

# The Gods of the Mountain

by Lord Dunsany

## Persons

Agmar \

Slag |

Ulf |

Oogno |- Beggars

Thahn |

Mlan |

A Thief /

Oorander \

Illanaun |- Citizens

Akmos /

The Dromedary Men

Citizens, etc.

The Others

Scene: The East

### The First Act

{Outside a city wall. Three beggars are seated upon the ground.}

Oogno:

These days are bad for beggary.

Thahn:

They are bad.

Ulf: {an older beggar but not gray}

Some evil has befallen the rich ones of this city.

They take no joy any longer in benevolence, but are become sour and miserly at heart. Alas for them! I sometimes sigh for them when I think of this.

Oogno:

Alas for them! A miserly heart must be a sore  
affliction.

Thahn:

A sore affliction indeed, and bad for our calling.

Oogno: {reflectively}

They have been thus for many months. What thing has  
befallen them?

Thahn:

Some evil thing.

Ulf:

There has been a comet come near to the earth of late  
and the earth has been parched and sultry so that the  
gods are drowsy and all those things that are divine in  
man, such as benevolence, drunkenness, extravagance,  
and song, have faded and died and have not been  
replenished by the gods.

Oogno:

It has indeed been sultry.

Thahn:

I have seen the comet o' nights.

Ulf:

The gods are drowsy.

Oogno:

If they awake not soon and make this city worthy again  
of our order I for one shall forsake the calling and  
buy a shop and sit at ease in the shade and barter for  
gain.

Thahn:

You will keep a shop?

{Enter Agmar and Slag. Agmar, though poorly dressed,  
is tall, imperious, and older than Ulf. Slag follows  
behind him.}

Agmar:

Is this a beggar who speaks?

Oogno:

Yes, master, a poor beggar.

Agmar:

How long has the calling of beggary existed?

Oogno:

Since the building of the first city, master.

Agmar:

And when has a beggar ever followed a trade? When has he ever haggled and bartered and sat in a shop?

Oogno:

Why, he has never done so.

Agmar:

Are you he that shall be first to forsake the calling?

Oogno:

Times are bad for the calling here.

Thahn:

They are bad.

Agmar:

So you would forsake the calling?

Oogno:

The city is unworthy of our calling. The gods are  
drowsy and all that is divine in man is dead. {To  
third beggar} Are not the gods drowsy?

Ulf:

They are drowsy in their mountains away at Marma. The  
seven green idols are drowsy. Who is this that rebukes  
us?

Thahn:

Are you some great merchant, master? Perhaps you will  
help a poor man that is starving.

Slag:

My master a merchant! No, no. He is no merchant. My  
master is no merchant.

Oogno:

I perceive that he is some lord in disguise. The gods  
have woken and sent him to save us.

Slag:

No, no. You do not know my master. You do not know  
him.

Thahn:

Is he the Soldan's self that has come to rebuke us?

Agmar:

I am a beggar, and an old beggar.

Slag: {with great pride}

There is none like my master. No traveller has met  
with cunning like to his, not even those that come from  
Aethiopia.

Ulf:

We make you welcome to our town, upon which an evil has  
fallen, the days being bad for beggary.

Agmar:

Let none who has known the mystery of roads or has felt  
the wind arising new in the morning, or who has called  
forth out of the souls of men divine benevolence, ever  
speak any more of any trade or of the miserable gains  
of shops and the trading men.

Oogno:

I but spoke hastily, the times being bad.

Agmar:

I will put right the times.

Slag:

There is nothing that my master cannot do.

Agmar: {to Slag}

Be silent and attend to me. I do not know this city.

I have travelled from far, having somewhat exhausted  
the city of Ackara.

Slag:

My master was three times knocked down and injured by  
carriages there, once he was killed and seven times he  
was beaten and robbed, and every time he was generously  
compensated. He had nine diseases, many of them  
mortal --

Agmar:

Be silent, Slag. -- Have you any thieves among the  
calling here?

