

## SHAMAN SAMPLE

### From Act I, scene 1 (in the Lower World of the Ancestors):

SINGER, BUILDER and DREAMER have begun creating an Upper World for their entertainment—a world where everything is perfect.

TRICKSTER has arrived on the scene, however, and takes a dim view of all this perfection. He inveigles the others into creating human beings in that world—and along with them, sex.

DREAMER

Oh! And already such a dream was unfolding!

SINGER

(excitedly)

Tell us, tell us!

DREAMER

A garden of delights. It's floating up there somewhere, full of fantastic creatures, all fantastically happy. Happy, happy, happy!

(fade in MUSIC)

TRICKSTER

(gazing upwards)

Ah, yes. And my imagination tells me there are long, slithery things sunning themselves in the grass. Happily, of course.

DREAMER

There's one, big, beautiful tree in the middle of the garden.

TRICKSTER

I imagine it's got shiny, red, tasty fruit on it, right?

SINGER

See, Builder? I knew it, I knew it! Oh, Dreamer, what a wonder! Tell us more.

(As DREAMER sings,  
accompanying visuals come up  
on the wall slab where the  
rectangles were.)

(TRICKSTER, meanwhile, gets ever more impatient as the happy vision unfolds.)

DREAMER

**The sun gets up, a-stretchin' and a-yawnin',  
Pourin' gold on a tabletop sea,  
Breakin' jade on sparklin' sand.  
Warmin' the earth of an emerald land.  
Busy little seeds send busy little shoots,  
Dapplin' hills with flowers and fruits.**

**A gentle rain sets everything a-spawnin',  
It's all as right as can be.**

S. **Oh, what a world, where contentment and harmony pervade.**  
D: **Happiness and peace, no doubts and no confusion.**

TRICKSTER

(aside)

**What a pure illusion!**

SINGER & DREAMER

**Oh, such a sweet and wonderful world!**

TRICKSTER

(aside)

**"Sweet," they say! How positively saccharin!  
It needs me—to toss a firecracker in!**

BUILDER

(to SINGER)

Maybe your idea wasn't so bad after all.

DREAMER

**The sun slides down, a-glidin' and a-dippin'.  
In rosy red clouds he'll finally set.  
A nighttime world awakes from a siesta,**

**A lantern moon lights the fiesta.  
You can hear the trillin' of a trillion wings,  
The frog keeps time and the cricket sings,  
Coons and fireflies a-waltzin' and a-blinkin',  
The owl and the mouse minuet.**

SINGER, DREAMER & BUILDER

**Oh, what a world, where contentment and harmony pervade,  
Happiness and peace, no doubts and no confusion.**

TRICKSTER

(aside)

**Enjoy it while you can, it's only an illusion!**

SINGER, DREAMER & BUILDER

**Oh, what a wonderful, wonderful,  
Dream of a wonderful world!**

TRICKSTER

(aside)

Where does someone go to throw up around here?

DREAMER

If you'll forgive me, I'm going back there for more.

SINGER

Oh yes, Dreamer, do!

DREAMER

'Night, night.

(DREAMER lies down  
contentedly and nods off.)

TRICKSTER

If your obedient servant might ask a question....

BUILDER

(suspiciously)

What?

TRICKSTER

Who's going to cut the grass up there? Shovel up after the elephants? You guys?

(SINGER and BUILDER look at  
one another uncertainly.)

TRICKSTER (CONT.)

I didn't imagine so. That garden needs domestic help. Builder, get to work.

BUILDER

Me?

TRICKSTER

It's your job putting things together, isn't it?

BUILDER

Yes, but.... What is "domestic help" supposed to look like? Us?

TRICKSTER

Cheap knock-offs. Utilitarian. Disposable.

BUILDER

I don't build inferior products, Trickster.

TRICKSTER

What's inferior about perfectly designed, built-in obsolescence? Get on with it.

BUILDER

(to SINGER)

I don't like the way he bosses us around. We were here first.

SINGER

But look at the marvelous new toys we're getting!

BUILDER

And my toy? The new one you promised me? Remember?

(DREAMER awakens and  
shuffles over to TRICKSTER)

DREAMER

I thought you imagined those slithery things were sunning themselves in the grass. One just slithered its way right up that tree in the middle. It's in the branches. Lurking!

