

THE TIGER'S BRIDE

Adaptation by

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Story by

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NURSE (cont'd)

01 (beat)
 02 In spite of his hairiness, mind,
 03 he'd drink down a full pint of ale
 04 at The George. I used to see him
 05 there all the time when I was your
 06 age, by the Upper Moor Fields.
 07 (beat)
 08 Oh, I had this lisp very similar to
 09 yours, my beauty, you wouldn't
 10 believe it hearing me now.
 11 (long sigh)
 12 But if you, young lady, aren't a
 13 good little girl and refuse to eat
 14 your beetroot, then the tiger-man
 15 will don his big black fur cloak,
 16 one just like your daddy's, sit
 17 atop his galloping mare, and ride
 18 through the night to get to the
 19 nursery and...
 20 (dramatic)
 21 Yes, my beauty! GOBBLE YOU UP!

22 SPOTLIGHT off NURSE

23 DESNUDA
 24 I'd squeal in delighted terror,
 25 half-believing her, half knowing
 26 she was teasing me.
 27 (beat)
 28 I couldn't tell her everything,
 29 there were things she was better
 30 off not knowing.
 31 (beat)
 32 In the farmyard, the giggling
 33 nursemaids would explain to me what
 34 the bulls did to the cows. They
 35 told me about the waggoner's
 36 daughter.

37 SPOTLIGHT on MAIDS

38 MAID 1
 39 Hush hush, keep quiet! Don't tell
 40 your nurse about this, but the
 41 waggoner's lass, the hare-lipped,
 42 squinty eyed, ugly as sin one is
 43 carrying. Who'd have taken her?

44 MAID 2
 45 Yet, shameful as she is, her belly
 46 swells with child! All the ostlers
 47 mock her, no surprise!

48 MAID 3
 49 I reckon it must have been a bear
 50 she lay with.

51 GIGGLES

01 restraint, forcing himself to stand on two, not four, feet.
02 He wears a mask of the most beautiful human face, too
03 symmetrical, too perfect to be real. A silk choker with a
04 pearl covers his throat, large gloves cover his hands, he
05 wears an old fashioned wig to cover his hair, and an
06 old-fashioned, long tailcoat to cover his body.

07 THE BEAST presents DESNUDA a WHITE ROSE at the sight of her.
08 She accepts it uncomfortably.

09 His voice is a deep, incomprehensible growl. His chirpy
10 valet translates all which is said.

11 THE BEAST
12 (growls)

13 VALET
14 He says you must play him at cards
15 if you are to stay.

16 The majority of the game has been played. THE BEAST has won
17 all of Desnuda's FATHER's money.

18 SPOTLIGHT still but for DESNUDA

19 DESNUDA
20 (monologue, she nervously
21 rips the petals off the
22 rose)
23 The Beast may be a carnival figure
24 made of paper mache and crepe hair,
25 but he has the Devil's knack at
26 cards.

27 SPOTLIGHT on everyone

28 FATHER
29 I have nothing left. You have won
30 everything I have.

31 THE BEAST
32 (growls)
33

34 VALET
35 Except the girl.

36 Everyone still but for DESNUDA.

37 DESNUDA
38 (monologue)
39 Gambling is a sickness. My father
40 said he loved me yet he would bet
41 my life on a hand of cards.

42 Game resumes.

43 FATHER places down his hand proudly, a true gambler
44 believing in miracles.

01 FATHER
02 A queen, a king, an ace.

03 THE BEAST lays down his cards.

04 FATHER
05 (unbelieving)
06 Three aces. Desnuda, my beauty, my
07 daughter, my life's reason!

08 VALET retrieves THE BEAST's overcoat and hands it to him as
09 FATHER attends despairingly to DESNUDA. He is crying, his
10 face is white.

11 VALET
12 (composed, indifferent)
13 I, not Milord, will call for you
14 and your bags tomorrow at ten
15 sharp, and escort you to Milord's
16 palazzo.
17 (beat)
18 Cاپisco?

19 DESNUDA
20 (the words barely leaving
21 her mouth, such is the
22 shock)
23 Cاپisco.

24 FATHER
25 As Othello- like the base Indian...
26 (sobbing)
27 "One whose hand; like the base
28 Indian, threw a pearl away; richer
29 than all his tribe."
30 (sobbing)
31 I have lost my pearl, my pearl
32 beyond price.

