

No Title As Yet

A play in  $\nu$  parts.

INT. SERENITY

NARRATOR

Two spaceships, travelling not aimlessly  
Through th'outer rim, where lies our  
scene  
A firefly class transport named Serenity  
And one blue box, of dubious esteem

Miranda's revelation now behind  
They flee the one who now flies at their  
tail  
Th'attention of the press they hope to  
find  
'Neath which to shelter, else forever  
fail

The curious events, which shall these  
crews  
Befall, and form the most part of our  
play  
Shall make you think we're loose just a  
few screws  
But nevermind, should all work on the  
day

So now, the scene, enough of all this  
rhyme  
We're rather tired, and running out of  
time

EXT. SIRIUS PRIME

NARRATOR

We join our band of troubadours towards  
the end of their dalliance with the  
agents of the press...

MALJEAN

So, as you can all see, plain as one  
of those tentacles, the Alliance has  
been messing with mind control drugs.  
Sure as I know anything I know this:  
they will try again. Maybe on another  
world, maybe on this very ground swept  
clean. A year from now, they'll swing  
back to the belief... that they can  
make people... better.  
And I do not hold to that!

CROWD

(Assorted cries of  
'no', 'shame', 'a  
duck' etc.)

The crowd begins to shuffle and the like; Rose steps on a tentacle.

TENTACULAR VIKING

\*ahem\* You have insulted me, and must  
pay the price. Or words to that effect!

NARRATOR

Good gentles, we would not expose your  
ears to such profanities as are, in this  
conversation, expressed, such is our  
concern for your nervous sensibilities.  
As such, we cut straight to...

Fighting! During the course of action, Javert enters the scene, and Rose  
dies. The former is by far the more important event.

JAVERT

I have a song to sing, oh!

CROWD

Sing us your song, oh!

JAVERT

It's a song that is sung when the bell  
is wrung  
To sound out a hidden wrong, oh!  
It's a song of the president, new elect  
Who jumped in rage at the great effect  
You made with your announcement,  
ill-thought out  
And bad for your health, without a doubt  
The Alliance's rule you'll no more  
flout,  
When we are done with this little bout,  
I'll cut you up and I'll wring you  
out...

THE DOCTOR

I don't think the line with Alliance  
scanned properly

JAVERT

Maljean! I have you now!

THE DOCTOR

(\*frowns\*)

Now that didn't even rhyme. The rest of it mostly worked, I'll grant you, but I think you're losing it towards the end.

JAVERT

(\*Turns to the Doctor,  
meeting his eyes\*)

What a lonely child you were, Maljean.  
What a poor, lonely child...

THE DOCTOR

(\*Looks slightly  
worried\*)

You're not going to kiss me now, are you? Because, you know, I get enough of that from Jack...

JAVERT

(\*Snaps out of his  
trance\*)

You're not Maljean? Where is he?

THE DOCTOR

(\*Thumbs over his  
shoulder.\*)

Over there. Big ship, looks a bit like a pregnant insect on steroids. Lifting off...

(\*Turns around\*)

...with my Tardis! My Tardis!

JAVERT

(\*Shrugs, rolls his  
shoulders\*)

Fancy a lift?

THE DOCTOR

(\*Raises an eyebrow,  
then puts his arm  
around Javert's  
shoulders\*)

Great. Now, I don't suppose you speak French, do you?

FADE OUT

NARRATOR

We now rejoin the crew of that most tranquil ship upon the sands of...

(\*Turns offstage\*)

...look, does it really have to be called this? I mean, it's enough you have me doing this ridiculous mock-Shakespeare thing, without calling planets after vegetables...

CROWD

Yes! (or no)

NARRATOR

... ahem, Mouse, a completely implausibly named planet, wherein our two most elusive protagonists reside, hidden from the clutches of the alliance...

EXT. MOUSE, OLD TOWN

SIMON

Damnit, Simon, damnit, you fool. You know where you are now, out here on the rim. Out here, the law belongs to whoever takes it in his hands and squeezes hardest. They don't like the Alliance, but the day you convinced yourself you could hide behind them, that was the day you signed your death warrant.

GAIL

Tell me, Doctor boy, why I shouldn't just hand you over to the Alliance, next one of them comes visiting?

SIMON

My sister...

GAIL

Your sister what?

SIMON

(\*Looks puzzled\*)

I... I don't know. Aren't you meant to punch me before I can properly explain things?

GAIL

(\*Slaps Simon\*)

Your sister can take care of herself. Doesn't explain why you're here, without permission, drawing every eye in the Alliance towards us. Some here might not appreciate that.

SIMON

She was right, I knew that. I had no right to be here, out in Mouse's Old Town. Problem was, they knew it too...

HOOKER

Gail, there's a ship just docked. A whole division of Alliance troopers, armed to the teeth and ready to play.

GAIL

(to hooker)

Alright. Get the girls ready; I want the roofs covered, the streets cleared, snipers in the windows.

