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## The role of Pridamant in Tony Kushner's adaptation of *The Illusion*: a production thesis in acting

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**THE ROLE OF PRIDAMANT IN TONY KUSHNER'S ADAPTATION OF  
*THE ILLUSION*:  
A PRODUCTION THESIS IN ACTING**

A Thesis

Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of the  
Louisiana State University and Agricultural  
And Mechanical College  
In partial fulfillment of the  
Requirements for the degree of  
Master of Fine Arts

In

The Department of Theatre

By

Brace Easton Harris  
B.A., University of Arkansas, 2002  
May, 2005

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## **ABSTRACT**

The role of Pridamant in Tony Kushner's adaptation of *The Illusion* was performed in the Fall of 2004 and elected as a thesis role at that time. This thesis is a written record of the actor's interpretation of the character. The thesis includes pre-production work, Character Analysis, and Four Column Score.

## INTRODUCTION

This thesis is a character study of Pridamant in Tony Kushner's adaptation of *The Illusion*. Pridamant, a wealthy lawyer from the city of Avignon, has gone to a sorceress to seek aid in the search of his long lost son. Pridamant's son ran away from home fifteen years prior. In all actuality, he was driven from his home by his father. Throwing all caution to the wind, we find Pridamant in a most bizarre setting with wizards, magic, hobgoblins, and colored vapor images of his son, far away from the security of Avignon. He has traveled to a mysterious cave and witnesses amazing sights that turn his heart upside down.

When I first read the play, I was extremely excited. It was fun, witty, and full of interesting twists. I was very interested in the part of Calisto/Clindor/Theogenes, Pridamant's son. He was able to change characters throughout the play, and as an actor, I would be able to create new lives for him. I never dreamed I would end up with the role of Pridamant. He was a seventy-year-old man! I am a young twenty-five year old! It did not make sense; but everything soon became clear.

Our director, Steve Young, was a guest artist brought in from Chicago. I had never met Steve before the audition, but I prepared as best I could by reading over the scenes we were told would be used for the audition pieces. Of course I barely looked at the role of Pridamant, and focused much more of my time on Calisto/Clindor/Theogenes. After reading for the role of the son, one of the other actors asked if I would read the role of Pridamant with him in a scene. "There's no way he would cast you as the father," he told me. Famous last words. I do not think I have had a better audition. Everything just

came so easily. When I walked out of the audition room, I knew I had just won the role of Pridamant. A day or two later the cast list came out, and sure enough, Brace Harris had received the role of Pridamant of Avignon. It was a time of mixed emotions. I was faced with playing a seventy-year-old man with a son, very hard when you do not know the first thing about being an older person or having children. Nevertheless, I was very happy about the challenge. I read the play again, this time focusing on Pridamant. It changed the whole essence of the play for me. Now I was fighting for my son.

First I needed to figure out the time and circumstances of the play. After speaking with Steve Young, we knew Pridamant was going to be from the seventeenth century. This raised some very powerful and character driven questions. What is Pridamant risking by seeking out the sorceress, Alcandre? If fifteen years have gone by, why has he waited so long to seek magical assistance? Where is his wife? She is never mentioned in the show. What was the attitude of magic and sorcery of that time period? How did society view the occult? As a predominant figure in Avignon, what about Pridamant is holding him back from finding his son without the help of the sorceress? These questions alone helped to send me into the world of Pridamant and start to figure out what was going on in this man's head, both positive and negatively.

This thesis is a documentation of the process that led to my characterization of Pridamant. This thesis consists of preproduction work, a Character Analysis, and a Four Column Score of the role. The preproduction work is the work done prior to the actual rehearsal process. I have enclosed a memo given to the cast prior to the arrival of the director. It helped create an introductory perspective of Pridamant and was essential in forming the character. The Character Analysis explores beyond the surface of the

character to obtain the very intimate details that are not automatically revealed, but help to form the most specific character possible. It consists of a brief autobiographical sketch of Pridamant, taken from the play itself and my own imagination, prior to the entrance to the cave, and a series of questions about what makes Pridamant who he is. The score is an outline that the actor creates to aid in making various and more specific acting choices. It is made up of the following: objectives, which are the character's wants and needs; actions and tactics, which are ways to achieve those objectives; and obstacles, which are things or people that block Pridamant from achieving those objectives. The score also has a column for focus and images, which can be visual or non-visual, are points of focus relevant to the actor at that particular moment.