33 THE BEAST makes a sudden growl, loud and horrifying, more of
34 a disgusted roar.

35 VALET
36 (still indifferent)
37 My master says if you are so
38 careless of your treasures, you
39 should expect them to be taken from
40 you.

3 41 EXT CARRIAGE

3

42 Snow has settled on the ground. The Beast's CARRIAGE is
43 elegant and old fashioned, jet black, drawn by a black
44 gelding HORSE who stamps the ground in a light-hearted
45 manner.

46 VALET sits atop the box in a black and gold livery, holding
47 a bunch of WHITE ROSES. He springs down agilely, presenting
48 the flowers ceremoniously to a humiliated DESNUDA, who

01 stands by the carriage with her FATHER, who is sobbing
02 unattractively.

03 FATHER
04 (desperately)
05 I need your forgiveness, my
06 beautiful, beautiful daughter. A
07 rose to remember you by will be
08 enough to remind me you still love
09 me.

10 DESNUDA breaks off a stem, pricking her finger accidentally,
11 and hands her FATHER a BLOOD SMEARED ROSE. She then goes and
12 sits in the carriage box.

13 The VALET then enters and tucks the RUGS around DESNUDA's
14 feet with perfect formality, minus a habitual itching
15 underneath his white wig. He has another habit- he chats to
16 himself under his breath as he packs away all of The Beast's
17 winnings, away from Desnuda's father.

18 DESNUDA shuts the CURTAIN on her FATHER and the VALET, and
19 addresses the audience.

20 DESNUDA
21 (monologue)
22 I always adored horses. Noblest of
23 creatures. Such wounded sensitivity
24 in their eyes, such rational
25 restraint of energy in their
26 high-strung hindquarters. I always
27 agreed with Gulliver's opinion that
28 horses were better than humans. I
29 would have happily ran off with the
30 beautiful black gelding who led the
31 carriage that fateful day, or
32 rather galloped off, to the kingdom
33 of horses and lived with them,
34 among them.
35 (beat)
36 Instead, she led me far out of the
37 city, far through the snow, the
38 mist which shrouded the sky,
39 through areas uninhabited and
40 bereft. My roses, faded before the
41 journey's end. The spurious Eden of
42 South Italy blighted by the cold!

43 DESNUDA steps out of the carriage and tosses the defunct
44 bouquet away. She reacts to the sharp wind pelting her face
45 with powdered SNOW, and gets back in.

4 46 EXT PALAZZO

4

47 A spotlight on the palazzo, a semi-derelict red brick
48 citadel with broken windows and gaping doors, and a tall
49 roof. The Beast had bought solitude with his money, not
50 luxury.

01 The horse trots in the wide open bronze doors to a tiled
 02 great hall, with hay and horse dung and a dozen HORSES
 03 themselves occupying the space.

04 DESNUDA gets out and goes straight for one of the horses.
 05 The VALET tugs, politely mind, at her sleeve.

06 VALET
 07 I'm sorry, but Milord is awaiting
 08 your arrival, Desnuda.

5 09 INT PALAZZO, LAIR

5

10 The whole palace is broken windows and gaping doors, the
 11 wind whistles everywhere. All furniture is covered in white
 12 cloth, pictures removed and placed facing the walls, a
 13 general lack of inhabitants consumes the place.

14 VALET and DESNUDA climb several marble staircases to reach
 15 The Beast's lair. The VALET approaches and DESNUDA follows,
 16 silently greeting THE BEAST indifferently.

17 THE BEAST sits in a grand CHAIR in the dark, shuttered room,
 18 with clawed feet, wearing a loose purple gown which covers
 19 all his limbs appropriately. He still remains with his mask
 20 and wig, an artificial entity in a empty room. Empty, but
 21 for a small fire in a small grate by the Beast's chair.