Ulf:

We have a few that we call thieves here, master, but  
they would scarcely seem thieves to you. They are not  
good thieves.



Agmar:

I shall need the best thief you have.

{Enter two citizens richly clad, Illanaun and  
Oorander.}

Illanaun:

Therefore we will send galleons to Ardaspes.

Oorander:

Right to Ardaspes through the silver gates.

{Agmar transfers the thick handle of his long staff to  
his left armpit, he droops on to it and it supports his  
weight; he is upright no longer. His right arm hangs  
limp and useless. He hobbles up to the citizens  
imploring alms.}

Illanaun:

I am sorry. I cannot help you. There have been too  
many beggars here and we must decline alms for the good  
of the town.

Agmar: {sitting down and weeping}

I have come from far.

{Illanaun presently returns and gives Agmar a coin.

Exit Illanaun. Agmar, erect again, walks back to the others.}

Agmar:

We shall need fine raiment; let the thief start at once. Let it rather be green raiment.

Beggar:

I will go and fetch the thief. {Exit}

Ulf:

We will dress ourselves as lords and impose upon the city.

Oogno:

Yes, yes; we will say we are ambassadors from a far land.

Ulf:

And there will be good eating.

Slag: {in an undertone to Ulf}

But you do not know my master. Now that you have suggested that we go as lords, he will make a better

suggestion. He will suggest that we should go as  
kings.

Ulf:

Beggars as kings!

Slag:

Ay. You do not know my master.

Ulf: {to Agmar}

What do you bid us do?

Agmar:

You shall first come by the fine raiment in the manner  
I have mentioned.

Ulf:

And what then, master?

Agmar:

Why, we shall go as gods.

Beggars:

As gods!

Agmar:

As gods. Know you the land through which I have lately  
come in my wanderings? Marma, where the gods are  
carved from green stone in the mountains. They sit all  
seven of them against the hills. They sit there  
motionless and travellers worship them.

Ulf:

Yes, yes, we know those gods. They are much revered  
here, but they are drowsy and send us nothing  
beautiful.

Agmar:

They are of green jade. They sit cross-legged with  
their right elbows resting on their left hands, the  
right forefinger pointed upward. We will come into the  
city disguised, from the direction of Marma, and we  
will claim to be these gods. We must be seven as they  
are. And when we sit we must sit cross-legged as they  
do, with the right hand uplifted.

Ulf:

This is a bad city in which to fall into the hands of  
oppressors, for the judges lack amiability here as the  
merchants lack benevolence, ever since the gods forgot  
them.

Agmar:

In our ancient calling a man may sit at one street  
corner for fifty years doing the one thing, and yet a  
day may come when it is well for him to rise up and do  
another thing while the timorous man starves.

Ulf:

Also it were not well to anger the gods.

Agmar:

Is not all life a beggary to the gods? Do they not see  
all men always begging of them and asking alms with  
incense, and bells, and subtle devices?

Oogno:

Yes, all men indeed are beggars before the gods.

Agmar:

Does not the mighty Soldan often sit by the agate altar  
in his royal temple as we sit at a street corner or by  
a palace gate?

Ulf:

It is even so.

Agmar:

Then will the gods be glad when we follow the holy  
calling with new devices and with subtlety, as they are  
glad when the priests sing a new song.

Ulf:

Yet I have a fear.

{Enter two men talking.}

Agmar: {to Slag}

Go you into the city before us and let there be a  
prophecy there which saith that the gods who are carven  
from green rock in the mountain shall one day arise in  
Marma and come here in the guise of men.

Slag:

Yes, master. Shall I make the prophecy myself? Or  
shall it be found in some old document?

Agmar:

Let someone have seen it once in some rare document.  
Let it be spoken of in the market place.

Slag:

It shall be spoken of, master.

{Slag lingers. Enter Thief and Thahn.}

Oogno:

This is our thief.