*The Illusion* was produced by Swine Palace Productions in association with Louisiana State University November 17-21, 30, December 1-5, 2004 in the Reilly Theatre. The production was directed by Steve Young. The cast was, in order of appearance:

Pridamant of Avignon	Brace Harris
The Amanuensis	Eric J. Little
Alcandre	Tara MacMullen
Calisto/Clindor/Theogenes	Preston Davis
Melibea/Isabelle/Hippolyta	Michelle McCoy
Elicia/Lyse/Clarina	Sarah Jane Johnson
Pleribo/Adraste/Prince Florilame	Chaney Tullos
Matamore	Shawn Halliday

## PREPRODUCTION

The following are excerpts from a memo sent to the cast and production crew prior to the arrival of our director, Steve Young. He makes specific references to what he is looking for in each character and the essence of the play.

**MEMO**  
**RE: ILLUSION PROD. NOTES**  
**TO: PRODUCTION TEAM**  
**FROM STEVEN YOUNG**  
**DATE: 8/24/04**

Greetings,

Without having the luxury of a face to face preliminary design meeting, it is the intent of these notes to give us a starting point for our work on *The Illusion* and to let you know what I feel the play is about and how I see it unfolding on stage.

Sunday, August 30<sup>th</sup> I start another production out of town and will have sporadic access to e-mail Sunday evenings through Wednesday nights until I leave for Baton Rouge on October 1st. If you need to get hold of me quickly the best thing to do is call my cell phone at 309/253-6337. Thursday mornings through Sunday mornings you can e-mail me at lepest50@yahoo.com or call my home phone at 309/347-5637.

If you wish to snail-mail an item, my address is 1400 N. Capitol St. Pekin, IL 61554. I do not own a fax machine. As for e-mail, I use Windows XP and Word.

I am looking forward to meeting and working with all of you. *The Illusion* is a play that I have long desired to direct and I am very excited about getting started. Please feel free to differ, suggest, and argue.

**ADAPTATION:** The Kushner adaptation features some additional dialogue and scenes not included in other versions. While some translations make the play a treatise on love, (Corneille was said to view love as an impractical and foolish notion-in fact Calisto & Malibea are named after characters in a Spanish play written in the 1400's that condemns love as folly), others emphasize the more 'illusionary / theatrical' aspects.

Most renditions conclude with the father and son being re-united, hence, a story of reconciliation, but the Kushner version does not. In fact, the father, after learning his son is alive, is loath to go to Paris, as the roads are muddy and inhospitable to



travelers. Moreover, he can't remember his son's name. His reason for being in the cave has more to do with him than his son.

In the Kushner story, the play ends with a scene not found in other adaptations. After all the theatrical tricks are exposed we return to a fictional character. Matamore, the lunatic, enters seeking to escape the confines of this world for the illusionary world offered by the lunar planet. The lunatic cannot have the women he loves and the father does not reconcile with his son. For the lunatic, a world without love cannot be endured and a father, whose love is dictated by convenience, leaves us asking where is love to be found?

The final line "Not in this life, but the next," suggests that love, purely an illusion in this world, will have to be sought somewhere else. Love exists not as a thing, but as air. We choose to be in love, love does not happen. (Pg. 158)  
"ALACANDRE: Love, which seems the realist thing, is really nothing at all; a simple gray rock is a thousand times more tangible than love is. ...Love is a sea of desire stretched between shores—only the shores are real. ...lies, hatred, murder even are all knit up in it. ...A Dream which makes the world seem-an illusion. ...The art of Illusion is the art of love..."

**INTENT: The faux reconciliation, and the three theatrical scenes, are subordinate to and serve the idea of 'love is the illusion'.**

I do not see the final scene as sentimental, romantic, but the actions of a deluded man. Mind you, we want love to be tangible, we want to believe there is romance, we want to wallow in sentimentality, but the play forces the audience to re-evaluate belief structures.

