

EXTRACT

# THE SADNESS OF MISTER SAISSON

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THE SADNESS OF MISTER SAISSON  
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**NOTE ON THE SCRIPT**

This is an unedited manuscript as provided to us by the playwright. We distribute it in good faith; however it may contain layout inconsistencies or typographic errors.

## **CHARACTERS:**

**Iris** (an Australian orphan girl who runs away to France)

**Etta** (a Gypsy girl who wants to shake the hand of the Gypsy King)

**Mister Saisson** (a sad, mysterious man who might be a spy)

**Zarafa** (an Ethiopian Giraffe)

**Zelda** (a Gypsy woman, Etta's 'Gypsy Mother')

**Aunty Nell** (an Australian singer seeking fame in France. Iris' aunt)

**Alberto Santos-Dumont** (an eccentric aviator)

**Bernadino Drovetti** (an animal trader and French Consul to Egypt)

**Mister Menage** (a zoo-keeper)

**President Sadi Carnot** (President of France)

In a large cast situation, all characters may be played by different performers, but for smaller casts, the following doubling is possible:

**Iris**

**Etta**

**Mister Saisson**

**Zarafa**

**Zelda, Aunty Nell**

**Alberto, Drovetti, Menage, Sadi Carnot**

A small chorus of dancers play the roles of:

**Orphans** (Edna, Maude, Bridgette, Mary)

**Gypsies** (Bandolier, Goby, Luca, Pesha, Gyorgi, Tamas, Milosh)

**Birds and the Butterflies**

**Kangaroos**

**The Crowd at the Great Exposition**

**Gendarmes**

**Labourers**

**Waiters at the 'Café of the Faithful Pig'**

In addition to their instruments, the orchestra members play:

**The Gendarme (The Conductor)**

**The Orchestra**

**A Crowd at the Port of Marseilles**

**The 'Jardin des Plantes'**

## **PRODUCTION NOTES:**

Of course, there are many options for the production and design of this work. In general, however, the intention is that the design elements would have a very two-dimensional or 'flat' feel on stage, much like the Vaudevillian and Operatic theatrical settings of the time or a child's pop-up book. In this way, when elements such as the Eiffel Tower appear, they should either 'fly in' (in an appropriate performance space) or 'pop-up' from positions on the floor of the stage, or 'slide in' from the wings.

As regards the potential for puppetry, it is intended that ZARAFa should be a body-puppet (operated by a performer inside the figure) allowing her to interact with the other characters.

It is also intended that the BIRDS & BUTTERFLIES should be puppets.

I have assumed that DUMONT's Flying Machine would also be achieved through puppetry. Consequently, it always lands and takes off 'off-stage'. During the flying scenes, the occupants of the Flying Machine would, therefore, be puppet versions of the characters.

This might also be the case in the climbing of the Eiffel Tower which would probably be performed by the same puppet versions of IRIS, ETTA, and ZARAFa.

Of course, if the production budget and safety considerations allowed for real actors to climb the tower and fly with DUMONT, this would be infinitely preferable.

Ideally, the play will be performed in a large open space that allows for the orchestra sections to be split up and positioned so that the audience (or, at least the younger members of the audience) can sit in small groups amongst the players and their instruments and have an 'inside' experience of an orchestra.

The performing area might have some thrust, and be only slightly raised so as to allow an easy flow between performers, orchestra and audience.

But, really, anything is possible in how the performance is staged.

And... if the space has a pipe organ, all the better.

## MUSIC:

### ACT ONE:

- Music #1: Printemps qui Commence (Act 1, Scene 6) from Samson et Dalila
- Music #2: Suite Algerienne, Opus 60 Second Movement: Rhapsodie Mauresque
- Music #3: Le Carnaval des Animaux (introduction)
- Music #4: Le Carnaval des Animaux (marche royale du lion)
- Music #5: Le Carnaval des Animaux (Hemiones)
- Music #6: Danse Macabre
- Music #7: Suite, Opus 16, Serenade: Andantino
- Music #8: Piano Trio No.1 In F Major, Opus 18, Scherzo: Presto
- Music #9: Le Carnaval des Animaux (Le Coucou au fond des bois)
- Music #10: L'Assassinat du duc de Guise, Opus 128, Quatrieme tableau
- Music #11: Le Carnaval des Animaux (Kangourous)
- Music #12: Suite, Opus 16, Prelude: Moderato assai
- Music #13: Le Carnaval des Animaux (Voliere)
- Music #14: Le Carnaval des Animaux (Personnages a longues oreilles)
- Music #15: Suite Algerienne, Opus 60, First Movement: Prelude

