

BEASTLY BARON

COUNTERBLAST

BY MARK BILLEN



Script sample from Act 1

(Suddenly there is a massive amplified hammering on the outer doors of the palace.

Montmorency exits.)

All: What's that?

Oscar: It sounded like someone knocking on the door.

Rosalind: There's only one person who knocks like that!

Oscar: } (Together.)

Rosalind: } Baron Counterblast!

Counterblast: (Booming offstage; amplified.) I demand to see the king and queen! Out of my way!

(Montmorency returns, very flustered.)

Montmorency: The noble Baron Counterblast craves an audience with your majesties.

Oscar: Tell him that we're busy.

Montmorency: It's ... not ... not ... like ...

Oscar: Tell him to come back later.

Rosalind: We'll be able to see him at six o'clock on 24th April in twenty-five years time!

Oscar: Yes! Tell Baron Counterblast ...

Counterblast: (Bursting in, booming and blustering.) The king and queen *will* see me now! Now, I say! Now! Now! Now!

(Grott and Splodd enter behind Counterblast and are usually not far from him.)

Grott: Now! Now! Now!

Splodd: Right now, now, now!

Montmorency: (Bowing.) Baron Counterblast!

Counterblast: (Pushing Montmorency aside.) Out of my way pipsqueak! It's dear King Oscar and the lovely Queen Rosalind I've come to see!

Rosalind: (Flattered.) Ooh! Ooh! Baron Counterblast!

Oscar: (Standing.) Good morning, Baron. To what do we owe the ... er ... er ... pleasure of your company?

Counterblast: (Going to Oscar and giving him a mighty slap on the back. Oscar drops the agenda in astonishment.) Oscar old boy! How are you doing?

Oscar: Very well ... at least I was feeling fine until a few moments ago.

Counterblast: Really? Tell me what's gone wrong. Who's upset you? My clever bodyguards will sort anything out!

Grott: (Menacingly.) Yeah! Yeah! Yeah!

Splodd: Yeah? Yeah! Yeah! (Turning to Grott.) What we saying yeah for?

Grott: I dunno. Let's do it again.

Grott: } **(Together.)**

Splodd: } **(Menacingly.)** Yeah? Yeah! Yeah!

Counterblast: If ever you need me I promise that I'm always available. **(Conceitedly.)** I'm a Counterblast and the Counterblasts never break their promises! Remember that!

Rosalind: The Counterblasts never break their promises. I think I can remember that.

Duke: But why are you here Baron Counterblast?

Edgar: Why have you left Counterblast Castle when it is so sunny?

Snoozy: Are you planning a foreign excursion?

Counterblast: I'm here for a very special reason!

Grott: } **(Together.)**

Splodd: } Very special reason! That's right!

Counterblast: It really is the most exciting news. I naturally thought that my king and queen should know about it first.

Duke: Then tell us about it!

Counterblast: I'm not telling you! I'm just telling the king and queen.

Grott: **(Menacingly.)** So don't listen to him.

Splodd: **(Snarling.)** Do as he says!

Edgar: Shall we leave?

Counterblast: No! Just put your hands tightly over each other's ears and don't try to listen! **(All the Courtiers, Advisers and Montmorency form a circle and put their hands over the ears of the person in front of them. Grott and Splodd check them and push hands tight over ears.)**

Counterblast: Can any of you hear me?
(There is no reaction.)

Oscar: It seems not!

Counterblast: Good! Then here is my news! I am going to be married!

Oscar: } **(Together.)**

Rosalind: } **(Clapping.)** Congratulations Baron Counterblast!

Oscar: That's wonderful news!

Rosalind: I am so happy for you!

Counterblast: I am perfectly able to be happy for myself!
(The Courtiers, Advisers and Montmorency begin to fidget.)

Oscar: Can they hear the rest of our chat?

Counterblast: I suppose so! Take your hands down!
(There is no reaction.)

Counterblast: **(Booming.)** Take your hands down!

Oscar: They can't hear you!

Counterblast: **(Pulling at sleeves.)** You can listen now!
(Grott and Splodd tug hands away.)

Advisers: } **(Together.)**

Courtiers: } What? ... What? Etc.
(Eventually all hands are down.)