Agmar: {encouragingly}

Ah, he is a quick thief.

Thief:

I could only procure you three green raiments, master.

The city is not now well supplied with them; moreover,

it is a very suspicious city and without shame for the

baseness of its suspicions.

Slag: {to a beggar}

This is not thieving.

Thief:

I could do no more, master. I have not practised

thieving all my life.

Agmar:

You have got something: it may serve our purpose. How

long have you been thieving?

Thief:

I first stole when I was ten.

Slag: {in horror}

When he was ten!

Agmar:

We must tear them up and divide them amongst the  
seven. {To Thahn} Bring me another beggar.

Slag:

When my master was ten he had already to slip by night  
out of two cities.

Oogno: {admiringly}

Out of two cities?

Slag: {nodding his head}

In his native city they do not now know what became of  
the golden cup that stood in the Lunar Temple.

Agmar:

Yes, into seven pieces.



Ulf:

We will each wear a piece of it over our rags.

Oogno:

Yes, yes, we shall look fine.

Agmar:

That is not the way we shall disguise ourselves.

Oogno:

Not cover our rags?

Agmar:

No, no. The first who looked closely would say, "These are only beggars. They have disguised themselves."

Ulf:

What shall we do?

Agmar:

Each of the seven shall wear a piece of the green raiment underneath his rags. And peradventure here and there a little shall show through; and men shall say, "These seven have disguised themselves as beggars. But we know not what they be."

Slag:

Hear my wise master.

Oogno: {in admiration}

\*He\* is a beggar.

Ulf:

He is an \*old\* beggar.

{Curtain}

## The Second Act

{The Metropolitan Hall of the city of Kongros. Citizens,

etc.

Enter the seven beggars with green silk under their rags.}

Oorander:

Who are you and whence come you?

Agmar:

Who may say what we are or whence we come?

Oorander:

What are these beggars and why do they come here?

Agmar:

Who said to you that we were beggars?

Oorander:

Why do these men come here?

Agmar:

Who said to you that we were men?

Illanaun:

Now, by the moon!

Agmar:

My sister.

Illanaun:

What?

Agmar:

My little sister.

Slag:

Our little sister the moon. She comes to us at  
evenings away in the mountains of Marma. She trips  
over the mountains when she is young. When she is  
young and slender she comes and dances before us, and  
when she is old and unshapely she hobbles away from the  
hills.

Agmar:

Yet is she young again and forever nimble with youth;  
yet she comes dancing back. The years are not able to  
curb her nor to bring gray hairs to her brethren.

Oorander:

This is not wanted.

Illanaun:

It is not in accordance with custom.

Akmos:

Prophecy hath not thought it.

Slag:

She comes to us new and nimble, remembering olden  
loves.

Oorander:

It were well that prophets should come and speak to us.

Illanaun:

This hath not been in the past. Let prophets come.  
Let prophets speak to us of future things.

{The beggars seat themselves upon the floor in the  
attitude of the seven gods of Marma.}

Citizen:

I heard men speak today in the market place. They  
speak of a prophecy read somewhere of old. It says the  
seven gods shall come from Marma in the guise of men.

Illanaun:

Is this a true prophecy?

Oorander:

It is all the prophecy we have. Man without prophecy  
is like a sailor going by night over uncharted seas.

He knows not where are the rocks nor where the havens.

To the man on watch all things are black and the stars  
guide him not, for he knows not what they are.

Illanaun:

Should we not investigate this prophecy?

Oorander:

Let us accept it. It is as the small, uncertain light  
of a lantern, carried as it may be by a drunkard, but  
along the shore of some haven. Let us be guided.

Akmos:

It may be that they are but benevolent gods.

Agmar:

There is no benevolence greater than our benevolence.

Illanaun:

Then we need do little: they portend no danger to us.

Agmar:

There is no anger greater than our anger.

Oorander:

Let us make sacrifices to them if they be gods.

Akmos:

We humbly worship you, if ye be gods.

