Act I - Scene 3

(Interlude of music.

Three weeks later. The Jungle.

An APE enters, beats on his chest, shrieks, then goes.
TRUDGE enters smiling and looks around playfully)

TRUDGE

Yes? Here I am.

(He looks around)

I thought it was my dear Wowski calling me.

INKLE

(Coming in)

Ah Trudge, there you are. Let us sit together a moment here in the woods before the teepee by this brook and discuss together the remarkable events of our last three weeks here on the main of America.

TRUDGE

Mr. Inkle, do you know, expect for fear of being caught by savages and having to come abroad only by moonlight as now — except for that I have never been happier.

WOSKSI

You are pleased to be with your little Wowski, I see.

TRUDGE

I wouldn't want to say this to just anyone you know, but Master Inkle, I'm happier with Wowski than with my own dear mother.

(Hugging himself)

It's a lovely life, like opening the lid on a jar of paradise.

INKLE

Idyllic yes, living as we have in innocent bliss. To sleep by day in the cool of this teepee, and at night to roam the secluded grottoes, or to bathe in the clear blue waters of the River James.

TRUDGE

And Wowski brings me food to eat — succulent pomegranates, wild berries that I don't know the name of, and curried pigeon. Or again, when my pants were wore out she made me these new ones from fur and flowers and bits of leaves, until if they saw me on Thread-needle street they'd think I was a ruddy old saviour myself.

(Dances about and pantomimes a flute)

INKLE

Not you, Trudge. They'd think you a woody sprite more like.

TRUDGE

(Sitting again)

Aye, I like this life of the woods and streams more than any I've ever dreamed of. But you, sir, Master Inkle, aren't you happy? I see by your tablets here that you have been multiplying again.
INKLE
Just amusing myself by calculating interest on some imaginary stocks and bonds.

(Fushing aside the tablets)
I am happy, Trudge. But as I sleep — as I sleep I often have visions of my father rising nearby — there — dressed in the suit he wore to business saying, 'How can you sleep, how can you sit idly by enjoying yourself when there's profit to be gained?'

(TRUDGE is awed by the spot the ghost is reported to appear)
Yarico, I have come to love. She brings me food if I am hungry, she amuses me if I am bored, she guards me and strokes my head as I sleep. In short, she is always with me, except for moments like this one when she must visit with her tribe in order to avoid suspicion. Always beside me. At those moments when my father speaks, Yarico becomes something else. I think of Robin and Rosey, and Peter and Pamela, and Andrew and Audrey — and I'm not sure — though I love her — whether I care for it to be Inkie and Yarico.

TRUDGE

(Impressed)
Why I've never considered such things at all. You have such a fine mind, master Inkie.

INKLE
When the vision goes, saying — Adieu, Adieu, adieu, remember me ...

TRUDGE
Ah do, sir.

INKLE
When the vision goes, such thoughts go. But don't you think on any of it, Trudge. No, no, don't think at all, Trudge, or you'll lose your sweet disposition, your pleasant mouth, and your enthusiasm, to become just another sour, dour creature who can calculate compound interest.

TRUDGE
But that's just what I want!

INKLE
Be patient, Trudge. For now, just pluck me some fruit off yonder bush.

(Bush appears from the wings).

TRUDGE

(Picking the fruit, then sighing)
Snacks grow at your front door here, but no sea captains are washed up on the beach.

INKLE
Are you so anxious to leave now that you want a ship to arrive.

TRUDGE
Not a ship, a sea captain. It's too much to expect providence to provide a little preacher of some sort from the ocean, but one could expect a sea captain to be washed up from the sea.
INKLE: I think I perceive your thoughts.

TRUDGE

(Sadly)
Ah, Mr. Inkle, one could ask no more of life than these three months of innocent bliss if only one was innocent.

INKLE

So you would marry Wowski?

TRUDGE

Yes, if she will, and if providence will provide us with the necessary official for the ceremony.

INKLE

Providence may provide an official, but certainly no dowry you may be sure of that. I'd consider it long.

But I love the girl.

INKLE

How do you know?

TRUDGE

Oh — indigestion and heartburn.

INKLE

Ah so? I know the same, and had put it off as not being acquainted with such an exotic diet as this.