Oscar: Baron Counterblast has just announced that he is soon to marry!

Advisers: } **(Together.)**

Courtiers: } **(Loudly.)** We know!

Counterblast: That's not fair! They were listening all the time!

Advisers: } **(Together.)**

Courtiers: } **(Loudly.)** We were!

Duke: Congratulations, Baron Counterblast. Congratulations.

Oscar: Now baron, we are all agog! Who is to be the lucky lady?

Counterblast: I was wondering when you would ask me that. **(Pompously.)** The lucky bride will be ... **(He pauses.)** ... Princess Melodie!

Others: Who?

Counterblast: **(Extra clearly.)** Princess Melodie!

Others: What?

Counterblast: Is there something wrong with everybody's hearing today? **(Slowly and very firmly.)** I said my bride will be ...

Counterblast: }

Grott: } **(Together.)**

Splodd: } ... Prin-cess Mel-o-die!

Rosalind: Has Princess Melodie *agreed* to marry you?

Counterblast: I haven't asked her yet! But she will be really fortunate to marry me.

Oscar: Isn't it normal to ask someone to marry you before you make an announcement?

Counterblast: That's a tiny problem! She'll fall for me the second she sees me!

Rosalind: You seem very sure of yourself Baron Counterblast. What if she does refuse you?

Counterblast: That won't happen. No princess could resist such an offer.

Oscar: But what if Princess Melodie does turn you down, what will you do then?

Counterblast: You have two more daughters. I'll marry one of them!

Rosalind: And what if they *all* refuse you?

Counterblast: What? *All* three princesses refuse me? Whatever gives you such ridiculous ideas?

Duke: Might I make a suggestion your majesties?

Oscar: } **(Together.)**

Rosalind: } Certainly, Duke.

Oscar: What do you propose?

Duke: I think it would be a good idea for Princess Melodie to meet Baron Counterblast.

Oscar: Brilliant! Brilliant! That's just what I was about to suggest!

Rosalind: And I was going to suggest it too!

Oscar: Montmorency, would you find Prince Melodie and ask her to join us?

Montmorency: Certainly, sire.

(Singing and trills are heard from offstage ending in another especially dreadful shriek.)

Melodie: **(Offstage.)** Oh drat those high notes!

Counterblast: What a sweet voice! I have such a good ear for music.

(The singing recommences.)

Rosalind: But Montmorency, don't interrupt her in the middle of a trill!

Oscar: She's always in a bad mood if her trills are interrupted.

Montmorency: Very well, sire. **(He bows and exits.)**

Counterblast: I am sure Princess Melodie has the sweetest nature. I will give her a blissful life in Counterblast Castle.

(Montmorency enters with Princess Melodie.)

Montmorency: **(Banging his staff.)** The Princess Melodie.

(All except Oscar and Rosalind bow to her.)

Melodie: **(Indignantly.)** Why have you called for me in the middle of my singing lesson? It was going so well too!

Oscar: Baron Counterblast has come to see you.

Melodie: Is that all. I thought you wanted me because of something important. **(She turns to leave.)**

Rosalind: Wait please, Melodie. This is something important.

Melodie: Well, what is it?

Counterblast: **(Striding to Melodie.)** I have decided that you are going to be my wife.

Melodie: Whoever thought of that? **(Laughing.)** What a stupid idea!

Counterblast: I think it's a brilliant idea. You'll love Counterblast Castle! You'll find that life there is idyllic.

Rosalind: Is your castle a suitable place for a princess to live, baron?

Counterblast: Of course it is! It's such an historic stronghold.

Oscar: Historic you say? That sounds ideal.

Counterblast: Historic indeed. Nothing has been changed at Counterblast Castle for over five hundred years!

Duke: Then it must be a listed building.

Counterblast: It does list a little; none of the floors are even.

Edgar: Has *nothing* been changed?

Counterblast: Nothing at all. Even the plumbing is exactly as it was when the first baron built the castle in 1182.

Melodie: Yuck! That sounds disgusting. Forget about me! You can marry one of my sisters instead!

(Melodie storms out leaving every one gaping open mouthed as they watch her exit.)