22 VALET
 23 (coughs)

24 THE BEAST
 25 (growls)

26 VALET
 27 (translating)
 28 My master...

29 A stick falls in the grate, a large, awkward CLATTER echoes
 30 through the room.

31 VALET
 32 My master has but one desire.

33 THE BEAST
 34 (growls)

35 VALET
 36 He wishes only...

37 The VALET's composure is lost with The Beast's desire. He is
 38 embarrassed by what he has to say. He gulps, swallows, and
 39 finally resumes.

40 VALET
 41 (now contrived)
 42 My master's sole desire is to see
 43 the pretty young lady unclothed,
 (MORE)

VALET (cont'd)

01 nude, without her dress only once,
02 after which she will be returned to
03 her father, untouched, with all the
04 money he lost to Milord at cards
05 returned as well as further fine
06 presents such as furs, jewels and
07 horses.

08 DESNUDA throughout all remains standing, staring into the
09 evading, ashamed eyes inside the mask. She remains silent
10 after the VALET finishes his translation.

11 The VALET wrings his gloved hands ferociously during the
12 silence, only to break it himself.

13 VALET
14 Desnuda...

15 DESNUDA finally lets out a raucous laugh, one such laugh
16 which disregards all the ladylike manners her old nurse
17 taught her.

18 The VALET anxiously skips back towards her, his face
19 pleading, wordlessly pleading for a more appropriate
20 response, his expression fearful.

21 DESNUDA composes herself.

22 DESNUDA
23 You may put me in a windowless
24 room, sir, and I promise you I will
25 pull my skirt to my waist, ready
26 for you.
27 (beat)
28 But there must be a sheet over my
29 face, to hide it. Though the sheet
30 must not choke me. I will be
31 completely covered from the waist
32 upwards and there shall be no
33 lights.
34 (pauses)
35 There you can visit me once, sir,
36 and only the once. Immediately
37 after, I must be driven to the city
38 and deposited in the public square,
39 by the church. If you wish to give
40 me the money then I should be
41 pleased to receive it. Though I
42 must stress to you only to give me
43 the same amount of money you give
44 other women in such circumstances.
45 However, if you choose not to give
46 me a present, then that is your
47 right.

48 THE BEAST is shaken by the reaction. A single TEAR swells
49 and glistens in the corner of the mask's eye. A smug DESNUDA
50 cannot resist a smile, as the tear falls down the painted

01 cheek and tinkles on the tiled floor.

02 The VALET, chattering away to himself, hastily ushers
03 DESNUDA out of the room.

6 04 INT CELL

6

05 A windowless, airless, lightless cell. White, like all the
06 roses given to Desnuda by The Beast. The VALET lights a LAMP
07 for DESNUDA, revealing a narrow BED, and a TABLE with a
08 basket of fruit and a vase of, yet again, WHITE ROSES.

09 DESNUDA
10 (confident)
11 I shall twist a noose out of my bed
12 linen and hang myself with it.

13 VALET
14 (his normal composure
15 recovered)
16 Oh no.
17 (beat)
18 Oh no, you will not.
19 (beat)
20 You are a woman of honour.

21 DESNUDA
22 Are you to be my warder until I
23 submit to The Beast's whim, then?
24 (beat)
25 Am I not to have a lady's maid?

26 The VALET ignores her and claps his hands.

27 VALET
28 To assuage your loneliness, madame.

29 He presents a clockwork twin of DESNUDA, her SOUBRETTE MAID,
30 with the same hazelnut curls in her hair, the same rosy
31 cheeks, the same blue, rolling eyes, though wearing the
32 white stocking, frilled petticoat and cap of a maid's
33 uniform.

34 She carries a small MIRROR in one hand and a POWDER PUFF in
35 the other. From her side protrudes the handle of a key.
36 Where her heart should be, there is a musical box which
37 churns out an 18th century dance tune as she rolls on her
38 tiny wheels towards Desnuda, who has sat on the bed.

39 VALET
40 Nothing that lives here is human.
41 (pauses as the SOUBRETTE
42 MAID stops)
43 We have dispensed with servants. We
44 surround ourselves, instead, with
45 imitations, robots as such, and
46 find it no less convenient.

01 The SOUBRETTE MAID smiles at DESNUDA, then proceeds to dust
02 her cheeks with pink, powdered chalk, which causes DESNUDA
03 to cough.

