

Albert T. Viola

Adapted from the short stories by Edgar Allan Poe

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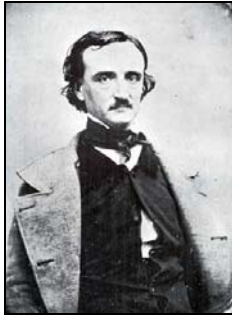
TALLEVAST, FL 34270

Three Sundays in a Week

CLASSIC/SATIRE COLLECTION. Surprise and delight your audience with an evening of humorous tales by Edgar Allan Poe. Though Poe is best known for his horror stories, he also wrote several entertaining, lighthearted tales that are celebrated for their quick wit. In “Some Words With a Mummy,” a group of scientists unwrap a mummy and bring him back to life only to find out that not only is the mummy completely unimpressed with the politics, architecture, and fashions of modern life, he is surprised and mortified at the Moderns’ gross misunderstandings of ancient Egyptian culture. In “Three Sundays in a Week,” a young couple must solve a riddle put forth by their stern aunt before they can get married. And in “Lionizing,” Thomas falls in love with his own nose and sets forth to learn all he can on the subject of Nosology. As his nose’s reputation grows, it becomes an object of admiration for royals, academics, and artists, but when Thomas shoots off Baron Bluddennuff’s nose in a duel, Thomas’s fame quickly turns to infamy as the Fum-Fudge residents turn on him.

Performance Time: Approximately 60 minutes.

For Edgar Allan Poe horror tales, check out our collection entitled “The Tell-Tale Heart,” which includes “The Tell-Tale Heart,” “The Raven,” and “The Black Cat.”



(1809-1849)

About the Author

One year after Edgar Poe's birth in 1809, his father abandoned the family, and then Poe's mother died the following year. Poe went to live with the Allans, who lived in Richmond, VA, and he was given the name Edgar Allan Poe, though he was never adopted by the family. Poe married his 13-year-old cousin, Virginia Clemm, in 1835, and it is thought that her death from tuberculosis just two years later inspired much of Poe's writing. The publication of Poe's poem "The Raven" (1845) made him an instant success, but he always suffered from financial problems during his lifetime. Though Poe is best known for his Gothic horror tales like "The Tell-Tale Heart" (1843), he also wrote many humorous tales, particularly satires that poke fun at societal conventions and the popular pseudo-sciences of the time including phrenology, which is based on the idea that a person's character can be determined from the lumps on his head and from the shape of his skull. In 1849, Poe was found wandering the streets of Baltimore and was taken to the hospital, where he died at the age of 40.

Some Words With a Mummy

(5 M, 5 F, 1 flexible)

COUNT ALLAMISTAKEO: Mummy; wears a black dress coat, sky-blue pantaloons with straps, a pink gingham shirt, brocade vest, a neck scarf, and a hat with no brim; male.

DR. PONNONNER: Egyptologist; male.

NARRATOR: Dr. Ponnonner's friend; male.

MISS POINDEXTER: Ponnonner's assistant.

SILK BUCKINGHAM: Expert in the study of Phrenology who has traveled and resided in Egypt; male.

MISS SIMPLE: Egyptologist.

GLADYS GLIDDEN: Professor and expert on hieroglyphics who has traveled and resided in Egypt.

MRS. GOLDSWORTHY: Egyptologist.

CAPTAIN ARTHUR SABRETASH: Dr. Ponnonner's cousin who acquired the Mummy.

MISS WALLABY: Dr. Ponnonner's servant.

DR. BRANDRETH: Inventor of Brandreth pills; non-speaking; flexible.

NOTE: All characters wear clothing appropriate for the 19th century.

Three Sundays in a Week

(2 M, 3 F)

BOBBY: 21, orphaned as a young child and forced to live with Aunt Rumgudgeon.

AUNT RUMGUDEON: 68, Bobby's great aunt; severe-looking woman with sharp features; her hair is pulled back into a bun; she wears glasses and a scarlet high-collard, floor-length dress with long sleeves.

KATE: 15, Bobby's fiancée.

PRATT: Sea captain.

MARTHA: Wife of a sea captain.

Lionizing

(7 M, 6 F, 9 flexible)

(Doubling possible)

NARRATOR: Flexible.

THOMAS: Expert on Nosology; male.

MOTHER: Thomas's mother.

FATHER: Thomas's father.

REPORTER 1: Male.

REPORTER 2: Female.

DUCHESS OF BLESS-MY-SOUL: Female.

MARCHIONESS OF SO-AND-SO: Female.

EARL OF THIS-AND-THAT: Male.