Oscar: Well that seems pretty conclusive.

Counterblast: Rubbish! She's just putting on a show. She was really interested. I can always tell!

Rosalind: We'll see. Would you like to meet our other daughters?

Counterblast: Waste of time! I've no doubts now! Melodie is the princess for me!

Rosalind: Really? Montmorency, ask Princess Adelia and Princess Bellina to join us, if you would be so kind.

Montmorency: Certainly, your majesty. **(He bows and exits.)**

Oscar: There can be no harm in meeting them. You may change your mind.

Counterblast: A Counterblast never changes his mind!

Grott: } **(Together.)**

Splodd: } He never changes his mind!

Counterblast: I don't remember when I last changed my mind.

Grott: He means what he says.

Splodd: And he says what he means.

(Montmorency enters with Princess Adelia and Princess Bellina.)

Montmorency: **(Banging his staff.)** Princess Adelia and Princess Bellina.

(All except Oscar and Rosalind bow to them. Montmorency exits.)

Adelia: Mummy, daddy, why have you sent for us?

Bellina: We were very busy doing very important things.

Rosalind: What was that dear daughters?

Adelia: There's a rumour going round the palace that our sister ...

Adelia: } **(Together.)**

Bellina: } ... is going to be married soon.

Adelia: So we were deciding on what we should wear to the wedding.

Bellina: After all, we will surely be the bridesmaids.

Counterblast: See, Oscar old boy! Even your younger daughters say Princess Melodie will be marrying soon!

Bellina: Who will she be marrying?

Counterblast: She'll soon be marrying me!

Adelia: **(Aside to Bellina.)** What a monster!

Bellina: (Aside to Adelia.) He looks like a particularly hairy old goat!

Adelia: When will the wedding take place?

Counterblast: Very soon! It will be held at Counterblast Castle.

Bellina: (Giggling.) Hee! Hee! You plan to hold a wedding in that old ruin?

Adelia: It's famed for it's cold running water.

Bellina: All the way down the walls.

Edgar: Then that castle is so historic it must be preserved at once!

Adelia: Cold running water, all the way down the walls, inside and outside!

Oscar: There is one slight problem with the baron's plans.

Adelia: } (Together.)

Bellina: } What's that?

Rosalind: Your sister has not accepted Baron Counterblast's proposal.

Counterblast: But she soon will! I have charmed her already!

Grott: He's ever so clever.

Splodd: Yeah! He knows what he knows.

Adelia: How can you tell that you have charmed her?

Counterblast: The hotter the temper the sweeter the nature! Princess Melodie will soon fall for the charms of a Counterblast!

(Princess Melodie appears in a doorway and hears the following. He expressions make her feeling totally clear.)

Bellina: And if she doesn't?

Counterblast: Then I'll marry either of you!

Adelia: I have other plans!

Bellina: And so do I!

Counterblast: Never mind! I shall marry Princess Melodie and that's that!

(Princess Melodie bursts in and confronts Counterblast face to face.)

Melodie: I will not marry you! (She prods him hard several times as she speaks.)
And that's that!

Counterblast: Why ever not? I suppose I am not good enough for you!

Melodie: Not good enough for me! That's a ridiculous thing to say! You are pompous!

Counterblast: How kind!

Melodie: You are rude!

Counterblast: When have I been rude?

Melodie: You think you are so clever!

Counterblast: It's good of you to notice!

Melodie: You're arrogant!

Counterblast: Never!

Melodie: You are haughty!

Counterblast: Only the best for you Princess Melodie!

Melodie: You are a puffed up windbag!

Counterblast: The puffier the better!

Melodie: And you have the manners of a badly behaved rhinoceros!

Counterblast: Is that all that's standing in the way of our marriage?

Melodie: That and a few thousand other things!

Counterblast: (Puzzled.) Really? I am amazed that you reject my offer of marriage. Many girls would regard becoming Baroness Counterblast as a step up the ladder of life.

Melodie: (With much sarcasm.) Dear Baron Counterblast ...

Counterblast: (With a big smile.) You see, she likes me really! She's just called me *dear* Baron Counterblast!