Illanaun: {kneeling too}

You are mightier than all men and hold high rank among other gods and are lords of this our city, and have the thunder as your plaything and the whirlwind and the eclipse and all the destinies of human tribes -- if ye be gods.

Agmar:

Let the pestilence not fall at once on this city, as it had indeed designed to; let not the earthquake swallow it all immediately up amid the howls of the thunder; let not infuriated armies overwhelm those that escape -- if we be gods --

Populace: {in horror}

If we be gods!

Oorander:

Come, let us sacrifice.

Illanaun:

Bring lambs!

Akmos:

Quick! Quick! {Exuent some}

Slag: {with solemn air}

This god is a very divine god.

Thahn:

He is no common god.

Mlan:

Indeed, he has made us.

Citizen: {to Slag}

He will not punish us, master? None of the gods will  
punish us? We will make a sacrifice, a good sacrifice.

Another:

We will sacrifice a lamb that the priests have blessed.

First citizen:

Master, you are not wroth with us?

Slag:

Who may say what cloudy dooms are rolling up in the



mind of the eldest of the gods? He is not common god  
like us. Once a shepherd went by him in the mountains  
and doubted. He sent a doom after that shepherd.

Citizen:

Master, we have not doubted.

Slag:

And the doom found him on the hills at evening.

Second citizen:

It shall be a good sacrifice, master.

{Reenter with a dead lamb and fruits. They offer the  
lamb on an altar where there is fire, and fruits before  
the altar.}

Thahn: {stretching out a hand to a lamb upon an altar}

That leg is not being cooked at all.

Illanaun:

It is strange that gods should be thus anxious about  
the cooking of a leg of lamb.

Oorander:

It is strange certainly.

Illanaun:

Almost I had said that it was a man that spoke then.

Oorander: {stroking his beard and regarding the second  
beggar}

Strange. Strange, certainly.

Agmar:

Is it then strange that the gods love roasted flesh?

For this purpose they keep the lightning. When the  
lightning flickers about the limbs of men there comes  
to the gods of Marma a pleasant smell, even a smell of  
roasting. Sometimes the gods, being pacific, are  
pleased to have roasted instead the flesh of lamb. It  
is all one to the gods; let the roasting stop.

Oorander:

No, no, gods of the mountains!

Others:

No, no.

Oorander:

Quick, let us offer flesh to them. If they eat, all is

well.

{They offer it; the beggars eat, all but Agmar, who  
watches.}

Illanaun:

One who was ignorant, one who did not know, had almost  
said that they ate like hungry men.

Others:

Hush!

Akmos:

Yet they look as though they had not had a meal like  
this for a long time.

Oorander:

They have a hungry look.

Agmar: {who has not eaten}

I have not eaten since the world was very new and the  
flesh of men was tenderer than now. These younger gods  
have learned the habit of eating from the lions.

Oorander:

O oldest of divinities, partake, partake.

Agmar:

It is not fitting that such as I should eat. None eat  
but beasts and men and the younger gods. The sun and  
the moon and the nimble lightning and I -- we may kill  
and we may madden, but we do not eat.

Akmos:

If he but eat of our offering he cannot overwhelm us.

All:

Oh, ancient deity, partake, partake.

Agmar:

Enough. Let it be enough that these have condescended  
to this bestial and human habit.

Illanaun: {to Akmos}

And yet he is not unlike a beggar whom I saw not so  
long since.

Oorander:

But beggars eat.

Illanaun:

Now I never knew a beggar yet who would refuse a bowl  
of Woldery wine.

Akmos:

This is no beggar.

Illanaun:

Nevertheless let us offer him a bowl of Woldery wine.

Akmos:

You do wrong to doubt him.

Illanaun:

I do but wish to prove his divinity. I will fetch the  
Woldery wine. {Exit}

Akmos:

He will not drink. Yet if he does, then he will not  
overwhelm us. Let us offer him the wine.