This begs the question if the play is merely an intellectual exercise? No, we must be swept into the story, we must desire the reconciliation, we must be amazed by the conventions, but all of it is designed for us to experience the complexity of our desires verses reality. **We are emotionally moved to an epiphany.**

I have gone to great lengths to explain this and find a way to unify the story. I have read many reviews of the play and the most common criticism is that the vignettes are entertaining, but the play as a whole doesn't seem to make sense. As a matter of fact, it is often described as outright confusing. I think we must make all of our choices with the intent in mind.

**NOTE:** From a discussion last spring, I am working under the assumption that we are playing in thrust and that there is an inner above and below to the set, and there are stairs to access the above.

**SETTING:** The play takes place in a cave near Remulac, (no, not where the cone heads live), in France. Caves symbolically represent the unconscious and are a medieval image considered the spiritual center of the human heart. One goes to a cave to seek transformation. The cave is deprived of light, an individual is thrown into the pitch black and forced to use their senses, now in chaos, in a manner they are unaccustomed. It is a place of danger, fear, and religious persecution should you be discovered.

Pictures of the famous caveman caves discovered in France may serve as inspiration. I have attached pictures and an article about them with this e-mail. I feel we could justify levels, and sitting areas through rock formations, etc...

Within the cave it might be interesting in crags and formations of the cave to house scientific looking bottles and jars that are lit or seem to glow. They could contain preserved animals, insects, and colored fluids. (I would love to see the Amanuensis carry a jar with his tongue floating in it. I have a whole idea about using it to make him speak-that's another discussion).

Within the cave, we are presented with three scenes, requiring a performance space. We can discuss if this is the main floor or an additional stage. Maybe furniture appears by opening a rock or turning something over.

**REALITY:** The scenes in the cave are reality-the vignettes are theatrical. This should be reflected with color, light and sound. I think reality is drab and harsh-the theatrical scenes are beautiful and vivid.

**OPENING:** I would like to hear wind in the cave that sounds like a sleeping giant, breathing. Perhaps water dripping as well. A single match that fails to ignite is the only light in the pitch black. I would like the Amanuensis seen entering slowly, a single torch in hand, starting from the back of the stage, past the double dock doors if possible, to suggest that the cave is miles deep.

I have an idea about Alcandre appearing within a huge theatrical cape he wears, that serves as a scrim and appears to be made of cobwebs or elements of the cave. After back lighting through it, Calisto would appear in silhouette, the cape would then fall away to start first scene and could be later bunched up to be the bush in the first scene. (This idea we would have to discuss on the phone in more detail)

**THREE VIGNETTES:** Despite indications the characters age and change economic circumstances, (we do need to observe this), I think it is more important that they be presented as theatrical scenes that do not relate to one another-are clearly their own story. (I think the fact their names change with each appearance and they play multiple characters has no other context-historical and dramatic

context of their names excepted. The thread is Being that Alcandre is a sorcerer, he can move us forward and back.

The scenes progress to be more cynical and violent, even modern. The first scene is silly and gushes with passion. The second is more jaded, yet, contains overtones of romance. The third is cynical, practical, modern and harsh. The progression of these scenes must move to a more realistic tone that would convince the father that it is reality. This progression should be reflected in the style of acting as well.

**Scene 1** The time is 1636; the son left 15 years earlier. I would like to set and costume the first scene in this period. Music, (perhaps a single harpsichord), and the lighting should reflect the conventions of the time.

**Scene 2** Could we set and costume this scene in the Napoleonic era, the height of the Romantic Movement. (Dying for love seen as noble and the notions of honor-Hernani) Music could be a Beethoven sonata or concerto. Lighting would reflect the era.

**Scene 3** I would like to put this in high-end modern dress with modern music as well. Again we should use/show the conventions of modern stage lighting. (With sound I think amplification and stereo quality comes into play).

**NOTE:** I think we should seek to wig, change facial hair, and evolve/change the performers look with the scenes.

**HAWK:** The cry of a hawk is heard several times and the shadow of the bird crosses the stage. I want to play with the scale of this thinking of the hawk as the size and volume of a dragon. The medieval hawk symbolized the mind of a sinner and victory over sexual desire.

**FIGHTS:** The first slap is silly and courtly. The second fight is a dual that morphs into a tragic death. The third is violent, horrific and unexpected. The murder must be so horrific as to move the father to tears.