Melodie: (With even more sarcasm.) *Dear* Baron Counterblast ... it seems that your brain, or what you pretend to have as a brain, has failed to notice that marrying you would not be a 'step up the ladder of life' for me.

Counterblast: (Puzzled.) Eh? Why do you say that?

Melodie: (Strongly.) Because, *dear* Baron Counterblast ...

Counterblast: (Delighted.) There! I'm right! She's called me *dear* Baron Counterblast again!

Melodie: (Snapping out each word.) Because, *dear* Baron Counterblast, I am already a princess and you are just a baron!

Counterblast: Well, if that's your attitude then one of your sisters will suit me just as well!

Grott: } (Together.)

Splodd: } Yeah! He'll marry one of your sisters!

Oscar: Are you really asking any one of my daughters to marry you?

Counterblast: (Slapping Oscar on the back.) Well done, Oscar, old chap! I'm glad someone here understands me!

Rosalind: Adelia, Baron Counterblast is now offering to marry you!

Adelia: Is he? Well, I'm a princess too! Who ever would want to live in a crumbling castle that has wall to wall running water?

Counterblast: Are you refusing my offer?

Adelia: What a stupid question!

Counterblast: Very well! Princess Bellina will show sense!

Bellina: Yes, I will ...

Counterblast: (Triumphant.) There! Princess Bellina has said yes!

Bellina: No, Baron Counterblast, you interrupted me! I was about to say that I would show more sense by refusing your offer in three simple words.

Grott: } (Together.)

Splodd: } Cor! Three words at once!

Counterblast: Three words? Why three words? What are they?

Bellina: (Very firmly.) Here they are! Are you ready?

Counterblast: Yes, I think so.

Bellina: Then listen very carefully! (She pauses.) *No! No!* And one more for luck! *No!*

Grott: } (Together.)

Splodd: } That was a lot of words!

Melodie: What could be plainer?

Adelia: Is that clear now?

Bellina: None of us will marry you!

Melodie: }

Adelia: } (Together, staring at him.) Beastly Baron Counterblast!

Bellina: }

Counterblast: (Shocked.) I'm ... I'm ... hurt ... ahhhhh!

(Counterblast collapses into the arms of Grott and Splodd.)

Grott: He won't take any notice.

Splodd: Nah, he'll turn a blind ear to them.

(Grott and Splodd hold Counterblast upright and he soon recovers.)

Counterblast: (Fiercely.) You say that now but I promise that one of you will marry me! And remember this; a Counterblast keeps his promises!

Grott: } (Together.)

Splodd: } Yeah! A Counterblast always keeps his promises!

Grott: (Aside to Splodd.) I wonder where he keeps his promises?

Splodd: (Aside to Grott.) I dunno. I've never seen them in the castle.

(Melodie, Adelia and Bellina turn abruptly and exit.)

Oscar: That seems to be fairly final, Baron Counterblast!

Counterblast: That's what you think!

Rosalind: My daughters could not have been clearer, baron!

Counterblast: Well, I can be clear and firm too!

Duke: I think it would be better if you accepted the situation baron.

Edgar: We don't want anything nasty to happen.

Natter: When, as their majesties have said, everything is going so well.

Snoozy: There really is nothing you can do.

Bumble: You can do nothing, nothing whatsoever.

Courtiers: There's nothing you can do, nothing at all.

Counterblast: That's what you think! There's plenty that I can do!

Oscar: Now don't be hasty, baron!

Counterblast: **(Menacingly.)** Hear this, King Oscar and Queen Rosalind! **(Relishing every word.)** I've got a huge, smelly, fire-breathing ogre called Grunge. He's locked in a dreary, dull, depressingly dank, deep, dark, dungeon at Counterblast Castle! What's more he's very, very tall and very, very big and very, very strong! He's been down there a long time so he's very, very cross and very, very smelly! Grunge smells worse than a dozen over-ripe cheeses that have been left in the sun!

Grott: That ogre's really stinky.

Splodd: We know because we have to feed him!

Grott: We know him well.

Splodd: Yeah, he's deaf in one ear.

Grott: And he's blind in the other ear.

Oscar: You ought to treat him more kindly.

Rosalind: And let him have a bath from time to time!