{Reenter Illanaun with a goblet.}

First beggar:

It is Woldery wine!

Second beggar:

It is Woldery!

Third beggar:

A goblet of Woldery wine!

Fourth beggar:

O blessed day!

Mlan:

O happy times!

Slag:

O my wise master!

{Illanaun takes the goblet. All the beggars stretch  
out their hands including Agmar. Illanaun gives it to  
Agmar. Agmar takes it solemnly, and very carefully  
pours it out on the ground.}

First beggar:

He has spilt it.

Second beggar:

He has spilt it. {Agmar sniffs the fumes, loquitur}

Agmar:

It is a fitting libation. Our anger is somewhat  
appeased.

Another beggar:

But it was Woldery!

Akmos: {kneeling to Agmar}

Master, I am childless, and I --

Agmar:

Trouble us not now. It is the hour at which the gods  
are accustomed to speak to the gods in the language of  
the gods, and if Man heard us he would guess the  
futility of his destiny, which were not well for Man.

Begone! Begone!

One lingers {loquitur}

Master --

Agmar:

Begone!

{Exeunt. Agmar takes up a piece of meat and begins to  
eat it; the beggars rise and stretch themselves; they

laugh, but Agmar eats hungrily.}

Oogno:

Ah! Now we have come into our own.

Thahn:

Now we have alms.

Slag:

Master! My wise master!

Ulf:

These are the good days, the good days; and yet I have  
a fear.

Slag:

What do you fear? There is nothing to fear. No man is  
as wise as my master.

Ulf:

I fear the gods whom we pretend to be.

Slag:

The gods?

Agmar: {taking a chunk of meat from his lips}



Come hither, Slag.

Slag: {going up to him}

Yes, master.

Agmar:

Watch in the doorway while I eat. {Slag goes to the doorway} Sit in the attitude of a god. Warn me if any of the citizens approach.

{Slag sits in the doorway in the attitude of a god,  
back to the audience.

Oogno: {to Agmar}

But, master, shall we not have Woldery wine?

Agmar:

We shall have all things if only we are wise at first  
for a little.

Thahn:

Master, do any suspect us?

Agmar:

We must be *\*very\** wise.

Thahn:

But if we are not wise, master?

Agmar:

Why, then death may come to us --

Thahn:

O master!

Agmar:

-- slowly.

{All stir uneasily except Slag, who sits motionless in  
the doorway.}

Oogno:

Do they believe us, master?

Slag: {half turning his head}

Someone comes.

{Slag resumes his position.}

Agmar: {putting away his meat}

We shall soon know now.

{All take up the attitude. Enter One, loquitur.}

One:

Master, I want the god that does not eat.

Agmar:

I am he.

One:

Master, my child was bitten in the throat by a  
death-adder at noon. Spare him, master; he still  
breathes, but slowly.

Agmar:

Is he indeed your child?

One:

He is surely my child, master.

Agmar:

Was it your wont to thwart him at his play, while he  
was strong and well?

One:

I never thwarted him, master.

Agmar:

Whose child is Death?

One:

Death is the child of the gods.

Agmar:

Do you that never thwarted your child in his play ask  
this of the gods?

One: {with some horror, perceiving Agmar's meaning}

Master!

Agmar:

Weep not. For all the houses that men have builded are  
the play-fields of this child of the gods.

{The Man goes away in silence, not weeping.}

Oogno: {taking Thahn by the wrist}

Is this indeed a man?

Agmar:

A man, a man, and until just now a hungry one.

{Curtain}

### The Third Act

{Same room.

A few days have elapsed.

Seven thrones shaped like mountain-crags stand along the back of the stage. On these the beggars are lounging. The Thief is absent.}

Mlan:

Never had beggars such a time.

Oogno:

Ah, the fruits and tender lamb!

Thahn:

The Woldery wine!

Slag:

It was better to see my master's wise devices than to  
have fruit and lamb and Woldery wine.