**TRANSITIONS:** Since the three scenes are a performance we should make no bones that we are performing them. As a convention, the actors, underscored, enter in a stylized manner and take their places. Rather than hiding it we make it a part of the show. I think it might be wise to explore a standard light cue that suggests we are going into show mode. (I have moved a few lines to give us a cleaner 'in' and 'out' to each scene).

I would like to toy with the idea that Alcandre has a wooden box with a lens and a hand crank. When he starts a scene, a flickering light, like an old silent movie shines onto the actors and whatever other conventions we use to establish his

magical ability, start up.

I would like any scene changes to happen easily and efficiently. (We have garden, jail, etc...) If we can incorporate the actors and make it part of the presentation that is ideal. I think less is more.

**THEATRICALITY:** Let's explore what we can do to boost the theatrical skills of Alcandre. I am interested in playing with smoke, thunder, lightening and any magic effects we could come up with. At the end of the play, when all of it is revealed, we should see the machinery.

**Curtain:** With the death of the son, Pridamant is to rush the stage, yanks at a red opera curtain, which falls to the floor. Can we place it over the back windows and he grab at it while standing on the above? Let it fall to the floor? We might be able to have the house lights come on as he rushes the stage and perhaps roll in speakers and or lower a boom with lights on as well?

**Lighting:** I think we might even be able to lose the theatrical lighting altogether when we learn this is a play-bring up the works and the house lights as well. The Amanuensis, at the very ending, can shut off the breakers, it would be great to hear this and see the work lights chunk out as Matamore re-enters.

**Backstage:** Perhaps we see the actors changing into street clothes, Alcandre takes off his costume, technicians begin to clean up and re-set the stage for the next show.

**ENDING:** As the Amanuensis is turning out the works, Matamore re-enters. I would like the Amanuensis to lower an obviously fake moon in on a rope and that the moon is obviously lit with an instrument. Once we have shifted to moonlight, I would like a rope ladder to drop from the ceiling and Matamore ascend into the ceiling. He struggles to climb, half way up the moon unhinges, falls, and rolls to a stop. After the Amanuensis' last line, he turns to the black curtains covering the windows, gestures, they open, and if nature cooperates, the real moon is revealed.

**COSTUMES:** Some character things.

**Pridamant:** I think his dress must reflect super-wealth. Height of fashion. Money is most important to him. He hurts his son by denying an inheritance. He's proud of his swift payment of debts.

Could he have a cross or something that suggest his religious affiliation? His being in the cave would be construed as heretical. He is from the town of Avignon, home of the French Papacy.

I would like him to appear plague like sick-maybe the clothes have become too big. Bad skin?

**Amanuensis:** I see him as Smike, perhaps using polio crutches. A Road Warrior extra. Has an eye patch. Large scars on his face and mouth where he met with violence. Clothing pieced together and tattered.

**Alcandre:** I would like to consider him in the vein of a Druid. Long hair; bone necklaces, furs, etc... Think Lord of the Rings.

**Matamore:** Don Quixote comes to mind. I think that in the first meeting he could have a polished breast plate, gauntlets, and helmet. After he goes into hiding I think he loses most of the armor and what is left is rusted and corroded. He wears bandages and has bite marks around the legs, ears, nose, and hands. The appearance becomes one of a homeless individual. Eyes are sunk, etc...

**Geronte:** (Final scene) Military dress uniform, complete with medals, braids, sashes, and any other plumage appropriate to the time.

**Calisto, Melibea, & Elicia:** Elicia and Melibea exchange positions. The servant becomes wealthy and the former mistress becomes more servant like. (They actually change costumes on stage) Calisto in the first scene has the clothes from when he lived at home-maybe they are a little out of style and starting to show some wear. The second scene is definitely a servant. In the final scene he is of high fashion. I think to some extent of Calisto and Melibea as Romeo and Juliet. The author points out that they are the elements of fire and ice. Calisto is hot and Melibea cool. It might be interesting to play with this contrast.

**Pleribo:** (First two scenes) He is of unearned wealth and position. His clothes are over done-in contrast to Calisto. Contrasted he is physically the lesser man. He is Silvio in *Two Gents* or Malvolio in *12<sup>th</sup> Night*. His outfit is overstated and impractical. Silly color? Standing by Calisto there should be no doubt who is of money.

