

Gormenghast audition pieces - first round

1.

Chorus

Gormenghast...

Withdrawn and ruinous... I brood in umbra...

Shadows of time eaten buttresses...

Towers patched with black ivy...

A field of stones among the stars...

Echoing throat of owls by night...

Stones have their voices...

Voices that grind from the grey lungs of granite...

Lungs of blue air and the white lungs of rivers...

Green voice of the garden... overgrown... gone forever

Voices that he shall hear when his ear is tuned...

To Gormenghast, whose voice is endless...

2.

Barquentine

It is written, and the writing adhered to, that the first-born male child of the House of Groan be laid among the pages that are heavy with words and engulfed in the waters, as One with the inviolate Law. I, Barquentine, Master of Ritual, I place Thee, Child Inheritor, of a thousand broken turrets and walls that crumble...

(The child, Titus begins to cry)

Your name is Titus! Titus, seventy-seventh Earl of Groan and Lord of Gormenghast. I dedicate you to your father's house. Titus, to Gormenghast, be true.

3.

Steerpike

Ladies, ladies! Thrones of hammered gold cannot be wrought overnight. Do you want your glory ruined by a ridiculous pair of makeshift yellow sit-upons? Do you want to be made a laughing stock?

Then you must leave it to me. Meanwhile, please try to preserve all dignity and silent power in your twin bosoms.

When the hour comes, we will strike...

(Chatter from the twins, interrupts him.)

Silence! No one will find out.

There is no one left to find out.

Have I not told you of the deadly Weasel Plague that is ravaging the Castle?

Your enemies are dead.

4.

Countess

There is mischief in the castle. Where, I do not know. But there is mischief...

An enemy. Whether ghost or human I do not know - but an enemy...

Who would dare to rebel? Who would dare! I'll break it! I'll crush its life out - not only for Titus - for Gormenghast!

Barquentine is dead. He was training Steerpike. The boy who rescued us from the library. He shall be my Master of Ritual...

No change!

5.

Swelter

Steerpike. Steerpike. Steerpike. Steerpike...

Skew-bald... His ruined face... white and scarlet...

Burnt beyond repair... Eyes the colour of dried blood...

Every word, every deed, every motive ulterior...

Holds the Castle in the scalded palm of his hand...

Where does he come from? What does he mean?

Tell me Steerpike, what does it all mean?

Countess

By the black tap-root of the Castle, if my fear is founded...

The oldest stones will sicken and spew,

The towers be gorged with his blood,

His liver and heart for the cats to chew

His entrails to rot in the mud.

And the carrion crow flap down from the sky

To pluck the brains from the hollow eyes

Of his skull on a spike on Traitor's Gate...

Beware!

Steerpike

Fuschia... What can I say? There is no excuse for what I did, but... at least let me try to explain. Do you know what would happen to you if we were caught, a daughter of the line consorting with a commoner? It's too awful to think about. That's why our meetings must be so secret...

There was no time to be lost. A moment later and your screaming would have led them to this door. Put yourself in my place. I had no time to be polite. My only thought was to save you. Can't you see? I love you, Fuschia. I called you 'fool' - yes 'fool' - out of love for you - and then... and now, it all seems so unbelievable, and I'm so ashamed... I don't even know if I can show you the present I bought you.