Counterblast: There's no baths in my castle!

Rosalind: How do you cope with the smell?

Counterblast: I don't! Grunge is kept in a deep dungeon well below ground and there are three thick doors to hold him in together with his smell!

Snoozy: Why are you telling us about the ogre?

Counterblast: Tell Princess Melodie that she'd better start singing a different tune or ...

All: **(Agog.)** Or? Or?

Counterblast: **(Viciously.)** I'll let Grunge out of his dungeon and send him to this palace and he'll stink you all out of it! Then he'll spout flames and burn the castle down!

Oscar: He can't be as bad as you say!

Counterblast: Can't he? You can smell my ogre from six miles away. You'll know he's coming two hours before you see him!

Oscar: I don't believe you baron.

Counterblast: That's your choice! After Grunge has attacked I'll blast the palace with cannon balls! Boom! Boom! Boom!

Grott: } **(Together.)**

Splodd: } Boom! Boom! Boom!

Oscar: What good would that do?

Counterblast: After my cannon balls have blasted away Princess Melodie won't have anywhere to live! Boom! Boom! Boom! So she'll *have* to come and live at Counterblast Castle!

Duke: That's ridiculous!

Counterblast: Ridiculous to you but perfect sense to me! I mean what I say! I'm a Counterblast and a Counterblast always ...

All: **(Loudly.)** ... keeps his promises!

Counterblast: I couldn't have put it better myself! (**Very loudly.**) Have a nice day! Boom!
Boom!

Grott: } (**Together.**)!

Splodd: } Boom! Boom! (**Counterblast strides out, Grott and Splodd follow. They continue to speak offstage.**)

Counterblast: Boom! Boom! ... Boom! Boom! Boom!

Grott: } (**Together.**)

Splodd: } Boom! Boom! Boom!

(**All stare after Counterblast with mouths wide open. There is a moment of silence.**)

Script sample from Act 2

Adelia: What's that dreadful smell?

Melodie: }

Adelia: } (**Together.**) Ugh! (**Holding their noses.**) What is it?

Bellina: }

Counterblast: (**Offstage, amplified.**) Oscar! He's getting closer and he's getting hotter!

Bellina: Who is that?

Oscar: }

Rosalind: } (**Together.**) Beastly Baron Counterblast!

Melodie: }

Adelia: He smells disgusting.

Dizzie: He's not making the smell!

Harold: It's Baron Counterblast's ogre.

Elsie: He's called Grunge.

Bellina: He smells appalling!

Oscar: Grunge is supposed to be taller than three men.

Rosalind: And he breathes fire!

Counterblast: (**Offstage, amplified.**) Oscar! I'm coming for Princess Melodie! Let me in!
Let me in or Grunge will attack!

(**There is loud hammering.**)

Counterblast: (**Offstage, amplified.**) Let me in I say! Grunge is breathing out fierce flames
and he's getting close.

(**A red glow begins to be visible through the archway and the windows.**)

Oscar: I suppose we'll have to give in to him.

Melodie: Never! I will *not* marry beastly Baron Counterblast.

Rosalind: If you don't we'll all be roasted alive!

Oscar: And fed to Grunge for supper tonight!

(**The glow becomes brighter and flickers like flames.**)

Counterblast: (**Offstage, amplified.**) Grunge is here and his flames are hot! Hot! Hot! Hot!
Save yourselves!

Bellina: (**Holding her nose.**) Ugh! The smell is worse than ever now Grunge is
breathing out flames.

(**The flames subside for a moment.**)

Oscar: Oh! His fire's going out.

Rosalind: Grunge isn't such a threat after all!

Counterblast:(Offstage, amplified.) That was just for starters; he was warming up. Grunge is just going to drink another eight buckets of petrol!

(There is a ghastly gulping sound from offstage as Grunge drinks his fuel.)

Grunge: (Offstage, amplified.) Mooooore! Mooooore! **(He belches loudly then there is more gulping.)**

Counterblast:(Offstage, amplified.) Right! He's full to his eyeballs! Now he'll show what he can do!

(The flame effects and burning sounds restart and are very ferocious.)

Melodie: }

Adelia: } **(Together.)** Help! Help! What shall we do?