Thank you and I look forward to working with all of you.

-Steve Young

## CHARACTER ANALYSIS

I was born in Avignon in 1571 as Pridamant de Fournier. My father and mother were of upper-middle class rank and I was brought up in the family business-- law. I was an only child. I had few friends as a young man, but was too caught up in my studies to notice. I had to be the best. I was married at the age of twenty to Marie Roux and was given a son in the first year. This is where my life became extremely uncomfortable. My wife passed away during childbirth. It is a loss I have still not overcome. I had no clue how to deal with a child. Work with my father was too consuming so I hired a nursemaid, and later a nanny, to deal with my son. He always seemed to want me around; to play with him or read fantasy books. I found this annoying and childish. He would always play games with imaginary friends and I would have to punish him for tomfoolery. He could never focus on important things in life. As he became older, my son began to hang around with what I considered to be the wrong crowd, other young men and women involved in the arts and philosophy: actors, singers, painters, and musicians. Nonsense. None of those vagabonds would ever be anything significant in life. I tried to stop him from being around those types. This did not go over well. He became enraged when I would not allow him to participate in their foolish games. Slowly, I lost control of him. My health was fading and I became impatient. He would be gone for days at a time with no word where he was going or where he had been. His studies became nonexistent. I put my foot down. No more friends. He would be sent to boarding school in Paris. That was the last time I saw him. It was fifteen years ago next month. I recently suffered a heart attack, almost leaving this world. I have a fortune only my son shall have. I have

looked for him with every resource available. Nothing. I have one hope left. I have journeyed to seek the magician Alcandre. My only hope is she will be able to give me some insight into where my son's life has gone. If anyone found out I had traveled to this cave I would be ruined. The occult is not looked upon highly by the church. My inherited business would go under. I must find my son.

**What does your character say about himself?**

Pridamant is a very strong-headed individual. He thinks very highly of himself. This can be shown in his relationships and interactions with others. He makes several references, such as, "I'm ashamed to be seen in a place like this," "That name means nothing to you. Well, it means something in Avignon," "Assure your master I can pay. More than adequately." He makes similar statements and comments to other characters in the show, giving a sense that Pridamant has a cold heart and a closed mind.

**What does my character say about others?**

The main focus of Pridamant's journey is to find his son. By looking at the script, Pridamant's attitude and feelings toward his son are mixed a love-hate relationship.

"He seemed uncontrollable, wild, dangerous to me in all sorts of little ways. I loved him so much I wanted to strangle him. I wanted to snap his spine sometimes in a ferocious embrace,"

"I can't stop thinking about him. I can't face death until I see him again. I want to tell him that I love him,"

"I want to tell him that the ghost of him has ruined my life, has sucked dry everything, present happiness and memory as well. I want to make him sick with guilt. I want to make him the heir to my fortune,"

“What technique he has, he fences like an aristocrat, elegant but not foppish, not affected,” but then immediately turns around with,  
“Oh, he’s dropped his sword, how clumsy, he was always so easily distracted,”  
“for the love of God, you can do better than that...do something right for once.”

As one can see, Pridamant loves his son but has no idea how to express his feelings. His emotions seem so powerful, he cannot control them, always turning into hate.

In the end, Pridamant has found out his son is an actor and everything he witnessed in the cave was an illusion. He speaks very specifically of his son,

“No. He’s an actor. I don’t know that I like that. I remember the day he was born; this small thing he was. I thought, “This is not like me. This will...disappoint.” And you see...I was right.”

One can see Pridamant has given up his longing for his son. The last thing Pridamant says before he leaves the cave also leaves the audience in saddened and disappointed. “All these memories, and I’ve forgotten his name.”

### **What do other characters say about my character?**

Characters from the play seem to have mixed feelings about Pridamant as well.

Alcandre says,

”You are a troubled and unhappy man,”

“Even if I could restore your son to you I wouldn’t,” “For this, to see your granite heart soften just a little bit.”