04 The SOUBRETTE MAID thrusts towards DESNUDA the mirror.
05 DESNUDA looks into it.

06 SPOTLIGHT reveals her FATHER, drunk, deluded, crying still.
07 He finishes his drink quickly and throws the GLASS on the
08 floor.

09 DESNUDA is shocked and the VALET takes the mirror off her.

10 SPOTLIGHT off FATHER.

11 The VALET breathes on the mirror, polishes it within his
12 gloved hand and gives it back to DESNUDA.

13 All DESNUDA sees now is herself, and she sees a tired, pale
14 version of herself, pale enough to want the rouge powder the
15 SOUBRETTE MAID was now offering.

16 The VALET leaves and locks the door behind him.

17 The SOUBRETTE MAID slows in her dusting, her music slowing,
18 tired, and eventually to a halt as she falls asleep. DESNUDA
19 blows out of the lamp and lays on the bed, sleeping herself.

7 20 INT CELL

7

21 The VALET is holding a TRAY with a continental breakfast and
22 a shagreen BOX on it. The lamp is lit again and DESNUDA
23 awakes.

24 DESNUDA gestures the tray away, unwanted and drowsy. The
25 VALET places it down by the lamp, picks up the box and
26 offers that instead.

27 DESNUDA turns her head away from the VALET.

28 VALET
29 (hurt)
30 Oh my lady!

31 The VALET opens the box- on a crimson, velvet bed lays a
32 single diamond EARRING, tear-shaped.

33 DESNUDA snaps the box shut, tears it from the VALET's gloved
34 hand and tosses it across the room. The SOUBRETTE MAID,
35 before still, jerks an arm in response, and then quickly
36 becomes still again.

37 VALET
38 Very well.
39 (pauses)
40 Milord wishes to see you again.

41 DESNUDA
42 May I wash first?

01 VALET
 02 There is no need, Milord does not
 03 require cleanliness and he does not
 04 appreciate waiting longer than he
 05 believes necessary.

8 06 INT PALAZZO, LAIR

8

07 THE BEAST seemingly has not budged since DESNUDA last stood
 08 in front of him with the VALET as she does now. He remains
 09 in his gown and chair, with his mask and wig the final
 10 contributions to his cover.

11 DESNUDA
 12 Take off my clothes, like a ballet
 13 girl? Is that all you want of me?

14 THE BEAST
 15 (growls)

16 VALET
 17 (stammering)
 18 The sight of a young lady's skin
 19 which no man has seen before...

20 DESNUDA
 21 I wish I'd rolled in the hay with
 22 every lad on my father's farm, just
 23 to disqualify myself from this
 24 humiliating bargain.
 25 (beat, sarky)
 26 Milord.
 27 (pause)
 28 That you seem to want so little is
 29 why I cannot give into you.

30 A single TEAR comes from the other masked eye of THE BEAST.

31 And then, suddenly, he buries his carnival head with its
 32 ribbon wig, into his arms, withdrawing his clawed, padded,
 33 furry paws from his sleeves.

34 The tear falls onto the fur on one of his paws and glistens.

9 35 INT CELL

9

36 DESNUDA sits on her bed. The VALET arrives, presenting on
 37 his silver tray an equal to the diamond EARRING which still
 38 lays the other side of the room. DESNUDA shuts the lid and
 39 throws the box again towards its twin.

40 The VALET chatters to himself regretfully.

41 VALET
 42 (now smiling)
 43 My master would like invite you to
 44 go riding.

01 DESNUDA
 02 (surprised, rude)
 03 What's this?

04 VALET
 05 (mimicking the action of
 06 a gallop, tuneless)
 07 Tantivy! Tantivy! Hunting we will
 08 go!

09 DESNUDA
 10 I'll run away. I'll ride to the
 11 city.

12 VALET
 13 Oh, no.
 14 (beat)
 15 Are you not a woman of honour?

16 The VALET claps his hands and the SOUBRETTE MAID goes to the
 17 cupboard and retrieves a riding JACKET.

18 DESNUDA
 19 (surprised, bewildered)
 20 That's my riding jacket.
 21 (beat)
 22 I left that in Petersburg. I lost
 23 that long ago, before my father and
 24 I even began this wild pilgrimage
 25 south.
 26 (pauses)
 27 That's the very riding jacket my
 28 old nurse had sewn for me, or else
 29 an exact replica, right to the lost
 30 button on the sleeve, the ripped
 31 hem held with a pin.
 32 (analysing it in her
 33 hands)
 34 How did you get this? What
 35 democracy of magic brought this
 36 here? Or is this proof of what my
 37 father has drummed into me- that,
 38 if you have enough money, anything
 39 is possible?