Mlan:

Ah! When they spied on him to see if he would eat when  
they went away!

Oogno:

When they questioned him concerning the gods and Man!

Thahn:

When they asked him why the gods permitted cancer!

Slag:

Ah, my wise master!

Mlan:

How well his scheme has succeeded!

Oogno:

How far away is hunger!

Thahn:

It is even like to one of last year's dreams, the  
trouble of a brief night long ago.

Oogno: {laughing}

Ho, ho, ho! To see them pray to us.

Agmar:

When we were beggars did we not speak as beggars? Did  
we not whine as they? Was not our mien beggarly?

Oogno:

We were the pride of our calling.

Agmar:

Then now that we are gods, let us be as gods, and not  
mock our worshippers.

Ulf:

I think that the gods \*do\* mock their worshippers.

Agmar:

The gods have never mocked us. We are above all  
pinnacles that we have ever gazed at in dreams.

Ulf:

I think that when man is high then most of all are the gods wont to mock him.

Thief: {entering}

Master! I have been with those that know all and see all. I have been with the thieves, master. They know me for one of the craft, but they do not know me as being one of us.

Agmar:

Well, well!

Thief:

There is danger, master, there is great danger.

Agmar:

You mean that they suspect we are men.

Thief:

That they have long done, master. I mean that they will know it. Then we are lost.

Agmar:

Then they do not know it.

Thief:



They do not know it yet, but they will know it, and we  
are lost.

Agmar:

When will they know it?

Thief:

Three days ago they suspected us.

Agmar:

More than you think suspected us, but have any dared to  
say so?

Thief:

No, master.

Agmar:

Then forget your fears, my thief.

Thief:

Two men went on dromedaries three days ago to see if  
the gods were still at Marma.

Agmar:

They went to Marma!

Thief:

Yes, three days ago.

Oogno:

We are lost!

Agmar:

They went three days ago?

Thief:

Yes, on dromedaries.

Agmar:

Then they should be back to-day.

Oogno:

We are lost!

Thahn:

We are lost!

Thief:

They must have seen the green jade idols sitting  
against the mountains. They will say, "The gods are  
still at Marma." And we shall be burnt.

Slag:

My master will yet devise a plan.

Agmar: {to the Thief}

Slip away to some high place and look toward the desert  
and see how long we have to devise a plan.

Slag:

My master will find a plan.

Oogno:

He has taken us into a trap.

Thahn:

His wisdom is our doom.

Slag:

He will find a wise plan yet.

Thief: {reentering}

It is too late!

Agmar:

It is too late!

Thief:

The dromedary men are here.

Oogno:

We are lost!

Agmar:

Be quiet! I must think.

{They all sit still. Citizens enter and prostrate  
themselves. Agmar sits deep in thought.}

Illanaun: {to Agmar}

Two holy pilgrims have gone to your sacred shrines,  
wherein you were wont to sit before you left the  
mountains. {Agmar says nothing} They return even now.

Agmar:

They left us here and went to find the gods? A fish  
once took a journey into a far country to find the sea.

Illanaun:

Most reverend deity, their piety is so great that they  
have gone to worship even your shrines.

Agmar:

I know these men that have great piety. Such men have often prayed to me before, but their prayers are not acceptable. They little love the gods; their only care is their piety. I know these pious ones. They will say that the seven gods were still at Marma. They will lie and say that we were still at Marma. So shall they seem more pious than you all, pretending that they alone have seen the gods. Fools shall believe them and share in their damnation.

Oorander: {to Illanaun}

Hush! You anger the gods.

Illanaun:

I am not sure who I anger.

Oorander:

It may be they are the gods.

Illanaun:

Where are these men from Marma?

Citizen:

Here are the dromedary men; they are coming now.

Illanaun: {to Agmar}

The holy pilgrims from your shrine are come to worship  
you.

Agmar:

The men are doubters. How the gods hate the word!  
Doubt ever contaminated virtue. Let them be cast into  
prison and not besmirch your purity. {Rising} Let  
them not enter here.