(Starts to bite into the fruit. An arrow whizzes past his Knocking it out of his hand. INKLE cries out in surprise. Enter YARICO, bow in hand, followed by WOSKI, carrying parcels and food)

YARICO

We returned just in time. Dear Inkle, you must not eat just any fruit that grows hereabouts. Many are poisonous as this one is.

INKLE

Again Yarico, I owe my life to you.

YARICO

See what we have brought! New furs for your bed, and food, and these shiny things you may wear around your neck.

(Decks him with jewels)

WOSKI

And a gift for my Trudge, but first help me bring these things into the tepee.

TRUDGE

Gladly. (WOSKI and TRUDGE go into the tent. YARICO seats herself near INKLE, busily folding the furs)
INKLE

Do they ask about you in the village of your tribe?

YARICO

No. All of the unwed women live in the far grottoes.

INKLE

Don't they think it strange that you take so many things away with you every day?

YARICO

No.

INKLE

No? Don't you have to pay for them?

YARICO

No.

INKLE

No? This valuable property, given away?

YARICO

They are given to me.

INKLE

(A little alarmed) By whom?

YARICO

By some of the young braves.

INKLE

Do you mean — you accept gifts from men!

YARICO

Oh yes. Every day I am courted and they bring me gifts. All of the bravest and handsomest. Is something wrong? You look so pained.

INKLE

A bad attack of indigestion, I think.

(Y going to her)

Yarico... I have been thinking many silly thoughts while you were gone. You will stay with me, won't you?

YARICO

Inkle, I will.

INKLE

Now tell me you don't love any of those young and handsome braves.

YARICO

No, I don't.

(INKLE is closer now, and then his eye is suddenly caught by the necklace around her neck in the midst of the embrace. He examines it closely with his glass.)

No, my heart belongs to none of them.
(Looking up)

INKLE

What were we saying?

YARICO

(Picking up his pad which has been left on the ground)
I see your tablet here. You have been sitting with your tablets and writing. How long it is, and how regularly placed in columns. Tell me what you were writing.

INKLE

Nothing . . . nothing .

YARICO

Not some business of your own country —

INKLE

Of course not; it's a poem. Can't you tell from how regularly arranged it is.

YARICO

Alas, and I cannot read your language. Will you read it to me?

INKLE

(Helplessly)

No, No.

YARICO

You must!

INKLE

No, I'd be embarrassed. Too personal. Terrible handwriting.

YARICO

Well let me see.

(He examines the paper. She waits expectantly. He examines it at a distance and then closely) I don't think I can read it without my spectacles.

YARICO

You're just shy. Sure you can read it if you squint.

INKLE

Yes.

(Takes it in hand, then puts it down) My spelling is so poor I really can't read a word of it!

YARICO

(Taking it and starting toward the teepee, laughing) Then, I shall ask Trudge to read it to me.

INKLE

But I think I can make it out!

(Reading)

Ah.
Ah?

Ahhhhhh.

Is that the title?

Oh no.

What is the title?

... Poem.

YARICO

Lovely!

(Owl hoots. INKLE seizes on it)

INKLE

(Singing)

Hear the owl as it dines
And hear, so gruff, the lion growl...

(Stuck)

Oh one and two and twice three nines...

(Expectantly, then helplessly)

Uhhhhhh. Fifty-seven.

You know, this is very difficult to make out. I'll look it over and try later.

YARICO

No, it's very nice so far.

INKLE

(Owl hoots)

Hear the owl as it dines

(Limon roar)

And hear, so gruff, the lion growl,
Now once now twice and three three nines
And see the wolf look up and howl...

(Wolf howls. INKLE wipes his grow)

You lead me well, safe to our cell
While, tremblingly,
I say to thee
(And kiss so sweet)

-- Dear Yarico, tell,

How could I live

Without

Yeeeee?

YARICO

Beautiful!

(INKLE sighs with relief rather pleased with himself.)
(As he starts to put away the paper, she takes it)

Yarico

No, no. I must have it — to carry here — by my heart.

Inkle

If you'd just let me keep it, I could copy you over a clearer copy.

Yarico

No, dear Inkle, I must have this one, and I shall keep it always.

Inkle

(Going to her)
The poem I just made is no jest, Yarico. I know that now.

Yarico

(Putting her hand next to his)
I like to see our hands side by side — how white your flesh is, and how bright is mine.