ROYAL HIGHNESS OF TOUCH-ME-NOT: Female.

ARTIST: Flexible.

GRAND TURK FROM STAMBOUL: Male.

COUNTESS POSITIVE PARADOX: Female.

PRESIDENT OF FUM-FUDGE UNIVERSITY: Flexible.

COUNT CAPRICORNUTTI: Male.

BARON BLUDDENNUFF: Male.

FRIEND 1-6: Thomas's "friends"; flexible.

Sets

Some Words With a Mummy: 1800s. Dr. Ponnonner's dining room has a fireplace on the back wall. A rich-looking dining room table sits CS. The eight chairs been removed from around the table. Seven chairs are set SL in a semi-circle and one chair is SR on the other side of the table. A footstool sits near the table. On the table lies a large box or case that is oblong-shaped (not coffin-shaped) and is large enough to contain the Mummy, cognac glass, book. The box can be decorated with dung beetle hieroglyphics to represent the Mummy's Scarabaeus lineage and resurrection.

Three Sundays in a Week: 1839, London, England. Aunt's living room. A round table covered with a lace tablecloth stands CS between a chair and sofa. In the center of the table is a basketball-sized globe. A rocking chair is situated by the fireplace.

Lionizing: City of Fum-Fudge, 1800s. The stage is empty except for a large red, yellow, and blue box. The boxes must be large enough to sit on (2' x 2' x 2') and be easily moved about.

Props

Some Words With a Mummy: Note, oblong-shaped box or case (7' long), 8 champagne glasses, serving tray, champagne bottle, tray of crackers and caviar, pen, pad of paper, scalpel, pieces of paper mache, cloth, strips of cedar wood, container, instruments for dissection, watch, Voltaic Pile (See note below), robe and slippers for Mummy, towel, footstool, first-aid medication and dressings, screen, hand bell, walking cane with a hook.

NOTE: The Voltaic Pile can be made from a glass cylinder several inches wide and filled with coils of wire. There are two wires with clips on each end of the wires. It has a round wooden base and top.

Three Sundays in a Week: Book, cane

Lionizing: Men's handkerchief, huge book or large dictionary, small table, watch, money, sketch pad, pencil, calling card, 2 pistols, small stuffed dog (optional).

Special Effects

Some Words with a Mummy: Throbbing sound.

Lionizing: Gunshot.

“As for progress,
it was at one time
quite a nuisance
and never progressed.”

—Mummy

Some Words With a Mummy

(AT RISE: 1845, evening. The Narrator, wearing 19th-century men's clothing, enters DSL. Stage is dark except for spotlight on Narrator.)

NARRATOR: *(To audience.)* Having gone to bed early after a light supper with my wife that consisted of five pounds of Welsh rabbit, which I am exceedingly fond of, and two pints of Brown Stout Ale, I became desperately drowsy after the frugal meal. I donned my nightcap with the serene hope of enjoying it till noon the next day. I placed my head upon the pillow and fell into a profound slumber. I had not completed my third snore when there came a furious rapping of the street doorbell, and then an impatient thumping at the knocker, which awakened me at once. In a minute afterward, and while I was still rubbing my eyes, my wife thrust in my face a note from my old friend Doctor Ponnonner. *(Unfolds note. Reads.)* "Come to me as soon as you receive this, my dear, good friend. Come and help us to rejoice. At last, I have gained the permission of the directors of the City Museum to my examination of the Mummy—you know the one I mean. It was taken from its sarcophagus, and I have permission to unwrap and remove bandages for assessment and evaluation of the remains. Only a few colleagues and friends will be present. You, of course. The mummy is now at my house, and we shall begin to unroll it at eleven tonight. Yours, ever, Ponnonner." By the time I had reached the word "Ponnonner," it struck me that I was as wide awake as a man need be. I leaped out of bed in an ecstasy, dressed myself with a rapidity truly marvelous, and set off, at the top of my speed, for the doctor's home.

(Lights up. Dr. Ponnonner's dinning room. The Narrator turns and enters the lighted area. Seven chairs have been removed from

around the dining table and are positioned in a semi-circle SL. One chair is SR. There is a 7-foot-long oblong-shaped box or case on the table. Professor Glidden, Miss Simple, Mrs. Goldsworthy, Miss Poindexter, Dr. Brandreth, and Mr. Silk Buckingham are either seated or standing SL. Captain Arthur Sabretash stands quietly near the empty chair SR. Dr. Ponnonner is pouring champagne into champagne flute glasses that are on a tray. When Dr. Ponnonner finishes pouring, Captain picks up the tray and offers each guest a glass of champagne.)