TRICKSTER

(to SINGER and BUILDER)

See what's going on up there? While you two are dilly-dallying!

(TRICKSTER grabs BUILDER's baton.)

BUILDER

Hey! That's mine!

TRICKSTER

It's nice to share.

BUILDER

You don't even know how to use it!

TRICKSTER

Of course I do.

(TRICKSTER flicks up an ungainly assemblage of body parts. BUILDER snatches his baton back.)

BUILDER

The rules! I told you: everything 1 to 1.6. Like Singer's rectangles that fit together and make others.

(BUILDER flicks a rectangle onto TRICKSTER's monstrosity. The body parts rearrange themselves into human form, the proportions all neatly indicated.)

TRICKSTER

Well then, smarty-pants, put another up there.

BUILDER

Why should I?

TRICKSTER

Because that one's got nothing to fit into.

SINGER

He's right.

(BUILDER, uncertainly, flicks up an identical figure. Both have crotches as smooth as kewpie dolls.)

And now what? BUILDER  
(TRICKSTER reaches for BUILDER's baton. BUILDER holds it away.)

Please? TRICKSTER

All right. But no funny business. BUILDER

As always, your obedient servant. TRICKSTER  
(BUILDER hands TRICKSTER his baton. TRICKSTER flicks pubic hair onto the one, and an erection onto the other.)

Now they can fit. Like an arrow into its quiver. TRICKSTER

I like it! Not only 1 to 1.6, but opposites that attract. And see? Arms and hands to take and make things. SINGER

And slap each other and break things. TRICKSTER

No! BUILDER

Opposites! The rules! TRICKSTER

And legs and feet to run around on, dance, and skip! SINGER

And kick each other's shins and trip. TRICKSTER

Stop mucking them up! BUILDER

SINGER

And a brain to figure out things!

TRICKSTER

And think the things in Dreamer's dreams are real things.

BUILDER

NO, NO NO!

TRICKSTER

Of which the opposite is YES times three.

DREAMER

If you don't mind me putting in my two bits, that arrow affair.... Isn't it going to poke into everything?

TRICKSTER

I imagine so.

BUILDER

(BUILDER grabs his baton back.)

Any fool can see it has to be retractable.

(BUILDER flicks at the image,  
and the erection subsides.)

TRICKSTER

Satisfied now?

BUILDER

No, I'm not. You've turned them into creatures of contradiction, not equilibrium. And that arrow-and-quiver nonsense is trouble, mark my words. I'm going to do some proper building on my own.

(BUILDER starts to exit.)

TRICKSTER

Whatcha gonna build?

BUILDER

None of your business.

(to SINGER)

You should never have let him loose. "Obedient servant" indeed! All I can say is *my* new toy had better be good.

(BUILDER exits)

TRICKSTER

He's such a spoilsport!

SINGER

(pointing to the images)

SINGER

Where shall we put them up there?

TRICKSTER

How about right under that beautiful tree? I imagine them happy there.

DREAMER

Just the place! Then off they go. And me, I'm off to dream. Arrows and quivers, quivers and arrows.... Yum, yum.

(DREAMER goes and lies down.)

SINGER

(to the images)

Do a good job now, hear? Keep everything up there in order.

(The images vanish from the slab.)

TRICKSTER

And now just as you sang it, Singer: Let the fun times flow!

SUDDEN BLACKOUT.)

END OF Act I, Scene 1

**From Act I, scene 4 (in the Upper World of the modern-day, dysfunctional family):**

IGGY, as usual, had landed in the wrong time and place on one of his trance quests to reach The Ancestors in the Lower World. This time, he returns as a Kashmiri merchant.



Meanwhile, the mother of the family has died, and the family members are bickering about what's to become of them all without the mother to keep them together. In the course of their quarreling, SILA learns a family secret.

IGGY

(sings, to an Indian *raga*)

**Goods and chattels, chattels and goods,  
Worthy Master, are worthless things.  
Hands that make them turn to dust,  
Substance passes...sooner or later.**

**Trinkets made of gold and silver,  
Chattels and goods, goods and chattels,  
Shine but briefly, melt and tarnish,  
Hands that make them turn to dust.**

**Objects last but for a moment,  
Here one day, gone tomorrow.  
Goods and chattels, chattels and goods,  
Worthy Master, are worthless things.**

**Hands that make them turn to dust,  
Substance passes...sooner or later.**

GORDON

Sila, get him out of here!

