!

**FANCY:** We can't get through to Liberty!

**CLOAKED COLLUSION:** Gentlemen! We won't get anywhere if we don't all agree.

**CRAFTY CONVEYANCE:** Right. Of course.

Here, then, is the circumstance.

Fancy and I, we twain,  
In Magnificence domain, remain.  
We've counterfeited our names  
To avoid certain past fames:  
He's Largesse, I'm Scrutiny, so far it's gone just fine.  
To us, Magnificence really does incline.  
We've told him about you.

**COUNTERFEIT COUNTENANCE:** Not by this name!

**CRAFTY CONVEYANCE:** In general terms. We didn't tell him who,  
Or even if we had one or two.

**CLOAKED COLLUSION:** Then I think we'll be able to cope.

I hope.  
Measure, that nasty freak,  
We'll have out of here by the end of the week.

**CRAFTY CONVEYANCE:** Counterfeit, brush up your novena: We're calling you Good Demeanor.

(*To CLOAKED COLLUSION.*)

And since we're trying to drive Magnificence into madness,  
Let's call you Sober Sadness.

**CLOAKED COLLUSION:** Now begins the game.

**CRAFTY CONVEYANCE:** Time to rule and reign.

**FANCY:** Time to cause some pain.

(*All exit except CLOAKED COLLUSION.*)

**CLOAKED COLLUSION:** (*Sings, perhaps?*)

Chew the breeze, take your ease, people prate and talk  
Of weather, or of whether they'll advance in their place  
Idle chittering chat, that's ground I love to walk  
And when they all have fallen, not so easy to trace  
Why where and who brought 'em down.  
Yes, by divine and holy grace  
They don't note me, they hardly see me coming  
Cloaked Collusion is a perilous thing.  
Double dealing and I are as tight as thieves,  
Crafty and nasty as much as I please  
I dissemble, resemble, I laugh and I groan

Hear me whisper sweet poison when I get you alone  
Division, Dissension and Derision, these  
Three Are One, like an unholy Trinity  
Mischief and I will make you our own.  
I am bad, never glad 'cept when I do ill  
And am never happy except when I see  
Former friends take a bite from that bitter pill  
Of Fellowship turned into enmity.  
Think you're shrewd, quite a dude, I think not my friend  
I'll take my portion of your fortune, and that's your bitter end.  
I meddle, mess and peddle with your great estates  
Sow seditious seeds of discordious debate  
Two faces in a cloak covertly I bear  
I feed forth a fool, leave him dangling in air.  
Water in the one hand, fire in the other  
Falsehood in fellowship, that be me, brother!  
By Cloaked Collusion, I say, and none other  
Using smiles, and wiles, turn neighbors to a 'hood,  
But who looking at this face would think I'm no good?

(Enter COURTLY ABUSE.)

**COURTLY ABUSE:** Hubba hubba tandarum, tandurum tayne, huffa huffa.

**CLOAKED COLLUSION:** Excuse me?

**COURTLY ABUSE:** Rutty bully jolly good, rutterkin mine, hey!

**CLOAKED COLLUSION:** De que pays este vous?

**COURTLY ABUSE:** Say what?

**CLOAKED COLLUSION:** What are you wearing?

A beetle or a buskin or a half-boot and batowe?

**COURTLY ABUSE:** Stop your swearing.

Just stylin', my friend.

Don't say you don't know me, Cloaked Collusion

**CLOAKED COLLUSION:** Courtly Abuse, or at least, this year's version

**COURTLY ABUSE:** And I heard you have an in with Magnificence.

**CLOAKED COLLUSION:** Are you offering your usual beneficence?

**COURTLY ABUSE:** I've dressed in the courtly manner.

**CLOAKED COLLUSION:** So you can fly a prince's banner?

**COURTLY ABUSE:** I'm a bold man, and hardy.

**CLOAKED COLLUSION:** So you've come to join our little party.

**COURTLY ABUSE:** I've heard you're in favor. You know I'm a dish that can suit any flavor.

**CLOAKED COLLUSION:** I may be able...yes, I think I shall.

(Enter *CRAFTY CONVEYANCE*.)