Bellina: }

Dizzie: We'll soon sort this out. **(She dashes to the special doorway, presses the decoration to open it, and shouts.)** Fire! Fire! Fire! **(Turning to the others.)** Come on all of you!

(They all go to the special doorway.)

All: (Shouting.) Fire! Fire! Fire!

(A siren sounds and blue emergency lights flash.)

All: (Shouting.) Fire! Fire! Fire!

Fire Officers: (Offstage.) We're coming! Stand clear!

(All back away from the doorway and The Fire Chief and two Fire Officers come dashing in with a fire hose.)

All: (Shouting.) Fire! Fire! Fire!

Fire Chief: Where? Where?

All: (Pointing to the window.) There! There!

Fire Chief: Stand clear!

All: We will!

Fire Chief: Open the window!

Officer One: Yes chief!

(The window is opened.)

Officer Two: Ready chief.

(The flames are brighter and the noise of burning becomes louder.)

Counterblast:(Offstage, amplified.) Thanks for opening the window! You'll soon be frazzled now!

Fire Chief: Is the hose ready?

Officer Two: Yes chief! **(He takes it to the window.)**

Fire Chief: Then let's them have it!

Officer One: } **(Together.)**

Officer Two: } Right, Chief!

(There is a great gushing sound and the Fire Officers aim the hose through the window as if they are spraying water to left and right.)

Fire Chief: Aim at the centre of the fire. Give it a good soaking!

Officer One: } **(Together.)**

Officer Two: } It's right there, Chief!

Fire Chief: Use plenty of foam too!

Officer One: } **(Together.)**

Officer Two: } We'll turn it on, Chief!

Grunge: (Roaring offstage, amplified.) Argh! Argh!

Oscar: That's marvellous.

Rosalind: We must have one of those things. What are they called?

Chief Officer: It's a fire engine, your majesty.

Rosalind: What a peculiar name.
(There is a great billow of smoke that envelops the stage. All cough and flap hands as the smoke clears.)

Officer One: The fire's out now chief.

Officer Two: There's a funny creature down there and it's not very happy!

Grunge: (Roaring offstage, amplified.) Argh! Argh!

Officer One: And there's an angry man jumping up and down.

Oscar: } (Together.)

Rosalind: } That's Baron Counterblast!

Fire Chief: Our work seems to be done. Roll up the hose and we'll be on our way.

Officer One: } (Together.)

Officer Two: } Very good chief!

(The Fire Chief and Fire Officers exit with their hose through the special door, leaving it open.)

Counterblast: (Offstage, amplified.) The fire may be out but the doors are burnt down. I'm coming up and bringing Grunge with me!

Oscar: }

Rosalind: }

Melodie: } (Together.) Oh no! Not Grunge!

Adelia: }

Bellina: }

Dizzie: Grunge? What's Grunge?

Melodie: Grunge is beastly Baron Counterblast's ogre.

Adelia: He's taller than three men!

Bellina: He drinks buckets of petrol and he can spout flames.

Melodie: Beastly Baron Counterblast will try and force me to marry him.

Dizzie: He can't do that!

Melodie: He will try! And if I don't agree he'll make horrible smelly threats.

Oscar: Whilst we had our day off I'd forgotten about beastly Baron Counterblast.

Rosalind: He's spoilt everything!

Oscar: I feel worn out! I could do with another day off!

Counterblast: (Offstage, amplified.) I'm on my way up!

Oscar: }

Rosalind: }

Melodie: } (Together.) Oh no! What shall we do?

Adelia: }

Bellina: }

Harold: Can we help at all?

Oscar: I really can't think of anything you could do!

Harold: I can't think of anything.

Elsie: And I can't think!

Dizzie: (Inspired.) But I've thought of something!

Others: What?

Dizzie: (With much emphasis.) There *is* going to be a wedding.

Melodie: (Forcefully.) I am not marrying beastly Baron Counterblast!

Dizzie: No you are not!

Adelia: } (Together.)

Bellina: } We'll be the bridesmaids!

Dizzie: Brilliant! Go and change.

(Adelia and Bellina exit, giggling.)