DORA

Are we going to do this inventory, or what?

IGGY

Your inventory is a pitiful menu with nothing on it to nourish your hearts. But make your selections. Meanwhile I will prepare a feast that will make your bellies jolly.

(IGGY gathers up his paraphernalia and heads out the door, clapping his hands as if summoning a servant.)

IGGY (CONT.)

Ramzan! These poor souls are starving!

(IGGY exits.)

GORDON

I give up.

SILA  
Why can't you hear what he says?

DORA  
Grow up, Sila.

SILA  
If only I *could!* Then I wouldn't have to have you running my life for me.

DORA  
You think I like it any better? I'm about to be a mother, and the last thing I need right now is to run *your* life. Gordo's right. A boarding school's what you need.

SILA  
*A boarding school?*

DORA  
A nice, cheap military academy or something.

SILA  
You wouldn't do that to me. Would you?

LUKE  
Relax, Ace. Over my dead body.

SILA  
I'd run away!

LUKE  
Fuckin' A, man!

SILA  
And Iggy? Where would he go?

GORDON  
Back to the deep freeze he came from.

SILA  
You know he can't go back to his people. You guys are sure some kind of family!  
(He starts to exit.)

GORDON  
We're only half family anyway.

SILA  
What do you mean, "half"?

Gordo...  
DORA

It's time someone told him.  
GORDON

Told me what?  
SILA

You weren't Father's child.  
GORDON

Say *what*?  
LUKE

What are you talking about?  
SILA

You're why Father bailed out. You chased him right out of the house. Oedipus triumphant!  
GORDON

I did not!  
SILA

Did too! When Mother showed up with Iggy in tow, she was—not to put too fine a point on it—knocked up. Father said there was no way it could be his.  
GORDON

Mother claimed you were a Spirit Child she'd conceived in a vision. That's why she gave you your weird name.  
DORA

She told me "Sila" meant "power of the universe." I think it's neat.  
SILA

So, Father said, "No way I'm gonna sleep with a wannabee slut who humps Indians!" And with that he was gone. History.  
GORDON

Oh god.  
SILA

Come over here, Ace.  
LUKE

(SILA doesn't move.)

GORDON

Their marriage sucked anyway. She was always banging around on digs somewhere, while he stayed home and banged the hired help. Wherever he is, Father probably thanks you for the one-way ticket.

(SILA stares at them for a moment and then exits at a run. LUKE starts after him, but stops.)

LUKE

That was really shitty, Gordo. Jesus, the kid's mother's just died, and you tell him he didn't have a father, and you guys aren't even his real brother and sister. Nice going!

GORDON

He's a minor. The world looks after minors.

LUKE

Yeah, tell me about it! You ought to be frigg'n' crucified. The kid's all alone!

GORDON

Like hell he is. He's got the two of you and his loopy Esquimo. Who have I got? I'm the one who's alone—and, it seems, about to be one of the homeless.

LUKE

Come on, doll. This meeting's not going anywhere. And I gotta go lie down.

(They prepare to exit.)

DORA

(waves the inventory)

We can't put this off. The sooner we get it over with, the sooner we can go our own ways. Face it: With Mother gone, this so-called "family" is history.

(DORA and LUKE exit.)

(Fade in music of "I want a family" from Scene 2.)

(GORDON stays unmoving until after the sound of the front door closing. He gets up and walks around, stroking the room's furniture, its architectural details.)

GORDON

(sings)

**Forget this family crap! One man will do  
To greet me in the evening when I come home.  
Instead of turning on the TV on the shelf,  
And pouring a drink all by myself,  
He'd turn *me* on...and pour us drinks for two.**

(He comes to the coffin.)

Mother, how could you leave me like this?

(IGGY, still the Kashmiri merchant, appears in the door with a tray of dishes. He looks around, surprised.)

IGGY

Where is the Memsahib and the Little One? And Luke Sahib?

(GORDON looks up at him, blankly.)

IGGY (CONT.)

I have cooked enough to feed a whole family of hungry people. But I find only hunger and no family to go with it. Oh my oh my, Gordon Sahib, you and I, we will be eating curry until the bulls come home to roost!

(LIGHTS FADE)

END OF ACT I, SCENE 4