PONNONNER: Thank you all for coming. Since each of you has been good friends and colleagues, I feel it is only fitting that you join me for this special occasion.

CAPTAIN: *(Raises his glass.)* Hear! Hear!

EVERYONE: Hear! Hear!

PONNONNER: Here lies... *(Carefully touches the box.)* ...the mummy brought to us with great care by my cousin, Captain Arthur Sabretash. *(To Captain.)* Cousin?

CAPTAIN: This is one of a pair brought several years ago from a tomb near Eleithias in the Libyan mountains, a considerable distance above Thebes on the Nile.

PONNONNER: The grottoes in the Libyan mountains, although less magnificent than the Theban sepulchers, are of higher interest.

SIMPLE: And why is that, Dr. Ponnonner?

PONNONNER: That is a good question, Miss Simple. In this particular region, the sepulchers afford us more numerous illustrations of the private life of the Egyptians. The chamber from which our specimen was taken was said to be very rich in such illustrations—the walls being completely covered with fresco paintings and bas-reliefs, while statues, vases, and mosaic work of rich patterns indicated the vast wealth of the deceased.

CAPTAIN: I deposited the treasure in the museum precisely in the same condition in which we originally found it—that is to say, the coffin had not been disturbed.

PONNONNER: As you are aware, for eight years it had thus stood, subject only externally to public inspection. We have now, after long persevering diplomacy, the complete mummy at our disposal, and to those who are aware how very rarely an untouched and intact antique reaches our shores, it will be evident at once that we had great reason to congratulate ourselves upon our good fortune.

GLIDDEN: *(Raises her glass.)* Hear! Hear!

EVERYONE: *(Raising their glasses.)* Hear! Hear!

PONNONNER: *(Raises his glass.)* May we learn secrets of this mummy that have literally been kept under wraps for the past three centuries!

EVERYONE: *(Laugh as they raise their flutes.)* Hear! Hear!

(Everyone takes a sip of champagne. Miss Simple picks up a tray of crackers and caviar and moves about the room offering the delicacy to each of the attendants.)

PONNONNER: I have asked Miss Poindexter, my assistant, to record the examination and document the happenings of this significant event. Miss Poindexter? *(Miss Poindexter approaches with pen and tablet of paper in hand. Ponnonner, with a scalpel in hand, reaches into the large box and begins to cut.)* I expected the outer material to be the wood of the sycamore, but, now, after cutting into it, I find it to be pasteboard, or more properly, paper mache composed of papyrus. *(Miss Poindexter continues to write.)* Have a look. *(Ponnonner takes pieces of paper mache, places them on a cloth, and passes it around to the small group. Ponnonner turns and gives a piece of paper mache to the Captain, who is standing behind him. Ponnonner continues his examination.)* At this point, I would like to call upon our special guest this evening...other than the mummy itself... *(Everyone laughs.)* ...Professor Glidden, who is a leader in the field of Hieroglyphically. Professor Glidden.

(Professor Glidden approaches the table and looks down into the box.)

GLIDDEN: Thank you, Dr. Ponnonner. You may all gather about. *(Everyone gathers upstage and SR and SL of the table.)* Painted on the container are funeral scenes interspersed among which in every variety of position are certain series of hieroglyphic characters, intended, no doubt, for the name of the departed.

PONNONNER: Can you decipher the name, Professor?

GLIDDEN: The first word is a familiar one. This mummy was a member of royalty.

SIMPLE: Oh, my! Good heavens!

PONNONNER: Royalty!

NARRATOR: Amazing!

BUCKINGHAM: A king?!

GOLDWORTHY: A queen?!

GLIDDEN: A count. His title was that of a count in the royal court. His name is...the first letter is "A" followed by the letter "L", another "L", and then an "A." *(Spells.)* A-L-L-A. There are eight more letters to the name. At the moment, it is difficult to decipher the next three, but the last five are as follows: "T" followed by "A" and then... *(Spells.)* ...K-E-O. "TAKEO." The first four are "ALLA." *(Excited, Poindexter is furiously writing down the words.)* Of, course! By George, I've got it! The missing letters are... *(Spells.)* ...M-I-S. I am absolutely sure. You have "TAKEO." The middle three are "MIS" and the first is "ALLA."

PONNONNER: How does it read, Miss Poindexter?

POINDEXTER: Allamistakeo. *[Pronounced All-a-mistake-o.]*

PONNONNER: Count Allamistakeo! Good work, Professor Glidden. Let us carry on.

(Lights dim on Ponnonner, as he continues cutting into the layers covering the Mummy. Spotlight on Narrator DSR.)