### ACT TWO:

- Music #16: Bacchanale (Act 3, Scene 2) Samson et Dalila
- Music #17: Suite Algerienne, Opus 60, Fourth Movement: March Militaire Francais
- Music #18: Suite, Opus 16, Tarantelle: Presto Non Troppo
- Music #19: Le Carnaval des Animaux (Aquarium)
- Music #20: Choeur des Philistins (Act 3, Scene 2) Samson et Dalila
- Music #21: 'If I had Words'  
*(adapted from Symphony No.3 In C Minor, by Scott Fitzgerald & Yvonne Keely)*
- Music #22: Le Carnaval des Animaux (Le Cygne)
- Music #23: Le Carnaval des Animaux (Fossils)
- Music #24: L'Assassinat du duc de Guise, Opus 128, Troisieme tableau
- Music #25: Symphony No.3 In C Minor (avec orgue) Maestoso, Allegro

## CHOREOGRAPHY:

- Choreography #1: At work on the docks of Marseilles
- Choreography #2: Gypsy Dance
- Choreography #3: Dance of the Birds and Butterflies
- Choreography #4: Kangaroos
- Choreography #5: The Gypsy Knife Dance
- Choreography #6: The Great Chase

## PROLOGUE: THE SISTERS OF THE GOOD SHEPHERD ORPHANAGE

*It's 1889.*

*Moonlight. Cicadas drone through a hot Australian summer night.*

*Looking into a window on the top floor of The Sisters Of The Good Shepherd Orphanage.*

*In another part of the space, a SINGER appears beside a piano.*

*SINGER: Hums the first line of 'If I Had Words'.*

*BRIDGETTE: Snores.*

*SINGER: Hums the second line of 'If I Had Words'.*

*BRIDGETTE: Snores.*

*SINGER: Hums the third line of 'If I Had Words'.*

*BRIDGETTE: Snores.*

*SINGER: Hums the fourth line of 'If I Had Words'.*

*(offstage) The sound of IRIS falling off a laundry bucket.*

*IRIS: (offstage) Bugger!*

*In the orphanage, EDNA gasps awake, sits up in bed. She lights a candle. MARY Wakes.*

*MARY: (whispers) Edna? What are you doing?*

*EDNA: (whispers) Shhh...*

*MARY: (whispers) What?*

*EDNA: (whispers) Didn't you hear that?*

*MARY: (whispers) Hear what?*

*BRIDGETTE: Snores.*

*MARY: (whispers) It's just Bridgette.*

EDNA:                    *(whispers)* No. Something else.

MAUDE:                   *(wakes, whispers)* Put the candle out, Edna. We'll get into trouble.

BRIDGETTE:             *(wakes, shouts)* What's all the noise?

OTHERS:                 Sshhh...

MAUDE:                   *(whispers)* Keep it down, Bridgette. You'll wake Sister.

BRIDGETTE:             *(whispers)* What's going on?

MARY:                    *(Whispers)* Edna heard a noise.

MAUDE:                   *(whispers)* Is anyone else hungry?

BRIDGETTE:             *(whispers)* What did you hear, Edna?

*Sound of a bucket being kicked over.*

IRIS:                     *(offstage, loudly)* Bugger Bum!

EDNA:                    That!

MARY:                    Where's Iris?

*The white curtains are pushed aside by a young orphan girl, IRIS. She hoists up the window.*

EDNA:                    Iris, what are you doing, go back to bed...

MAUDE:                   Iris, take those sheets back to the laundry. People paid good money for us to clean them. You'll get us into trouble.

MARY:                    *(chants)* Iris is running away. Iris is running away.

BRIDGETTE:             Iris, come away from the window. You'll fall?

*In another part of the stage, at another window CAMILLE, a middle aged man, stands and looks down into the street, horrified by what he sees.*

CAMILLE:                No!

*Back at the orphanage... IRIS lifts a bundle of knotted, white sheets up to the window sill.*

*BRIDGETTE rushes over.*

BRIDGETTE: Iris. Are you barmy? What are you doing? Where are you going?

*IRIS pulls a postcard from her pocket and shows it to BRIDGETTE.*

BRIDGETTE: *(reads)* ...wish you were here, love, Aunty Nell. Iris, this postmark says Paris!

IRIS: Oui, d'accord, Bridgette. Au revoir, mon aimee. I'm off to Paris to live with my Aunty Nell. I'll play the oboe and she will sing and we'll be famous together. I won't be a laundry orphan anymore.

BRIDGETTE: But how will you get there?

*IRIS tosses the knotted sheets out of the window. They fall to the ground.*

IRIS: On a wish and a hope and good old shanks's pony.

BRIDGETTE: You can't walk all the way to Paris.

IRIS: Just you watch me.

*IRIS clammers out of the window.*

BRIDGETTE: You ninny. You'll fall.

IRIS: "*Bad girls do the best sheets*", isn't that what they say? This place mightn't hold me, but the sheets will.

*IRIS pulls herself back up to the window sill and kisses Bridgette on both cheeks.*



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