Oscar: } **(Together.)**
Rosalind } What is happening?
Dizzie: There isn't time to explain. Baron Counterblast is on his way! Just go along with everything I say and do! Go and put on some of your royal clothes, then hide close by.
(Oscar and Rosalind exit.)
Melodie: What shall I do?
Dizzie: Go and put on one of your finest dresses, then be close by.
Melodie: I know which one! **(She exits.)**
Harold: } **(Together.)**
Elsie: } What's going on?
Dizzie: Don't worry! Go and sit on the thrones! Just become king and queen again for a few minutes. I'll be back in a moment. **(She exits.)**
(Harold and Elsie sit on the thrones. Montmorency suddenly enters.)
Montmorency: **(Bowing then banging his staff and gabbling.)** The-members-of-the-Royal-Council-your-majesties.
(The Advisers and Courtiers suddenly burst in. They all bow awkwardly.)
Advisers: } **(Together.)**
Courtiers } What's happening? Do you need us for advice?
Oscar: } **(Together.)**
Rosalind: } Just agree with everything.
Advisers: } **(Together, bowing in unison.)**
Courtiers: } Very well. That means we don't have to think!
(Counterblast appears in the doorway.)
Counterblast: **(Poking Montmorency.)** Announce me!
Montmorency: **(Shaking.)** B ... B ... Baron Counterblast. **(Muttering to himself and shaking.)** This is awful, awful! **(He exits.)**
Counterblast: Here I am Oscar!
Harold: G ... g ... good ... m ... m ... morning.
Counterblast: I've got something for you!
Harold: H ... h ... how ... v ... v ... very k... k ... kind.
Counterblast: **(Shouting back through the doorway.)** Grott! Splodd! Bring in Grunge!
Grott: } **(Offstage, together.)**
Splodd: } He's coming!
Counterblast: Hurry up!
Grott: **(Offstage.)** He's having trouble on the stairs.
Counterblast: Then push him!
Splodd: **(Offstage.)** We are pushing him!
Grott: } **(Offstage, together.)**
Splodd: } He's coming!
(Grott and Splodd appear in the doorway, Grunge is unseen behind them.)
Grott: } **(Together.)**
Splodd: } Here he is!
Counterblast: Where is he? What have you done with him!
Grott: } **(Together.)**
Splodd: } He's here!
(Grott and Splodd part to reveal Grunge, a very short ogre who appears to be soaking wet.)
All: **(Except Counterblast, Grott, Splodd and Grunge.)** Is that Grunge? Is that really Grunge? **(They all laugh loudly.)**

Grunge: (Growling.) Argh! Argh!
Advisers: } (Together.)
Courtiers: } We thought he was supposed to be smelly.
Harold: And you told us that he is as tall as three men!
Grunge: (Growling.) Argh! Argh!
Elsie: What's happened to him?
Grunge: (Growling.) Argh! Argh!
Counterblast: He was huge ten minutes ago.
Grott: Then all that water hit him!
Splodd: And a lot of foam hit him as well!
Grott: } (Together.)
Splodd: } Lots of foam! Lots and lots of foam!
Splodd: And it washed him!
Counterblast: So that took away his smell!
Grott: And then more water went over and over him.
Splodd: And it washed him and washed him.
Grott: } (Together.)
Splodd: } And he shrunk in the wash!
Counterblast: (Desperate.) Does he still breathe fire?
Grunge: (Growling and shaking his head.) Nargh! Nargh!
Grott: Nargh! His stomach's gone cold.
Counterblast: (To Grott and Splodd.) Take him away heat him up!
Grott: } (Together, like automatons.)
Splodd: } Very well Baron Counterblast.
Grott: Come along Grunge!
Grunge: (Growling.) Argh! Argh!
Splodd: We'll give you some lovely hot food.
Grunge: (Growling.) Argh! Argh!
Grott: And some buckets of your favourite fuel!
Grunge: (Growling.) Argh! Argh!
(Grott and Splodd exit taking Grunge with them.)
Counterblast: This changes nothing! I'll feed Grunge seventeen meals a day and he'll soon be back to size. He'll drink a few dozen buckets of petrol then he'll come and burn your palace and I *shall* marry your daughter!

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