NARRATOR: *(To audience.)* After cutting through the outer paper mache container, and upon opening the second

container, which Dr. Ponnonner did quite easily, he arrived at a third case, also coffin-shaped, and varying from the second one in no particular way except in that of its material, which was cedar and still emitted the peculiar and highly aromatic odor of that wood. He quickly removed the third case and discovered the mummy.

(Lights up on Dr. Ponnonner as he takes out some strips of cedar wood and places them into a nearby container.)

PONNONNER: I expected to find bandages of linen but instead the body is in a sort of sheath made of papyrus and it seems to be coated with....some kind of plaster, thickly gilded and painted.

(Mrs. Goldsworthy gets up and goes to the table.)

GOLDSWORTHY: Dr. Ponnonner, doesn't a mummy corpse have openings and incisions through which the entrails are extracted?

PONNONNER: Yes, Mrs. Goldsworthy, you are correct. The brain was customarily withdrawn through the nose with a wire hanger instrument, the intestines through an incision in the side. The body was shaved, washed, and salted, then laid aside for several weeks when the operation of embalming began.

GLIDDEN: Only the heart was left in place. They believed it to be the center of a person's being and intelligence.

SIMPLE: How sweet.

PONNONNER: However, I see no trace of an opening, no visible signs of incisions to be found for the removal of the other organs. Odd.

GOLDSWORTHY: The eyes are very beautiful and wonderfully lifelike with an exception of a somewhat too determined a stare.

GLIDDEN: The eyes were most likely removed and glass ones substituted.

SIMPLE: The fingers and nails are brilliantly gilded. Lovely!

GOLDSWORTHY: Dr. Glidden, do you suppose the mummy could possibly be a countess instead of a count?

GLIDDEN: No, a count, to be sure.

GOLDSWORTHY: The skin is hard, smooth, and glossy. The teeth and hair in good condition.

(Dr. Ponnonner starts to assemble his instruments for dissection.)

NARRATOR: *(Looks at his watch.)* Dr. Ponnonner, it is half past 2 a.m. Perhaps we should postpone the internal examination until tomorrow evening.

CAPTAIN: Hear! Hear!

SIMPLE: Perhaps before we leave, Dr. Ponnonner could do an experiment or two with the Voltaic Pile electrical cells.

PONNONNER: That's a straightforward idea, Miss Simple. It will only take a minute. What say you all?

CAPTAIN: Hear, hear!

EVERYONE: *(Tired, unenthusiastic. To Simple.)* Hear. Hear.

SIMPLE: *(Shyly.)* Thank you!

(Silk Buckingham picks up the Voltaic Pile and sets it on the table next to the Mummy. It is a glass cylinder several inches wide and approximately 24 inches tall and filled with coils of wire. There are two wires with clips on each end of the wires. It has a round wooden base and top.)

BUCKINGHAM: This procedure of using electrical shock brings to mind the story of a gentleman whose relations were compiling a family history, a legacy for their own children and grandchildren. They only had one problem: It was discovered that their Great Uncle Horace was an inmate for life in a federal prison, and while during a stroll in the prison yard, he was hit by a stroke of lightning.

NARRATOR: How did they record it?

BUCKINGHAM: They wrote, "Great Uncle Horace was a special guest at an important government institution, to which he was attracted by the strongest of ties, and his death came as a great shock."

(Everyone laughs.)

PONNONNER: I have attached the clamps to the temporal muscle, which appears less rigid than other parts of the frame. Here goes it. *(The Voltaic coil lights up and makes a throbbing sound and then is silent. Nothing happens.)* Nothing!

CAPTAIN: Good try, Cousin.

PONNONNER: Thank you, again. Till tomorrow.

(Everyone giggles and laughs and begins to shake hands and say goodnight. Narrator takes one last look at the Mummy before leaving.)

NARRATOR: Oh, heavens. His eyes! Look at his eyes! They have taken on a wild stare and seem to be moving about furiously! *(Realizes. Shouts.)* It's alive! It's alive!

(Everyone looks at the Mummy and reels back in fright. Silk Buckingham drops to the floor and crawls under the table on all fours. Professor Glidden is halfway out the door.)

PONNONNER: Steady, everyone. I'm quickly going to make an incision over the outside of the great toe of the right foot. *(With great haste, Dr. Ponnonner steps to the foot of the Mummy, makes the connection, and turns his back to the Mummy as he readjusts the battery. As the battery lights up again and its generating sound is heard, the Mummy draws up its right knee so as to bring it nearly in contact with the abdomen, and then straightening the limb with inconceivable force, forcefully kicks Dr. Ponnonner, sending him across the room and crashing into*

the wall. Dr. Ponnonner picks himself up, adjusts his clothing, and picks up pieces of debris from the floor.) Quickly, make a deep incision into the tip of the Mummy's nose. I'll do the rest.