**CRAFTY CONVEYANCE:** Psst! Collusion!

**CLOAKED COLLUSION:** You called?

**CRAFTY CONVEYANCE:** Who's he?

**CLOAKED COLLUSION:** A friend. A helper.

**CRAFTY CONVEYANCE:** What? That swaying swearing swaggerer?

**COURTLY ABUSE:** Have you addressed me?

**CRAFTY CONVEYANCE:** I'm certainly not dressing you. It would take a week.

**CLOAKED COLLUSION:** Hold your peace. I'd like to have him with me.

**CRAFTY CONVEYANCE:** We'll see.

**CLOAKED COLLUSION:** Tarry here a moment, old friend.

**COURTLY ABUSE:** Fine. And while I wait, could you lend!

**CRAFTY CONVEYANCE:** Don't push your luck, popinjay.

**COURTLY ABUSE:** I promise I won't go away.

**CRAFTY CONVEYANCE:** Does he always dress like that?

**CLOAKED COLLUSION:** He'll do us good service.

You'll find nothing amiss.

He's a whoreson proud and haughty.

And our task is plenty naughty.

(They exit.)

**COURTLY ABUSE:** (*Sings, perhaps a soft shoe,*)

What now? Look at me.

I know what you see.

Well rounded and firm

A gayly dressed worm

Not everyone can wear

Courtly gear.

My hair brushes out  
So pleasantly  
My robe rustles  
So ruttingly.  
I swirl, I could fly  
I swear I could die  
I am so light  
A dancing delight.  
Properly dressed  
You can't fail to impress.  
The cut and the fit  
You'll be such a hit.  
The perfect size,  
The latest guise,  
Rushed from Paree  
My last shopping spree.  
Beyond Measure  
Sleeves are wide this year  
It's about pleasure  
Wear the fabric sheer  
My hose are well tied  
And my buskin is dyed  
I am rich to behold  
When I glitter with gold.  
A rich man's son  
Brought up with...not much  
With me will have won  
This and that, such and such.  
Things he thinks he can't live without  
It's so fun just to flout!  
Under me  
He will see  
Bankruptcy!

**FANCY:** (*Enters.*) I heard you were here! How jolly! Welcome, by all that's holy!

**COURTLY ABUSE:** Fancy, my friend! But I've come to fetch you. For me?

**FANCY:** Have heard of the furious fray,  
The fight this very day?

**COURTLY ABUSE:** What's the news!

**FANCY:** Liberty is loose!

Perfect time to send for Courtly Abuse.

**COURTLY ABUSE:** I heard he was abiding...

**FANCY:** Right, under Measure's guiding.

But Liberty so chafed at the constant chiding.

And that opened the door for Crafty Conveyance.

**COURTLY ABUSE:** That amiable dunce.

But also you, I presume?

**FANCY:** You assume correctly. What a hoot!

We wrangled and crangled, and then he got the boot!

**COURTLY ABUSE:** I don't believe it. Measure's leaving.

**FANCY:** As I stand here breathing. Ain't none of us grieving. But I can't hang out now. You go on before.

(*COURTLY ABUSE exits. FANCY sings, perhaps.*)

I'm Fancy, Fancy Free

Sometimes too sober, often too sad.

Sometimes too merry, and sometimes bad.

Sometimes sitting ceremoniously proud,

And sometimes laughing way too loud.

Sometimes I weep for a darling gew-gaw

And sometimes suck milk up my nose with a straw.

Whatever I feel like, that's what I do,

And when I feel like something else, I do that too.

With an orange or an apple you may win my love,

Then lose it by harshly waving your glove.

My wits are weak, and my brains, so so,

But when it comes to my fun I'm a real pro.

Now I want this, and now I want that,

And now I must have new shoes, dress and hat.

I blunder, bluster, blow and blother,

Make in one day what I mar on t'other,

Busy, busy, ever busy,

Dancing in circles until I'm dizzy.

I can find fantasies where none is.

I won't have that, when I can have this.

(Enter *FOLLY*.)

**FOLLY:** Fancy? Are you here alone?

**FANCY:** My good brother Folly, I should have known.

But brother Folly, I've always wondered one thing.

You and I from the same mother did spring.  
What am I so tiny, and you so tall?

**FOLLY:** Oh, is that all? You are so fantastical,  
So flighty and so fanciful,  
Your wit, wandering woefully whither it will,  
Grown-up thoughts from your head simply spill.  
As for me, I'm a fool, but usually only one way,  
Once a day. And therefore, I grow more in a day  
Than you can in seven years.

