

**Bleak House – Audition Piece****Chancellor / Tangle (1)**

TANGLE: The case of Jarndyce and Jarndyce, my Lord.

*Audible yawns sound from the invisible occupants of the court.*

CHANCELLOR: What is it concerning?

TANGLE: One of the wards in Jarndyce, young Mr Carstone, my lord, wishes to purchase a commission in the army. A request has been made for limited funds to be released for this purpose.

CHANCELLOR: Mr Carstone? But surely, if I am not much mistaken, the court released a sum of money only last month to cover his training as a physician

TANGLE: Indeed so, my lord. Mr Carstone begs to inform the court that he has changed his mind.

CHANCELLOR: Then the court begs to inform Mr Carstone that he is a vexatious and capricious infant, who should learn to know his own mind. Make an appointment for Mr Carstone to report to me in my private office. Next matter!

TANGLE: The Gridley case, my lord. A small dispute over a parental legacy between Mr Gridley and his brother, filed seven years ago.

CHANCELLOR: Not this case again. I thought we were still awaiting proof of parentage.

TANGLE: We received that proof four years ago, my lord. The case has been waiting to proceed, but now ...

CHANCELLOR: File an affidavit to investigate the reason for the delay. We shall examine the evidence a year from today.

TANGLE: But my lord ...

CHANCELLOR: The court is adjourned!

**Chancellor / Tangle (2)**

CHANCELLOR: Silence in Court! Regarding the matter at hand, this court hereby authorises the transfer of the two Jarndyce wards to the care of their uncle, this being apparently the most expedient course for ensuring...

- TANGLE: Begging your Lordship's pardon... dead, m'lud.
- CHANCELLOR: What!?
- TANGLE: The uncle, m'lud. Dead, m'lud.
- CHANCELLOR: Ah yes indeed, Mr Tangle. I meant, of course, their grandfather.
- TANGLE: Dead, m'lud, also. Victim of rash action. Took his own life, m'lud. Brains, m'lud, blown out, m'lud, begging your lordship's pardon.
- CHANCELLOR: Yes, yes, I remember now. Well, is there anyone left who could possibly act as their guardian?
- TANGLE: Will your Lordship allow me? There is a cousin, a very distant cousin, several times removed, so I am told, also by the name of Jarndyce, who would be prepared to act as guardian to the two unfortunates ... to the wards in this case.
- CHANCELLOR: Hmm ..... Very well, I will speak with both young people, and satisfy myself on the subject of their residing with their cousin. Are there any other matters?
- TANGLE: One other thing, m'lud. The young woman, Esther Summerson.
- CHANCELLOR: Esther Summerson? I do not recall that name. What has she to do with the Jarndyce estate?
- TANGLE: She... ahem, that is to say, she is not connected with the estate. She is an orphan, conceived, we believe, out of wedlock, and brought up by one Miss Barbary, now deceased.
- CHAN CELLOR: Oh, I see. And what is to become of her?
- TANGLE: Mr Jarndyce is a former friend of Miss Barbary. He, in his infinite charity, having no females in his household, has asked Miss Summerson to act as companion to his new ward.
- CHANCELLOR: An excellent notion. Well that disposes of both of them very nicely. If that is all ...
- TANGLE: That is all, m'lud.