Illanaun:

But oh, most reverend deity from the Mountain, we also  
doubt, most reverend deity.

Agmar:

You have chosen. You have chosen. And yet it is not  
too late. Repent and cast these men into prison and it  
may not be too late. \*The gods have never wept.\* And  
yet when they think upon damnation and the dooms that  
are withering a myriad bones, then almost, were they  
not divine, they could weep. Be quick! Repent of your  
doubt.

{Enter the Dromedary Men.}

Illanaun:

Most reverend deity, it is a mighty doubt.

Citizens:

\*Nothing has killed him! They are not the gods!\*

Slag: {to Agmar}

You have a plan, my master. You have a plan.

Agmar:

Not yet, Slag.

Illanaun: {to Oorander}

These are the men that went to the shrines at Marma.

Oorander: {in a loud, clear voice}

Were the Gods of the Mountain seated still at Marma, or  
were they not there?

{The beggars get hurriedly up from their thrones.}

Dromedary Man:

They were not there.

Illanaun:

They were not there?

Dromedary Man:

Their shrines were empty.

Oorander:

Behold the Gods of the Mountain!

Akmos:

They have indeed come from Marma.

Oorander:

Come. Let us go away to prepare a sacrifice. A mighty  
sacrifice to atone for our doubting. {Exeunt.}

Slag:

My most wise master!

Agmar:

No, no, Slag. I do not know what has befallen. When I  
went by Marma only two weeks ago the idols of green  
jade were still seated there.

Oogno:

We are saved now.



Thahn:

Ay, we are saved.

Agmar:

We are saved, but I know not how.

Oogno:

Never had beggars such a time.

Thief:

I will go out and watch. {He creeps out.}

Ulf:

Yet I have a fear.

Oogno:

A fear? Why, we are saved.

Ulf:

Last night I dreamed.

Oogno:

What was your dream?

Ulf:

It was nothing. I dreamed that I was thirsty and one  
gave me Woldery wine; yet there was a fear in my dream.

Thahn:

When I drink Woldery I am afraid of nothing.

Thief: {reentering}

They are making a pleasant banquet ready for us; they  
are killing lambs, and girls are there with fruits, and  
there is to be much Woldery wine.

Mlan:

Never had beggars such a time.

Agmar:

Do any doubt us now?

Thief:

I do not know.

Mlan:

When will the banquet be?

Thief:

When the stars come out.

Oogno:

Ah! It is sunset already. There will be good eating.

Thahn:

We shall see the girls come in with baskets upon their heads.

Oogno:

There will be fruits in the baskets.

Thahn:

All the fruits of the valley.

Mlan:

Oh, how long we have wandered along the ways of the world!

Slag:

Oh, how hard they were!

Thahn:

And how dusty!

Oogno:

And how little wine!

Mlan:

How long have we asked and asked, and for how much!

Agmar:

We to whom all things are coming at last!

Thief:

I fear lest my art forsake me now that good things come  
without stealing.

Agmar:

You will need your art no longer.

Slag:

The wisdom of my master shall suffice us all our days.

{Enter a frightened Man. He kneels before Agmar and  
abases his forehead.}

Man:

Master, we implore you, the people beseech you.

{Agmar and the beggars in the attitude of the gods sit  
silent.}

Man:

Master, it is terrible. {The beggars maintain  
silence.} It is terrible when you wander in the  
evening. It is terrible on the edge of the desert in  
the evening. Children die when they see you.

Agmar:

In the desert? When did you see us?

Man:

Last night, master. You were terrible last night. You  
were terrible in the gloaming. When your hands were  
stretched out and groping. You were feeling for the  
city.

Agmar:

Last night do you say?

Man:

You were terrible in the gloaming!

Agmar:

You yourself saw us?

Man:

Yes, master, you were terrible. Children too saw you  
and they died.

Agmar:

You say you saw us?