Inkle

Like — you are like Eve newly risen from the red loam of the garden of Eden.

Yarico

Another poem!

Inkle

Oh, poetical snatches come to me now and again.

Yarico

Come, let's go into the tepee. I brought back a whole large basket of those shiny red stones you are so fond of.

Inkle

I would rather go for a walk with you, Yarico.

(Inkle takes her hand)

Come!

(They start to go, and he hesitates, troubled)

No — one thing only first. The compliment I just paid — the red loam and Eden. Trudge made it up. He is able to say such things without pondering, without waiting, without calculation. But know, I did make up the poem, dear Yarico. I realize the metrics aren't all in order, and the images are prosaic, but just now I'm only a babe in matter of the heart. The money chest in which my heart was locked, you have opened. Suddenly there are colors, I have never seen!

(They go out, hand in hand)

(The Bush from the wing, carried by an Indian, moves in. He looks off after the couple and calls like a bird and is answered by honking. Indian drums briefly, as he stealthily goes off, disguised as a Bush. Enter Trudge)
TRUDGE
Was that Wowskij I thought I saw a shadow. The girl is so light and swift, I can never be sure just where she is.
(Wowskij enters and playfully comes up quietly behind him, putting her hands over his eyes)
Ah, there she is.
(He opens his mouth and she puts a grape inside)
Delicious! What was it?
(She holds up her hand spread-finger fashion with half a finger held under, then doubles up at her joke)
Wowskij
And I brought you this, too.
TRUDGE
A piece to wear around my neck. Very pretty.
(Delighted, he puts it on)
Now, how do I look, eh?
Wowskij
It's not as pretty a gift as my mistress brought to Ink Joe I fear.
TRUDGE
Prettier, prettier, because it came to me from my Wowskij.
Wowskij
(Overcome)
AWWWWWW.
TRUDGE
(The Indian returns, creeping in behind, still disguised as a bush or tree)
But what can I give to her. Only a kiss.
(He peeks her on the cheek)
And a flower.
(He plucks one off the Indian as he goes by)
And that, poor soul that I am, is all I have.
Wowskij
Come, sit with me by the brook here. There's something I must ask you.
(THEY kneel at the front of the stage)
TRUDGE
Now ask.
Wowskij
Are you happy here?
TRUDGE
Well, occasionally I think of Andrew and Audrey, and Peter and Pamela.
And then — at those times — I wonder — do I want it to be . . .
Wowskij
Be what?
TRUDGE
Nothing, the truth is I never think of Andrew and Audrey, and Peter and Pamela, but of Trudge and Wowskij. Ah yes, I am happy here, and have
TRUDGE (con't)
except when a caterpillar starts making lunch off my pants. I'm afraid I have a frivolous mind, and will never amount to much at all.

WOWSKI
No, I'm sure that's not so.

TRUDGE
But it is, and it bothers me.

WOWSKI
What I mean to ask was — will you ever want to go away?

TRUDGE
Well, Wows, no and yes.

WOWSKI
No and yes?

TRUDGE
Nay and aye.

WOWSKI
Nay and Aye?

TRUDGE
No and nay, as long as my little Wowski is here; and yes and aye if ever the chance should come to leave, if she'll go with me.
(The INDIAN signals off. Honking reply)

(WOSSKI)
(Punching him)
Ah, there's many able-bodied laddies, but none like you.
(THey thrash about playfully, HE blowing in her hair.)
Listen, listen, do you hear that bird?
(Honking from off)

TRUDGE
A cockatoo.
(The INDIANS continue to signal)

WOSSKI
Aye, a cockatoo bird, and it's calling to thee from the banks of the Natoeka.
(MUSIC has started)
White man never go away —
Tell me, why need you?
Stay with your Wowski, stay;
Wowski will feed you.
Cold moons are now coming in
Ah, don't go grieve me!
I'll wrap you in leopard's skin
White man, don't leave me.
WOJSKI (cont'd)

And when all the sky is blue
Sun makes warm weather,
I'll catch you a cockatoo,
Dress you all in feather.
When cold comes, or when tis hot,
Ah, don't go grieve me!
Poor Wowski will be forgot —
White man, don't leave me!

TRUDGE

Sounds, leopard's skin for winter wear and feathers for a summer's suit.
I shall look like an upright shuttlecock! And for all this, if my
master and I find our way to England I promise you, Wows, you shall
be part of my travelling equipage.