She knows why he has come, and enjoys torturing him by pointing out the chinks in his armor. There is a scene with the Amanuensis where a look into Pridamant’s soul seems to happen. The Amanuensis tells Pridamant exactly what he is,



“While baby-fat men like you sit watching, devouring like pigs the agony I produce! Leech-men, vampires, you smile, you’re sated, you think blood won’t call for blood, the crimes you commit are all shellacked, clean and beautiful while your refuse runs through me like a...”

The most important information comes from Pridamant’s son. He speaks of his father in a very interesting way. It always seems to be in a positive light. Although the words might sound negative, the context of each scene shows how he loves Pridamant. Elicia says, “Sweet Calisto, your eyes are very dark.” He responds with, “Like my father’s-deep, dark, there’s nothing but love in them.” The fact that he even remembers his father’s eyes shows that Pridamant was a very important factor in his son’s life. Later, the son refers to his past with Pridamant, ‘Poor, an orphan, forced from his home by an unloving father.’ Probably the greatest insight from Pridamant’s son comes when the son is awaiting execution. The son speaks, in a prayer almost, to Pridamant,

“I’m thinking of my father. When they toss my trunk in the lime pit, and my astonished head in after it, will you, Father, in your house, oblivious, half a mile away, feel some correspondent shiver in your spine? When the sun and lime have bleached my bones, will your mouth, unexpectedly, inexplicably, go dry?”

“The audience at attention, men my father’s age, the hooded stranger with the hand on the handle of the axe and then...”

Even at death’s door, the son thinks of Pridamant.

### **What is my character fighting for?**

Pridamant needs his son. So much, in fact, that he is terrified at the thought of having him back. But still he drives on, searching. Pridamant’s son is the only thing real,

the only thing left in Pridamant's once human heart. The son is the lifeblood. At the end of the play, we find Pridamant chooses death over love. He cannot overcome the pride and prejudice of his own heart.

**How do I resemble my character: inside and outside?**

**How do I differ from my character: inside and outside?**

I have placed these two questions together because this was one of the more difficult aspects of Pridamant to conquer. Pridamant is around sixty-five years old. This alone was a challenge. We are both men, but playing a sixty-five year old man is a difficult task. As far as appearances, we are both thin-- Pridamant because he is older and sick and I am young and active. We both have curly hair. The wig used by the costume department had some nice waves in it. I pictured a Thomas Jefferson hairdo. We both have poor eyesight. The costume department also added this. I was given glasses. I always imagined Pridamant having spectacles, even at a young age. I too am blind without glasses.

Our emotional life is also similar. Pridamant shuts people and emotion out. I have a tendency to do this for self-protection. Pridamant has a bad temper as do I. But I believe anger is directly connected to passion though one must learn to control both.

Differences were more bountiful. As I stated before, Pridamant is an older man than I am. He has been married and lost his wife. He knows the struggles of being a father and having an intense career. I have not experienced any of this. I had to be specific about what I wanted-- my son. This helped to drive everything else. Pridamant's age also adds life experience to his card. At twenty-five, my experience is limited, but I

am learning. I would like a stab at this role in forty years. I know everything would change.

**How does my character move?**

Pridamant is sick and likely has congestive heart failure waiting in the wings. He does not breathe well and excitement sets his heart racing. He tries his best to stand with “dignity”, but he cannot hold it for long. He is developing a slight curvature of the spine from sitting over a desk like Scrooge covering a heart filled with regrets. He stumbles in the cave because of his weak legs. He likes to talk with his hands. This comes from law. He is quick to move when he is willed. This energy comes in extremely stressful situations.

**Other inspirations for your character.**

When creating the role of Pridamant, several other characters from literature came to mind. Moliere’s Harpagon from, *The Miser*, Pantalone, from Italian Comedia dell’Arte, and Charles Dicken’s Ebenezer Scrooge from, *A Christmas Carol*. Each one of these characters had the same basic premises. Each man was wealthy and wanted no one to touch his money. Each was elderly and hateful toward their fellow man. Yet, each secretly wanted more in his life. Like Pridamant, each wanted his “son”.