(Everyone freezes and looks at one another. Only Professor Glidden, with brave and stern determination, comes forward and picks up the scalpel, looks down at the Mummy with wild abandonment in her eyes, and makes the incision. Dr. Ponnonner returns to the Voltaic Pile and makes adjustments. He turns and connects the wires to the Mummy's nose. Dr. Ponnonner steps to the foot of the Mummy and reconnects the wires. He turns his back to the Mummy as he readjusts the battery. As the battery lights up again and its generating sound is heard, the Mummy suddenly sneezes violently, sits up in the coffin, and shakes his fist at Dr. Ponnonner. Everyone is startled and reels back. Miss Simple faints. The Mummy turns its head and looks at Professor Glidden and Silk Buckingham.)

NARRATOR: Everyone became frozen and speechless as Count Allamistakeo turned to Professor Glidden and Mr. Silk Buckingham and addressed them, in very capital Egyptian, thusly...

MUMMY: I must say that I am as much surprised as I am mortified at your behavior. Of Dr. Ponnonner nothing better was to be expected. He is a poor little fat fool who knows no better. I pity and forgive him. But you, Professor Glidden, and you, Silk...who have traveled and resided in Egypt until one might imagine you to the manner born. You, I say, who have been so much among us that you speak Egyptian fully as well, I think, as you write your mother tongue. You, whom I have always been led to regard as the firm friend of the mummies—

[END OF FREEVIEW]

“She is a
hard-headed,
dunder-head,
obstinate,
rusty,
crusty,
musty,
fusty,
old
savage!”

—Bobby

Three Sundays in a Week

(1839, London, England. Aunt Rumgudgeon's living room. Aunt Rumgudgeon is rocking in a rocking chair. She is wearing glasses and reading from a book. Bobby enters DSR.)

BOBBY: *(To audience.)* My name is Bobby. And I lived all my life with that... *(Indicating Aunt.)* ...old woman over there.

AUNT: *(Reads.)* "Remplis ton verre vide! Vide ton verre plein!"

BOBBY: She is my Grand Aunt Rumgudgeon. My parents, in dying, had bequeathed me to her as a rich legacy. I believe the old villainess loved me as her own child—nearly, if not quite as well, as she loved her daughter Kate—but it was a dog's existence that she led me, after all. From my first year until my fifth, she obliged me with very regular floggings. From five to 15, she threatened me, hoarsely, with the House of Correction. From 15 to 20, not a day passed in which she did not promise to cut me off with a shilling. I was a sad dog, it is true—but then it was part of my nature, a point of my faith. In Kate, however, I had a firm friend, and I knew it. She was a good girl and told me very sweetly that I might have her, dowry and all, whenever I could badger my Grand Aunt Rumgudgeon into the necessary consent. Her little amount in the funds would not come available for five years. What then to do? Kate is 15. I am 21. Five years from now would be the same as 500! And so today is the day! I will no longer be treated as a child and humiliated. I will no longer grovel at her feet. I will tell her what I think of her. She is a hard-headed, dunder-head, obstinate, rusty, crusty, musty, fusty, old savage! I will no longer be separated from the one I love but united in marriage forever. A date must be set for this sacred union and Kate will be mine!

(Bobby turns and approaches his Aunt.)

AUNT: *(Reads.)* "Remplis ton verre vide! Vide ton verre plein!"

BOBBY: What?

(Aunt gives Bobby a stern look.)

AUNT: *(Reads.)* "Remplis ton verre vide! Vide ton verre plein!" *(Looks up from book.)* What is it? Can't you see I'm studying? *(Bobby is frozen and speechless. Shouts.)* Out with it! What do you want?!

BOBBY: *(Shouts.)* Remplis ton verre vide!

AUNT: What? Are you mad! You have no glass! How can I fill it! Off with you!

BOBBY: My dear Aunt... *(Forces the blandest of smiles. With gentleness and smoothness.)* ...you are always so kind and considerate and have demonstrated your benevolence in so many—so very many, many ways—that, that I feel I have only to suggest this little point to you once more to make sure that I have your full support.

AUNT: Hem! Good boy! Go on!

BOBBY: I am sure, my dearest Aunt, that you have no design, really, seriously, to oppose my union with Kate. You have given permission and fully understand our intentions. This is merely a joke of yours to keep us waiting, I know. Ha! Ha! Ha! And how pleasant you are at times.