40 VALET
 41 (charmed by DESNUDA's
 42 pleasure)
 43 Tantivy?

10 44 EXT PALAZZO

10

45 A bright morning. Horses, saddled and bridled, waiting for
 46 their riders. The black gelding DESNUDA mounts, a little
 47 PONY the VALET springs upon with a flourish, a grey MARE THE
 48 BEAST, wrapped in a black fur-lined cloak, heaves himself
 49 upon. He clings onto the mare's mane nervously, an unnatural
 50 rider.

01 They ride among a bereft landscapes of a brown and sepia
02 marshland, by a wide river. The horses drink from the river.

03 VALET
04 (clearing his throat
05 first)
06 If you will not let him see you
07 without your clothes...

08 DESNUDA shakes her head instinctively.

09 VALET
10 ...you must, then, prepare yourself
11 for the sight of Milord.
12 (dramatic pause)
13 Naked.

14 DESNUDA is anxious, losing her composure and the strange
15 comfort she felt riding.

16 VALET
17 (fearfully urging her)
18 You...
19 (beat)
20 ...must.

21 DESNUDA nods, panicked.

22 The VALET holds THE BEAST's cloak around him to hide his
23 transformation from DESNUDA. The HORSES stir.

24 SPOTLIGHT on DESNUDA.

25 DESNUDA
26 (monologue)
27 The tiger will never lie down with
28 the lamb. He acknowledges no pact
29 that is not reciprocal.
30 (pause)
31 The lamb must learn to run with the
32 tigers.

33 SPOTLIGHT off.

34 A great, striped feline stands now- THE BEAST. His large
35 head so fearful he has to hide it. Great, subtle muscles;
36 vehement eyes.

37 DESNUDA marvels. An odd combination of striking fear and
38 intrigue.

39 The VALET moves to cover THE BEAST.

40 DESNUDA
41 (clear, composed)
42 No.

43 All remain still.

01 DESNUDA, shivering, unfastens her riding jacket. Clumsy and
 02 blushing, she removes her clothes to show THE BEAST the
 03 frail little article of human upholstery she believes
 04 herself to be, worried she may not be grand enough to
 05 satisfy his grand expectations of the human flesh.

06 In his silence, THE BEAST acknowledges her true form as she
 07 had his, before lowering his head.

08 THE BEAST
 09 (growls)

10 VALET
 11 Enough.

12 The VALET and THE BEAST leave together, the VALET on his
 13 pony, THE BEAST running on all fours with his mare alongside
 14 him.

15 DESNUDA, liberated, walks along the river.

16 DESNUDA
 17 (monologue)
 18 I do not know if I was what he
 19 hoped, what he so desired. Not one
 20 man has seen me naked and I am a
 21 proud girl.
 22 (beat)
 23 He reminded me nothing of humanity,
 24 nothing of the wandering eyes of
 25 boys and men in Petersburg, nothing
 26 of my flattering father who showers
 27 me with praise.

28 DESNUDA puts her clothes back on.

29 The VALET and THE BEAST return, THE BEAST cloaked and masked
 30 once more, upon his mare. The VALET holds a WATERFOWL and
 31 slung by his saddle is the corpse of a ROEBUCK.

11 32 INT BOUDOIR

11

33 The VALET takes DESNUDA to an elegant, old-fashioned
 34 boudoir, not her cell. Faded pink SOFA, Oriental carpet,
 35 glass chandelier, candles in antlered holders. The pair of
 36 diamond earrings, earlier discarded, sit on a dressing
 37 table, attended by the SOUBRETTE MAID with her powder puff
 38 and mirror.