(\*Turns to Simon\*)

You're lucky. You get a preview of how justice is enforced around here. Not many people can say that... not for long, anyway.

River emerges from a side street, holding a sword in each hand, and proceeds to lay about the Alliance troopers.

SIMON

She was a work of pure beauty, violence given form. She was Kali, Eris, Morgan... she was a weapon, and her weapons were part of her. She cut through them like a laser cutting torch through the hull of a derelict ship. When she'd killed all his lackeys, she stood before him, crouched with weapons extended to either side. Just as she was about to kill him, he turned - a fatal mistake, I thought at the time, but maybe it was the only thing that saved his life.

JAVERT

Maljean!

MALJEAN

Javert!

MALJEAN

Believe of me what you will  
The truth of the Alliance must be known  
They will try again like this  
Truth is all I want right now  
You know nothing of the world  
Alliance wants control, how?  
I will not tolerate this mind control

I am warning you Javert  
I am a stronger man by far  
There is power in me yet  
My race is not yet run  
I am warning you Javert  
There is nothing I won't dare  
If I have to kill you now  
I'll do what must be done!

JAVERT

You are wrong, you can't be right  
You are wrong, you can't be right  
Recant your lies, Jean Maljean  
My duty's to the law  
You have no rights  
Recant your lies, Jean Maljean  
Miranda did not occur  
Jean Maljean is nothing now  
Dare you talk to me of sin  
Or the price you have to pay  
Every man is born in sin  
Every man must choose his way  
You know nothing of Javert  
I was born inside a jail  
I was born with scum like you  
I am from the gutter too

Javert shoots at Maljean, misses, hitting Simon.

SIMON

Look after her for me, Mal...

Maljean grabs River, they both exit.

RIVER

(over Mal's shoulder)

Killy, killy, killy; swathes, swathes,  
swathes...

THE NIGHT BEFORE, OUSFG PARTY PANTO WRITING

PRESIDENT

Mr. Stratton?

STRATTON

I recognised immediately the identity  
of the one who addressed me; who  
wouldn't? President of OUSFG, high  
up as they went. "At your service,"  
I told her immediately. "How may I be  
of assistance?"

PRESIDENT

I've been following some of your work.  
Some of it's quite impressive.

STRATTON

I nodded graciously at the compliment.  
"I hadn't realised it was so well known"

PRESIDENT

It's my job to know these things. Would  
you happen to be free for a moment?

STRATTON

I nodded my affirmative, and without  
a word she led me down a flight of  
stairs to a door whose existence I'd  
never noticed. And it was my staircase!  
She held it open for me and I stepped  
through. Upon the wall was a sequence  
of scripts, black lettering upon white  
paper. "What are they?" I asked of  
her, though I had a suspicion welling in  
the pit of my stomach.

PRESIDENT

OUSFG Punt Party Panto scripts. You're familiar with the work of Dan Brown, I trust?

Stratton looks embarrassed, but nods

Then you're aware of the technique by which one looks at prior works and can extrapolate the full content of future ones?

Again, Stratton nods

We've had to update the technique somewhat - we're dealing with far more advance material, of course, but we've done it. And this is what we see.

STRATTON

She raised her hand towards the far end of the room, where the scripts grew smaller and finally vanished. I looked at the top of the page, reading the title. 'OUSFG PUNT PARTY PANTO, 2011'. I turned back to the president. "Where's it gone?" I asked her.

PRESIDENT

It never existed. We've rerun this experiment hundreds of times, even worked out the entire deduction basis from scratch. After 2010, there is no OUSFG panto. There's just not enough material to work with... even with the books in the library, there are only a finite number of spec. fic. concepts that can be filked to put into a panto. We're within 5 years of the final generation.

STRATTON

My mind reeled desperately. "But there'll be more things written, surely? We can buy more books..."

PRESIDENT

Perhaps. But how long can that go on, how long until the library will no longer fit in Tim's car? Until all the useful ideas have been used up?

STRATTON

So what do you suggest?

PRESIDENT

We've been working on ways of distilling the essence out of Pantos, finding common elements that we can permute to generate new ideas. So far, we're not having much success. I'd hoped you could help us out.

STRATTON

Over the next few hours, I worked with the President and some other members, trying to come up with some method by which we could circumvent the perceived end of OUSFG Pantos. We managed to isolate the bad attempts at humour, the faux-intellectualism, but none of it seemed to help. It occurred to me that if we were successful, OUSFG would be able to create new pantos without the limitations imposed by working from material that was actually published. Would the world be enriched by the resulting works, or would the society destroy itself in the pathological ramblings of its members? There was no way to tell.

OUSFG PUNT PARTY WRITING SESSION, A FEW HOURS LATER

STRATTON

I thought I had it. I was playing with source material of the texts, and various means of incorporating them into the panto. I turned to the president, showing her my results. I'd taken last year's panto and plugged it into itself, getting a whole new play by recycling both theme and structure from last year's. "So what do you think we get out of this?"

PRESIDENT

I think you're writing it.