AUNT: Ha! Ha! Ha! Curse you, yes!

BOBBY: To be sure. Of course! I, thank God, knew you were jesting because you are a good person. Now, Aunt, all that Kate and myself wish at present is that you would oblige us with your wise advice...as regards the time. You know, Aunt, in short, when will it be most convenient for yourself that the wedding...shall come off, you know?

AUNT: "Come off"? You scoundrel! What do you mean by that? Better wait till it goes on!

BOBBY: Ha! Ha! Ha! He! He! He! Hi! Hi! Hi! Ho! Ho! Ho! Hu! Hu! Hu! Hu! That's good! That's capital! Such a wit, dear Aunt! But all we want just now, you know, Aunt, is that you would indicate the time precisely.

AUNT: Ah! Precisely?

BOBBY: Yes, Aunt...that is, if it would be quite agreeable to yourself.

AUNT: Wouldn't it be an answer, Bobby, if I were to leave it at random...some time within a year or so, for example? Must I say precisely?

BOBBY: If you please, Aunt. Precisely.

AUNT: Well, then, Bobby, my boy...you're a fine fellow, aren't you? Since you want the exact time, I will oblige you for once.

BOBBY: Thank you, dear Aunt.

AUNT: Hush! I'll do you this service but once. You shall have my consent, and the...dowry, we mustn't forget the dowry. Let me see! When shall it be? Today's Sunday, isn't it? Well, then, you will be married precisely when three Sundays come together in a week!

(Pause.)

BOBBY: When three Sundays come together in a week?

AUNT: You heard me correctly, sir!

BOBBY: When three Sundays come together in a week. I see. Ha, ha, ha! Oh, Aunt Rumgudgeon, this is a riddle. A riddle. A test.

AUNT: What is it with you, boy? Are you out of your senses? I say you will have Kate and her dowry when three Sundays come together in a week...but not till then. You know me! I'll die for it! I am a woman of my word! Now be off!

(Bobby rushes from the area to address the audience downstage.)

BOBBY: (*To Audience.*) I was all sail...and no anchor. It was no riddle. My Grand Aunt Rumgudgeon is really a very fine old English woman but she has her weak points. When she wants your opinion, she gives it to you. With little effort and time, she earned herself the reputation of a curmudgeon. She is all right in her own way...but she always wants it! To every request a positive "No!" was her immediate answer. Against all attacks upon her purse, she made the most sturdy defense. She firmly believed that charity should begin at home...and should stay there. For the fine arts, she entertained a profound contempt. She despised and stopped going to the theatre because she could not hiss at the actors—because she couldn't hiss and yawn at the same time. Her dislike of the "humanities" had also increased of late due to an accidental incident that drew her to "science." It happened one day when someone greeted her on the street thinking she was Dr. Deborah Dubble L. Dee, the quack physics lecturer. Unbeknownst to her of the Doctor's quackery, she accepted it as a compliment and rode the wave of celebrity. Aunt Rumgudgeon's politics were stubborn and easily understood. She thought that "people have nothing to do with the laws but to obey them." Although with all her little faults, her name was her word and her word was a rock, a cornerstone, an anchor. Once she made a commitment she would keep her word or die for it! That I know. I will sum up in a few words what constitutes the whole pitch of the story. In her heart, Aunt Rumgudgeon wished for nothing more ardently than our union. This was her hope all along. The problem was that Kate and I broached the subject ourselves. She wanted it to be her idea. We stole, robbed, and deprived her of the one last thing she wanted to control before the two lovebirds departed from the nest. She was going to teach us one last lesson. However, as if the Fates ordered it, Kate, lovely Kate, contacted two acquaintances of the family who had just set foot upon the shores of England after a year's

absence, each in foreign travel. In company with them, my cousin and I paid Aunt Rungudgeon a visit on the afternoon of Sunday, October 10th, just three weeks after the memorable decision, which had so cruelly defeated our hopes.

(Kate enters. Captain Pratt and Martha Brewer Brown follow.)

[END OF FREEVIEW]

May your snout
rest in the shadow
of a thousand suns."