**SCORE**

TEXT	TACTIC	OBSTACLE	FOCUS
<p><b><u>Act I</u></b>  <b>Pridamant: Is this the cave of the magician Alcandre? Is this...Nothing here. Hello? Is this the cave of the magician Alcandre? I'm a pilgrim in need of her services.</b></p> <p><b>Is your master in? Can you speak? I followed the directions carefully, but I've arrived... to be honest I'm ashamed to be seen in a place like this, wizards and spells, I... I'm Pridamant of Avignon. That name means nothing to you. Well it means something in Avignon. Assure your master I can pay. More than adequately.</b></p> <p><b>Say something! Move, fetch, announce me, more light or...Very well, I must have the wrong address. A thousand pardons and goodnight.</b></p> <p><b>Voice: He doesn't speak because he has no tongue. And because he's deaf he didn't catch your name.</b></p> <p><b>Pridamant: Pridamant of Avignon. I'm looking for the sorceress Alcandre they told me lives in this dismal pit.</b></p> <p><b>Voice: Turn around.</b></p> <p><b>Alcandre: What do you want from her?</b></p> <p><b>Pridamant: Do I have the honor...</b></p> <p><b>Alcandre: What do you want? This is close enough; my time is precious to me; your business, or go away.</b></p> <p><b>Pridamant: I want a more intimate consultation.</b></p>	<p>to awaken</p> <p>to win him over</p> <p>to push</p> <p>to pacifier (a baby's)</p>	<p>I am in an unknown place. It is dark, and don't know where the magician is.</p> <p>I don't know if he's dangerous.</p> <p>I don't know where she is She is more powerful and on her own territory.</p>	<p>the darkness of the cave</p> <p>The Amanuensis</p> <p>Alcandre</p>



TEXT	TACTIC	OBSTACLE	FOCUS
<p><b>Pridamant: ... information proved worthless; I have paid through the nose for every clue, but always I am led to a wall in which all the doors have been locked to me, as if by magic.</b></p> <p><b>Alcandre: Magic. Which explains your long journey form Avignon to me.</b></p> <p><b>Pridamant: It's near fatal for a man of my age and poor physical condition, I never thought I'd make it. I hear you can... They tell me you can conjure. That you can bring to bear on any situation certain skills and lost arts of a pre-Christian variety...</b></p> <p><b>Alcandre: Even if I could restore your son to you I wouldn't. He's lucky to have escaped.</b></p> <p><b>Pridamant: But I've changed. For the first time this year in early spring I faced death in the form of a sharp surprising tearing at my heart. A warning. Nothing of my life for the past fifteen years has seemed real to me. I can't stop thinking about him. I can't face death until I see him again. I want to tell him that I love him. I want to ask him why he never wrote. I want to tell him that the ghost of him has ruined my life, has sucked dry everything present happiness and memory as well. I want to make him sick with guilt. I want to make him the heir to my fortune. He must be very poor... Oh impossible, impossible; it's him; you've called him back to me...My heart, as I told you, I must avoid excitement.</b></p> <p><b>Alcandre: Odd for a man avoiding excitement to come to a magician's cave at night. What did you expect?</b></p>	<p>to probe</p> <p>to beseech</p> <p>to deflect</p>	<p>Alcandre still hasn't helped me.</p> <p>I have no other options.</p> <p>I am terrified of my son.</p>	<p>Alcandre</p> <p>Calisto</p>

TEXT	TACTIC	OBSTACLE	FOCUS
<p><b>Alcandre: You're perfectly safe here. Frightened?</b></p> <p><b>Pridamant: My son always frightens me. I want to speak to him.</b></p> <p><b>Alcandre: Uh uh uh. Violate the boundary between their world and ours only at the greatest peril to yourself. Cross over, and you may not be able to find your way back.</b></p> <p><b>Pridamant: Then what am I to do?</b></p> <p><b>Alcandre: Use your eyes, your ears....If he teeters on the brink of some fatal trap you can call out a warning still he'll fall in and die.</b></p> <p><b>Pridamant: I wouldn't want to see that.</b></p> <p><b>Alcandre: I'll show you his life, just as he's lived it, since you cast him off. How it ends, I cannot say.</b></p> <p><b>Pridamant: He's so young, he's hardly aged at all.</b></p> <p><b>Alcandre: Before the night's over, he will. You see him now as the young man you banished, years ago. Life is still fresh to him. Full of wonders...</b></p> <p><b>Calisto: I have seen a most splendid vision.</b></p> <p><b>Pridamant: What is he talking about? Is he also a magician?</b></p>	<p>to seize</p> <p>to grade</p>	<p>I can't go to him. I can only watch his life unfold.</p> <p>I am powerless to change things.</p> <p>If he is a magician, that would look very bad for me.</p>	<p>Alcandre</p> <p>Calisto</p> <p>Alcandre</p> <p>Calisto</p>