Man:

Yes, master. Not as you are now, but otherwise. We  
implore you, master, not to wander at evening. You are  
terrible in the gloaming. You are --

Agmar:

You say we appeared not as we now are. How did we  
appear to you?

Man:

Otherwise, master, otherwise.

Agmar:

But how did we appear to you?

Man:

You were all green, master, all green in the gloaming,  
all of rock again as you used to be in the mountains.  
Master, we can bear to see you in flesh like men, but  
when we see rock walking it is terrible,

it is terrible.

Agmar:

That is how we appeared to you?

Man:

Yes, master. Rock should not walk. When children see  
it they do not understand. Rock should not walk in the  
evening.

Agmar:

There have been doubters of late. Are they satisfied?

Man:

Master, they are terrified. Spare us, master.

Agmar:

It is wrong to doubt. Go and be faithful.

{Exit Man.}

Slag:

What have they seen, master?

Agmar:

They have seen their own fears dancing in the desert.

They have seen something green after the light was gone, and some child has told them a tale that it was us. I do not know what they have seen. What should they have seen?

Ulf:

Something was coming this way from the desert, he said.

Slag:

What should come from the desert?

Agmar:

They are a foolish people.

Ulf:

That man's white face has seen some frightful thing.

Agmar:

It is only we that have frightened them and their fears have made them foolish.

{Enter an Attendant with a torch or lantern which he places in a receptacle. Exit.}

Thahn:



Now we shall see the faces of the girls when they come  
to the banquet.

Mlan:

Never had beggars such a time.

Agmar:

Hark! They are coming. I hear footsteps.

Thahn:

The dancing girls! They are coming!

Thief:

There is no sound of flutes, they said they would come  
with music.

Oogno:

What heavy boots they have; they sound like feet of  
stone.

Thahn:

I do not like to hear their heavy tread. Those that  
would dance to \*us\* must be light of foot.

Agmar:

I shall not smile at them if they are not airy.

Mlan:

They are coming very slowly. They should come nimbly  
to us.

Ulf: {in a loud voice, almost chanting}

I have a fear, an old fear and a boding. We have done  
ill in the sight of the seven gods. Beggars we were  
and beggars we should have remained. We have given up  
our calling and come in sight of our doom. I will not  
longer let my fear be silent; it shall run about and  
cry; it shall go from me crying, like a dog from a  
doomed city; for my fear has seen calamity and has  
known an evil thing.

Slag: {hoarsely}

Master!

Agmar: {rising}

Come, come!

{They listen. No one speaks. The stony boots come  
on. Enter in single file through door in right of  
back, a procession of seven green men, even hands and  
faces are green; they wear greenstone sandals; they

walk with knees extremely wide apart, as having sat cross-legged for centuries; their right arms and right forefingers point upward, right elbows resting on right hands; they stoop grotesquely. Halfway to the footlights they left wheel. They pass in front of the seven beggars, now in terrified attitudes, and six of them sit down in the attitude described, with their backs to the audience. The leader stands, still stooping.}

Oogno: {cries out just as they wheel left}

The Gods of the Mountain!

Agmar: {hoarsely}

Be still! They are dazzled by the light. They may not see us.

{The leading Green Thing points his finger at the lantern -- the flame turns green. When the six are seated the leader points one by one at each of the seven beggars, shooting out his forefinger at them. As he does this each beggar in his turn gathers himself back on to his throne and crosses his legs, his right arm goes stiffly upward with forefinger erect, and a staring look of horror comes into his eyes. In this

attitude the beggars sit motionless while a green light

falls upon their faces. The gods go out.

Presently enter the Citizens, some with victuals and  
fruit. One touches a beggars arm and then another's.}

Citizen:

They are cold; they have turned to stone.

{All abase themselves, foreheads to the floor.}

One:

We have doubted them. We have doubted them. They  
have turned to stone because we have doubted them.

Another:

They were the true gods.

All:

They were the true gods.

{Curtain}