—Baron Bluddennuff

Lionizing

(AT RISE: *City of Fum-Fudge. A red, yellow, and blue box are on stage. Thomas is sitting on the center box. Mother and Father are sitting on the boxes on either side of Thomas.*)

NARRATOR: *(To audience.)* This is the story about lionizing—when people go upon their ten toes in wild wonderment of celebrity. We begin our story in the beginning. He is...that is to say... *(Stands and moves downstage.)* ...he was a great man. But he is neither the author of “The Legend of Sleepy Hollow” or “The Man in the Iron Mask.” His name was simply Thomas Smith and he was born... *(Thomas drops to his knees and puts his right finger in his mouth. Father moves DSC and looks down at Thomas. Thomas takes his right thumb out of his mouth and puts his left thumb in his mouth. Mother moves quickly to Thomas’s right.)* ...somewhere in the city of Fum-Fudge. The first action of his life was the taking hold of his nose with both hands. *(Thomas takes a hold of his nose with both hands.)* When his mother saw this, she was awestruck and could not believe what she was witnessing.

MOTHER: *(Proudly.)* He is a genius!

NARRATOR: The father wept for joy. *(Father takes out a handkerchief and wipes his eyes as he drops to his knees sobbing with joy.)* Immediately, his father searched all great bookstores in the city of Fum-Fudge and eventually found what he was seeking... *(Father gets up and goes to a nearby prop table and picks up a huge book the size of a large dictionary.)* ...and presented it to his new son. “A Treatise on Nosology.” *(Father hands the huge book to the Thomas. The book is so heavy it brings Thomas prostrate on the floor.)* Before he was wearing long pants... *(Thomas gets up, paces, and reads the book.)* ...he had not only mastered the treatise but had collected and read all that had been written on the

subject... *(Thomas pantomimes reading books by placing his palms together and opening them as if they have become a book. He looks across both palms and places the "book" on an invisible bookshelf in front of him. He reads two or more "books." Each time he reads a "book," he places the "book" on a higher shelf of the "bookcase.")* ...by Pliny, Aristotle, Alexander Ross, Minutius Felix, Hermanus, Del Rio, Villaret, Bartholinus and Sir Thomas Browne. He now began to feel his way in the science and soon came to understand that—provided a man had a nose sufficiently big—he might, by merely following it, arrive at a lionship...true celebrity. But his attention was not confined to theories alone. Every morning he took a dram or two and gave his proboscis a couple of pulls. *(Thomas goes to an imaginary mirror. With a devilish smile, he turns and looks at the profile of his nose from each direction. He picks up an imaginary bottle, takes an eyedropper from it, puts some drops into his nose, and squeezes his nose.)* When he came of age, his father asked him one day if he would step with him into his study.

(Thomas and Father each sit on a box and use the center box as a desk.)

FATHER: My son, what is the chief end of your existence?

THOMAS: Father, it is the study of Nosology.

FATHER: And what, Thomas, is Nosology?

THOMAS: Sir, it is the science of noses.

FATHER: And can you tell me what is the meaning of the nose?

THOMAS: A nose, my father, has been variously defined by about a thousand different authors. *(Pulls out a watch.)* It is now noon, or thereabouts. We shall have time enough to get through with them all before midnight.

FATHER: That will do, Thomas. I am thunderstruck, my boy, at the extent of your information—positively upon my soul. Come here. *(Stands and takes Thomas by the arm.)* Your

education may now be considered as finished, and it is high time that you should scuffle for yourself. So-so-so-so get out of my house!

NARRATOR: He kicked Thomas down the stairs and out the door.

(Father turns Thomas around, puts his foot on Thomas's behind, and "kicks" Thomas away SL.)

FATHER: *(Shouts.)* And God bless you! *(Exits SR.)*

NARRATOR: At that very moment, Thomas Smith had a rush of unexpected breath, a powerful force that would fill him with divine inspiration. He considered this accident rather fortunate than otherwise and was determined to follow his nose. So he gave it a pull.... *(Pulls his nose.)* ...or two... *(Pulls his nose twice.)* ...and wrote a pamphlet on Nosology. All Fum-Fudge was in an uproar.

(Reporter 1 enters and stands behind SL box.)

REPORTER 1: "Wonderful genius!"

NARRATOR: Said the Quarterly.

(Reporter 2 enters and stands behind SR box.)

REPORTER 2: "Superb physiologist!"

NARRATOR: Said the New Monthly.

(Smiling, Thomas stands behind the center box.)

THOMAS: "Fine writer!"

NARRATOR: Said the Edinburgh.

(Reporter 2 steps on top of SR box.)

REPORTER 2: "Great man!"

NARRATOR: Says Blackwood.

(Reporter 1 steps on top of SL box.)

REPORTER 1: *(With sophistication.)* "Who can he be?"

NARRATOR: Said Miss Bas-Bleu.

REPORTER 1: *(Strong, dominant.)* What can he be?"

NARRATOR: Said, big Miss Bas-Bleu.