**FANCY:** Good brother, as always, you've dried my tears.  
I jump from fantasies so fleetly  
That wisdom and I will never quite meetly.

(Enter *CRAFTY CONVEYANCE*.)

**CRAFTY CONVEYANCE:** Fancy. Did we tell you you could bring an other?

**FANCY:** Crafty, meet Fancy, my own sworn brother.

**CRAFTY CONVEYANCE:** But this is very cool.  
We can make good use of a fool.

**FANCY:** Go ahead, show him what sport you can make.

**FOLLY:** Oh, please, hold you peace, I've such a toothache!

**CRAFTY CONVEYANCE:** A toothache? I'm just sure.

**FOLLY:** Please, sir, could you help me find a cure?

**CRAFTY CONVEYANCE:** Do you know to whom you speak?

**FANCY:** His mind is not all that weak.  
He'll speak to Magnificence thus.  
Win his sympathy and his trust,

**CRAFTY CONVEYANCE:** And for his charitable kindness, he'll pay...

**FANCY:** And pay and pay and pay.

**CRAFTY CONVEYANCE:** The very man for us.

**FOLLY:** What do you want with me, though, another fool.  
Aren't there more than plenty?

**CRAFTY CONVEYANCE:** Even fools have a conscience. They get all repenty.

**FOLLY:** Not me. I'll make a fool of anyone, even you.

**FANCY:** He can. It's true.

**FOLLY:** I'll bet you twenty shillings.

**FANCY:** I'm willing.

**CRAFTY CONVEYANCE:** A fool? Even one like me?

**FOLLY:** Oh, look, Fancy. He's got a flea.

*(Plucking a flea from CRAFTY's shoulder.)*

**CRAFTY CONVEYANCE:** I'm not that gullible.

**FANCY:** Let's see. It's a Spanish flea, grey back...

**CRAFTY CONVEYANCE:** I'm not foolable.

**FOLLY:** Aren't they the kind that gives you the plague?

**CRAFTY CONVEYANCE:** You're pulling my leg.

**FOLLY:** No doubt about it. A flea-us bubonicus.

**FANCY:** A big one, too, quite humongous.

**CRAFTY CONVEYANCE:** *(Ripping off his clothes.)* Get it off me, help!

**FOLLY:** And there it is, a fool's great yelp.

**FANCY:** *(Laughing.)* He took you for a ride,  
Losing dignity and pride.

**CRAFTY CONVEYANCE:** *(Sullenly dressing again.)* You are truly a fool among fools.

**FOLLY:** Not a fool, but one who makes fools.

First, I set out from the Bible,  
How men should always remain idle.  
Chew their fingernails all day long,  
And then I sing them a song,  
Which gets their minds a simmerin'  
With thoughts of illicit women.  
Or, theft, or bribery, however they're weak,  
We all have weaknesses; those I seek.  
And when I spot a sweet young thing,  
Then songs of lasciviousness I sing.  
So she'll fling herself at any man,  
Who comes along. And that's my plan.

**CRAFTY CONVEYANCE:** So, idleness, impure thoughts. Are those the tools You use to create fools?

**FOLLY:** My good, dear friend, I have a whole storehouse  
Of devices to drive men to the poorhouse.  
But without Fancy, there's not much I can do.

**FANCY:** It's true. We're a team.

**CRAFTY CONVEYANCE:** You're a schemer's dream.  
Fancy, with me. Magnificence awaits.

**FANCY:** Let Folly come too. I hates  
Working alone. Can't Folly come with me also.

**CRAFTY CONVEYANCE:** To be sure. Let's go. But we need to find you a name.

**FANCY:** By the mass, let's call him Constraint.

**FOLLY:** A better name there ain't.

**CRAFTY CONVEYANCE:** Magnificence will admit you; he's pretty dim.  
Then Measure and Good Rule will leave him.

**FANCY:** And Liberty will join us?

**CRAFTY CONVEYANCE:** Without a fuss.

**FOLLY:** One last thing? I'm thirsty.

**CRAFTY CONVEYANCE:** Why think of that now? When Measure is gone, you'll have wine and to spare.

**FOLLY:** And then I'll drink 'till I'm bursty.

**FANCY:** And goodbye, then, to care.

**CRAFTY CONVEYANCE:** In you go. Magnificence to tow.

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