WOJSKI

Oh, I would like that.

(Jumping up)

Now you wait, I bring surprise.

(She hastens into the cave. A moment later the TREE hastily
goes by in the rear, followed shortly by a rather extensive
GROVE of Indians. A beat later, the APE tiptoes through,
also disguised as a tree. He goes off, then seeing TRUDGE,
comes back, coming up on him quietly).

TRUDGE

Bring some more berries, if you will, girl. I feel a bit hungry.

(THE APE freezes as HE speaks. Then comes closer)

You know you and I will have a merry little cottage in Threadneedle —

(Ape growls)

What did you say? What's the surprise, a new dress? Don't worry
I won't peek. Yes, we'll have a merry little cottage with a couple
of snug rooms on the first floor. I'll come home from my master's
counting house every evening and there you'll be with a pretty
little muslin apron over your feathers.

(Slapping his hands together in delight. APE leers over him,
stretching himself full-length, growls more)

Dammn, what a flashy fellow I shall seem on the streets; me in
a black suit and tie, and green vest, and walking with a bright
vermillion Lady!

(He laughs delightedly. The APE suddenly clamps an arm around
his head. Pleasantly)

Well, what's the surprise.

(He opens his mouth expectantly)

Aren't you holding me a little tightly, dear?

(APE starts to shake his head, groveling)

You know you are rather pushing my nose in. Come on now, stop
being so secretively, or Trudge will hit your ole hairy arm.

(Stops in terror. Examines arm. Tries to get away, backing
up)

Now, don't get excited, beastie. Like the pretty flowers.

(Plucking one off his pants)

Now, you can have it.

(Faints. Enter Wowski, dagger drawn. Duel with APE. Indian
music. Enter INDIANS. APE is knocked out with a palm frond.
(INKLE and YARICO brought on spear-point. All very quick. Tableau.)

QUEEN MAPOOAKA

(After chords)
Take them to the Indian village!
(MUSIC immediately as APE and TRUDGE are dragged off, others surrounded by INDIANS with spears and arrows.

CURTAIN closes.) (MUSIC continues into next scene, which is played in front of this inner curtain.)
Act I - Scene 4

(Along the road. INKLE and TRUDGE tied.)

SAVAGE
Let us stop here for a moment before we continue on to the village.

TRUDGE
Odsbaw, I'm glad they've stopped. I'm not used to walking so fast.

INKLE
We shall have to keep our wits about us, Trudge, and spend these few moments here to devise a plan.

TRUDGE
Aye. I heard one say that we are being taken to see the Chief. They have taken both Yarico and Wowski away, as you know sir, for fear they may cut our honds. In short, our situation is not a good one, sir. We're lost lambs for sure now.

INKLE
My mind hasn't been idle as we walked, Trudge. When we are brought before the Chief of this tribe, we shall so confound this poor ignorant heathren that he'll think we're gods for sure.

TRUDGE
Good, how do you plan to do that?

INKLE
Have you your playing cards with you?

TRUDGE
Why, by a lucky chance, I have, Mister Inkle.

INKLE
First, I'll confuse the Chief with a few mathematical calculations; and then before he has time to recover, you shall perform a few of your slight of hand card tricks. These natives are superstitious fellows and will be convinced for sure. They'll end up by bringing us offering of their finest furs, fruits, and jewels.

TRUDGE
An excellent plan!

SAVAGE
Come. We go now.

TRUDGE
(Delighted. INKLE and TRUDGE laughing as they go off)
Of course, just lead the way, my good fellow!

(The CURTAIN opens as THEY go off. Enter CHIEF and COURTIERS).
CHIEF

(As a MESSENGER throws himself at the feet of the CHIEF). So, Miasma, you have captured some pale ones?

MIASMA

We have, King Nataoka, at the direction of your Queen.

CHIEF

(Looking toward the QUEEN who bows) I see. Then, have these pale ones brought before me.

MIASMA

At once.

(Claps his hands, and gives instructions in Indian to one of the natives. INKLE and TRUDGE are brought in.)

INKLE

(Pleasantly) I can tell, sir, that you are the Chief. I am Thomas Inkle, god of Seasons, and this is Trudge, god of the south wind.