(Reporter 1 steps down from her box and kneels down.)

REPORTER 1: *(Like an awe-struck groupie.)* Where can he be?
(Exits.)

NARRATOR: Said little Miss Bas-Bleu. But he paid them no manner of attention and walked into the shop of an artist. *(Duchess enters and strikes an exaggerated pose for her portrait. Artist enters and encircles the Duchess with his thumb in front of his eyes, lining up the subject to be painted.)* The Duchess of Bless-my-Soul was sitting for her portrait...

(Showing off his nose, Thomas struts in front of the Duchess.)

DUCHESS: *(Sighs.)* Oh, beautiful!

(Duchess exits. Marchioness enters, sits on a box, and acts as if she is petting and comforting a tiny dog in her arms. Note: Or she can hold a stuffed dog.)

NARRATOR: The Marchioness of So-and-So was holding the Duchess's poodle.

(Thomas approaches Marchioness so that she can admire his nose.)

MARCHIONESS: *(Lisping.)* Oh, pretty! Pretty!

(Marchioness exits. Earl of This-and-That enters with a lilt to his walk. He walks around the box as if there were precious articles being displayed.)

NARRATOR: The Earl of This-and-That was flirting with her collection of precious silver and gold pieces.

(Thomas steps on the box the Earl is looking at. The Earl gazes up at Thomas's nose.)

EARL: *(Groans.)* Oh, horrible!

(Earl exits. Royal Highness of Touch-Me-Not enters with a royal, stately flair and stands behind a box. Thomas prances back and forth in front of her.)

NARRATOR: And his Royal Highness of Touch-Me-Not was standing behind her chair.

ROYAL HIGHNESS: *(Growls.)* Oh, abominable.

(Royal Highness of Touch-Me-Not exits. Artist enters. With his thumb in front of his eyes and focusing on Thomas's nose, Artist circles Thomas.)

ARTIST: *(To Thomas, with deep passion.)* What will you take for it?

(Thomas sits on a box.)

THOMAS: A thousand pounds.

(Artist approaches Thomas. Artist turns Thomas's head to the side so he can see Thomas's nose better.)

ARTIST: *(Evaluates nose.)* A thousand pounds?

THOMAS: Precisely.

(Artist stands back as if he has found the model for the "Mona Lisa.")

ARTIST: Beautiful!

(Thomas twists to one side and lowers his head showing a different view of his nose.)

THOMAS: A thousand pounds.

ARTIST: Admirable!

THOMAS: A thousand pounds.

ARTIST: You shall have them. What a piece of true beauty!

NARRATOR: So he paid Thomas the money and made a sketch of his nose. *(Artist pays Thomas some money, takes out a sketch pad and pencil, makes a quick sketch of Thomas's nose, and exits.)* Thomas took a room in a nearby home on Jeremy Street, sent her Majesty the 99th edition of the "Nosology" with a portrait of the author's nose, and his Royal Highness of Touch-me-Not invited Thomas to dinner.

THOMAS: We are all lions and rare and uncommon.

NARRATOR: At the dinner was a gathering of some of the greatest minds in the world. The Grand Turk from Stamboul.

(Grand Turk enters with flair and stands on a box.)

GRAND TURK: *(Grandiose.)* Angels were horses, cocks, and bulls. Somebody in the sixth heaven had 70,000 heads and 70,000 tongues. And the earth is held up by a sky-blue cow having 400 horns. *(Steps down from box.)*

NARRATOR: There was Countess Positive Paradox.

(Countess Paradox enters and stands on a box.)

COUNTESS: Fools are philosophers, and all philosophers are fools. *(Steps down from box.)*

NARRATOR: There was the President of Fum-Fudge University.

(University President enters and stands on a box.)

PRESIDENT: The moon is called "Bendis" in Thrace, "Bubastic" in Egypt, "Dian" in Rome, and "Artemis" in Greece. *(Steps down from box.)*

NARRATOR: The speeches continued through the night and last to speak was Thomas.

(Thomas stands on a box.)

THOMAS: I will end the evening by speaking of Pictorius, Del Rio, Alexander Ross, Minutius Felix, Bartholinus, Sir Thomas Browne and the sciences of the noses.

GRAND TURK: Marvelous, clever man!

(Everyone applauds Thomas.)

NARRATOR: The evening ended in joyous celebration as all gathered around Thomas and his nose. *(Grand Turk, President, and Countess Paradox gather around Thomas and admire his nose and then exit.)* The next morning her grace of Bless-My-Soul paid Thomas a visit.

[END OF FREEVIEW]