

SYNOPSIS OF *BEGGAR AT THE FEAST*

(A comic drama in one act; fourteen scenes)

TIME: the present and thirteenth century

PLACE: A stylized set suggests a Manhattan brownstone; a New York City police station; and the hills and skies of ancient Anatolia.

CHARACTERS: (an ensemble cast of 3 men and 3 women play 15 characters)

ACTOR #1: The Spirit of Reamus Skrolls, an elderly dramaturg

ACTOR #2: Griffon Wright, Vorclav Vulturius, Rumi, Husam; late thirties

ACTOR #3: Detective Nathan Binder, Wynn Scrivener, Veero Vulturius; early twenties

ACTOR #4: Detective Jane Pagett, Vyva Vulturius, Spirit of Violet Vellumare; forties

ACTOR #5: Fontana Skratz, Valorie Vulturius; early twenties

ACTOR #6: Maude Scrawlings, Sybil Readman, Volga Vulturius; early-thirties

SYNOPSIS: The corpse of Reamus Skrolls, an esteemed elderly dramaturg, is found on the floor of his Manhattan brownstone where his spirit has returned to witness the consequences of his death. A reputable director, Griffon Wright, discovers the body, and assumes Reamus has committed suicide, but instead of a note, he has left a lengthy play entitled *Beggar at the Feast*. When detectives search the house, they discover that the rooms on the top floor are filled with thousands of scripts; while the cellar features a laboratory for the production of potent opiates. Soon the deceased dramaturg is declared a notorious felon, and theatres everywhere are clamoring to produce his play -- despite all the characters being vultures and the dialog entirely in verse. Because the fingerprints on a nearby syringe do not belong to Reamus, his suicide is deemed a possible homicide, and an investigation ensues, revealing that his name, ethnicity, and country of origin have all been a deception. The police locate Reamus's granddaughter, Fontana, a musician and heir to his estate, who participates, along with Griffon, a detective, a playwright, and literary manager at the reading of *Beggar at the Feast*. A romance ensues between Fontana and Griffon amid subplots involving accusations of seduction, plagiarism, and musings on the never ending cycles of violence enacted by human beings as vultures devour their carrion spoils on the fields of battle. Since the play is told from Reamus's point of view, he interjects his dramaturgical analysis while espousing his philosophy. He also engages in futile attempts to control the destinies of characters who resist his machinations.

THEMES: *Beggar at the Feast* deals with the moral reckoning of a tormented soul, while exploring the value of familial and romantic love, the triumph of imagination, and the perpetual folly of resolving conflicts through violence.