MIASMA

This is King Natooka of the Powhatanu Indian Nation; this, his wife, Queen Natooka; and this the son, Prince Starlight.

INKLE

A charming looking boy, kind Natooka.

Thank you.

INKLE

Your highness, to get to business, I fear your braves have made a grave error in treating us as they have, not realizing we are gods making a brief visit to this part of the country.

CHIEF

(Impassively) Make it snow.

INKLE

I don't expect you to believe us, of course, without proof, which I am perfectly willing to furnish. Think of a number.

INKLE

Make it snow.

INKLE

Now, you certainly don't want me to destroy your crops by having me make it snow, surely. Think of a number.

CHIEF

(Impassively) Destroy the crops.
INKLE
But that would cause famine. What would your tribe eat?
(CHIEF looks at him for a moment suspiciously)
You would not want it said that the great King Natooka caused his
tribe to starve, surely.
(The CHIEF finally shakes his head. INKLE exchanges a triumphant
glance with TRUDGE)
Now. Think of a number.

CHIEF
Eight.

INKLE
No, no, just think of it. But don't tell me. Think of another one.

All right.
(Uses his wife's hand to count on)

INKLE
Have you got one now?

CHIEF
(Lifting one of her fingers)
Yes.

INKLE
Add three.
(The CHIEF does so.)
Subtract six.
(The CHIEF slaps down the fingers)
Now what's your answer?

(Immediately) CHIEF
Negative two.
(TRUDGE looks alarmed)

INKLE
Now, if your highness will just concentrate on the number you
thought of, I will mysteriously read your mind and tell you what it is.
(Puts his hand on his head. Appears to concentrate and
make magical passes. The CHIEF concentrates fiercely on his
wife's one upraised finger)
You thought of ... one!
(The CHIEF does not respond)
Isn't that correct?

CHIEF
(Fiercely.)
No, no, tell!

INKLE
Quick, the cards, Trudge.
TRUDGE
Take a card, any card, your highness.

CHIEF
Why?

TRUDGE
See, how pretty they are — courtiers and queens and all. Now take one, and I'll show you something very interesting.
(CHIEF does so)
Now look at it.

CHIEF
All right.

TRUDGE
Now just put it back into the deck just anywhere at all. No, not there — in here. Thankyou.
(Having forced the card into place, shuffles them, turning his back holding the selected card in his teeth, talking all the while)
Now, hocus, pocus...

CHIEF
What are you going to do?

TRUDGE
(Holding up the card)
This is the card you selected.

CHIEF
No, it isn't.

TRUDGE
But I'm sure it is.

CHIEF
It's not the same one.

TRUDGE
But it has to be.

CHIEF
I don't believe you gods at all.
(INKLE and TRUDGE start to go. INDIANS stop them)

INKLE
But I assure you sir...

CHIEF
(Notions for silence)
I am stoo ped, you are tall. I have wrinkles, and bags under my eyes. Your skin is smooth. My eyes are red from lack of sleep, and yours are not. In short: I am a god and you are not.
MIASMA

Yes, that is so, white men.

CHIEF

Think what it is to be good and have everybody know it. You are not allowed to relax at a game of bow and arrows, or eat out of doors without being blamed for the sand that gets blown into the salad. I am not allowed to lie down for fear the winds might fail. If you were good like I am and had to manage all those perverse little spirits of the stream, you'd talk different.

INKLE

But if you'll just give us a moment, I'm sure we can prove to you who we are.

CHIEF

If you gods, you certainly wouldn't go around and tell everybody because you'd know they'd always be pestering you for something. They expect you to keep up with every fallen sparrow when you haven't even thought up explanations for all the fallen warriors.

(Grumbling)

As fast as you explain things the little spirits come along and do something else.

QUEEN MOTAKA

Bat, Natooka, these look like gentlemen. I hear that they are from across the great water. Bear in mind that they could introduce us to some very interesting society if we should go for a visit sometime.

CHIEF

Quiet woman!

(EVERYBODY falls flat. CHIEF turns to INKLE)

Mr. Inkle, if it wasn't that I am also merciful, I'd recognize you as a god and leave you to take over this position. But since I am merciful, somebody go fill the large kettle and put a bayleaf in.

(Starts to go)

I must go now, to supervise the preparations.

(THEY all go out)

Guard them well.