39 DESNUDA takes the mirror.

40 SPOTLIGHT on FATHER.

41 FATHER smiles, overjoyed. He sits in the lodging, at the
 42 very table he gambled Desnuda away, with a large pile of
 43 BANKNOTES. He is clean shaven, with a neat haircut and smart
 44 new clothes. He holds a GLASS of champagne and the BOTTLE
 45 sits in an ice BUCKET by the table. He puts his glass down
 46 on the table and reads a NOTE.

01 FATHER
02 (reading the note aloud,
03 overjoyed)
04 Your daughter will arrive
05 imminently.
06 (beat)
07 Oh, joy of joys! The Beast has
08 shown mercy on us!

09 SPOTLIGHT off FATHER.

10 VALET
11 You can leave the palace any time
12 hereafter.

13 The VALET places on her bed a handsome sable CLOAK, a
14 gratuity from The Beast.

15 DESNUDA looks into the mirror again. She sees a pale,
16 hollow-eyed girl she scarcely recognises.

17 VALET
18 When should I prepare the carriage?

19 DESNUDA
20 (indifferent)
21 Let me be alone.

22 VALET
23 Very well.

24 The VALET leaves, without locking the door.

25 DESNUDA fixes the earrings into her ears. She takes off her
26 riding jacket and drops on the floor lackadaisically. She
27 undresses awkwardly, flaying to remove her shift dress.

28 She is naked, apart from the earrings of The Beast's tears.

29 DESNUDA
30 (monologue)
31 I thought he had wanted only a
32 small thing compared what I
33 prepared myself for.
34 (pause)
35 But it is unnatural for humans to
36 be naked, ever since we first hid
37 our loins with fig leaves.
38 (pause)
39 He had demanded the abominable.
40 (long pause)
41 I shall not return to my father.
42 (beat)
43 I shall dress her in my clothes,
44 wind her up, and send her to
45 perform the part of my father's
46 daughter.

(MORE)

DESNUDA (cont'd)

01 (pause)
 02 For the confines of that role, she
 03 suffices.

04 DESNUDA picks up the fur cloak from her bed and leaves the
 05 cell.

12 06 INT PALAZZO, LAIR

12

07 DESNUDA waits outside the door of The Beast's lair. Without
 08 the Valet, she raps tentatively on the door.

09 The VALET opens the door, naked himself now, a delicate
 10 creature with silken moth-grey fur, brown fingers, a brown
 11 muzzle, and slight whiskers. He opened the door to invite
 12 into the room.

13 The dressing gown, the mask, the wig, the gloves- all laid
 14 out on the chair. The fire extinguished. A candle on the
 15 mantelpiece lights the room dimly.

16 THE BEAST, naked in his revealed form, paces around the room
 17 on all fours, his heavy tail twitching among the bloody
 18 bones scattered on the floor.

19 SPOTLIGHT on NURSE.

20 NURSE
 21 He will gobble you up.

22 SPOTLIGHT off NURSE.

23 DESNUDA approaches THE BEAST, pale and shivering, offering
 24 herself to him.

25 THE BEAST sees DESNUDA, he goes still as stone- he is
 26 frightened, far more frightened than her. She squats on the
 27 wet straw in front of him and offers him her hand.

28 THE BEAST
 29 (growls)

30 THE BEAST lowers his head, leans towards his forepaws,
 31 snarling, showing off his sharp, yellow teeth. He sniffs the
 32 piss ridden air, trying to smell her fear. But he is more
 33 frightened than she is.

34 Slowly, THE BEAST drags himself to DESNUDA. DESNUDA holds
 35 her hand out further towards him.

36 THE BEAST
 37 (purrs)

38 The thunderous purr shakes the walls, shatters any remaining
 39 glass in the windows, brings tiles crashing down from the
 40 roof.

01 THE BEAST drags himself closer and closer, until his head
02 rubs against DESNUDA's hand. He then starts licking her
03 hand.

04 He licks her hand so ferociously that the skin peels off it.
05 He then starts licking the rest of her, each lick peeling
06 off the skin, peeling away her humanity.

07 Beneath DESNUDA's skin is shining fur. Before long, she is
08 entirely covered in fur. The diamond earrings turn back to
09 tears and they glisten in her fur. She drops to all fours, a
10 majestic tigress beside THE BEAST.