INKLE

Well.... Trudge .... I fear our odds are up.

TRUDGE

Aye, master Inkle, it certainly seems the case.

(Silence for a moment. TRUDGE whistles)

I certainly did want to own that new pair of boots and maybe a suit before I would die. The suit I had was cut over from my brother, who had it from my other brother before him, who had it from my Uncle Dodge on my mother's side.

INKLE

It would please me to buy you those things just now.
TRUDGE

(Whistles some more)
But other than that, it's been very pleasant. It's been very pleasant, for example, knowing you Master Inkle.

INKLE

It won't be long now, I fear.

TRUDGE

They say a watched pot never boils.

INKLE

Only a saying. It always does.

TRUDGE

Aye. (Singing half-heartedly)

A voyage e'er seen,
Had not entered my head

(Sighing)
I do hope my dear mother never hears of this. She would never forgive them.

(Singing again)
If I'd known but on which side to butter my bread
Heigh ho
That I...

(Enter the QUEEN, and KING, STARLIGHT, and baggage)

QUEEN

Now, gentlemen, we're all ready to go.

INKLE

(Amazed)
All ready to go?

TRUDGE

I'll never be ready to go, I can tell you that.

QUEEN

To the Barbadoes, of course. Starlight, take my bags down to the canoe. And don't forget the large box of face paints, we'll need to decorate ourselves for social functions and such.

STARLIGHT

Shall I wait for you thence?

QUEEN

Yes, of course, dear. Tell me, Mr. Inkle, are the winters chilly? Should I take something more than a few light chemises?

NATOSKA

It's too late to talk of that now. Hurry, Matoska, we will be seen.
INKLE
I'm afraid, we don't understand any of this at all . . .

KING

(Impatiently)
We are going to the Barbadoes with you. I have observed you civilized and Christian people, and I want to live as you do, never having to care about anyone but myself for a change. Hurry man, do not just stand there!

QUEEN
Now, you don't have to talk so loudly, Natoeka; there are none of your braves here now that you must impress.

TRUDGE
Do you mean, we are being sent back to our countrymen.

QUEEN
Of course, why when I learned that my daughter was sheltering two young Englishmen, naturally I was anxious to take advantage of the situation. I've longed for the occasion to expand my social circle from this rude native village, and to visit the other royal families of the world, and such. Ah, here's Yarico.

(MARICO and WOBSKI enter).

YARICO
All is arranged, Inkle. The ship of your countrymen searching near here has seen my signal. Soon you will be among your own people again.

TRUDGE
But — But — I can't leave my Wows . . .

WOBSKI
You don't have to; I come with you!

TRUDGE
Ah, what a showy fellow I'll be!

(They embrace)

INKLE
And you, Yarico, will you come with me?

YARICO
Of course I will, Inkle.

INKLE
But do you know what dangers there are in my country?

YARICO
Ah Inkle, I fear no single one of your countrymen alone — I fear only your great cities!
INKLE

Aye, these are the schools of our civilized nations; where children
are raised. Maxims! Fight for what you want, take care of yourself,
for nobody else will.

(MUSIC has started)

0 Say, simple maid, have you formed any notion
Of all the rude dangers in crossing the ocean?
When winds whistle shilly, ah, won’t they remind you,
To sigh, with regret, for the grot left behind you?

YARICO

Ah, no, I could follow, and sail the world over
Nor think of my grot, when I look at my lover!
The winds which blow round us, you arms for my pillow,
Will lull us to sleep, whilst we’re rocked by each hillow.

BOTH

0 say then, my true love, we will never sunder,
Nor shrink from the tempest, nor dread the big thunder;
While constant, we’ll laugh at all changes of weather,
And journey, all over the world, both together.

(CANNON is heard from off as music finishes)

KING

That’s the signal of the ship!

INKLE

Englishmen and civilization at last!

ALL

(Coming forward)
Come let us dance and sing,
While all Barbadoes bells shall ring
Love scrape the fiddle-string
And Venus plays the lute;
Hymen gay feet away
Happy on our landing-day
Cocks his chin, and figures in
To tabor, fire and flute.

Come let us dance and sing,
While all Barbadoes bells shall ring
Love scrape the fiddle-string
And Venus plays the lute!

(THEY all start off.)

(CURTAIN.) (End of first act.)