TEXT	TACTIC	OBSTACLE	FOCUS
<p><b>Alcandre:</b> He is frequently in love.</p> <p><b>Calisto:</b> The vision's name is Melibea.</p> <p><b>Alcandre:</b> That one there. Your son's great passion, his waking dream. If we retreat, the first phantasma can commence.</p> <p><b>Calisto:</b> I was hungry; I trapped a hawk.....I am watching your every move. My love</p> <p><b>Pridamant:</b> At home he always told stories like that. When I could catch him, I'd whip him for telling lies.</p> <p><b>Calisto</b> This garden wall encircles paradise....It's cold out here, I'm freezing.</p> <p><b>Melibea:</b> It isn't cold, it's spring, and warm, and I know who you are, Calisto.</p> <p><b>Pridamant:</b> Calisto? His name's not...</p> <p><b>Melibea:</b> You can't come in.</p> <p><b>Calisto:</b> I'm in already.</p> <p>(scene continued)</p> <p><b>Melibea:</b> ....That probably isn't even your real name.</p> <p><b>Pridamant:</b> It isn't! His name isn't Calsito, it's...</p> <p><b>Alcandre:</b> Sssshhhhh! Sit and don't move. Watch and don't talk.</p>	<p>to swing her to my side</p> <p>to suspect</p> <p>to inject</p>	<p>I don't know what exactly is going on.</p> <p>I need Alcandre to believe my story.</p> <p>My son's name has changed.</p> <p>I can't change the scene.</p>	<p>Calisto</p> <p>Alcandre</p> <p>Melibea</p>





TEXT	TACTIC	OBSTACLE	FOCUS
<p><b>Alcandre:</b> As if you'd lived a life you never really lived.</p> <p><b>Pridamant:</b> It makes me feel immortal. Please, continue. I watch gluttonously.</p> <p>(scene continued)</p> <p><b>Calisto:</b> Who are you?</p> <p><b>Pridamant:</b> Ah, it must be my son's rival, looking for his lover; poor fool; against this sharp-billed shrike he doesn't stand a chance.</p> <p>(scene continued)</p> <p><b>Calisto:</b> I will return! Wait for me, my own adored! With my great love for you...</p> <p><b>Pridamant:</b> What happened? Magician? Hello? The visions have disappeared! Just as the father was about to enter! A light, please, I'm blind...</p> <p><b>Alcandre:</b> Don't be alarmed. A great leap is taking place. Days, months, years perhaps...</p> <p><b>Pridamant:</b> But the father was about to appear.</p> <p><b>Alcandre:</b> Irrelevant to the story.</p> <p><b>Pridamant:</b> Your servant, that noise. He...</p> <p><b>Alcandre:</b> Yes?</p> <p><b>Pridamant:</b> He...Why is he doing that?</p>	<p>to pump up</p> <p>to belittle</p> <p>to measure</p>	<p>My son's rival. I want my son to be the best.</p> <p>The vision has disappeared and I can't do anything about it.</p> <p>Things are contradicting themselves. They are not concrete.</p>	<p>Alcandre</p> <p>Calisto</p> <p>Alcandre</p> <p>The Amanuensis</p>



TEXT	TACTIC	OBSTACLE	FOCUS
<p><b>Pridamant:</b> My son, he looks different. Has he aged? His clothes are richer. No, I was wrong, it's not my son. Calisto's coming now...</p> <p><b>Clindor:</b> Your servant, Clindor.</p> <p><b>Pridamant:</b> Clindor? This is my son, Calisto.</p> <p>(scene continued)</p> <p><b>Adraste:</b> ...I go now to claim you: my murderer; my bride.</p> <p><b>Pridamant:</b> I'm utterly bewildered. It's uncanny. Why has everyone changed their name?</p> <p><b>Alcandre:</b> You still pick after the tiniest details, like a lawyer examining a brief.</p> <p><b>Pridamant:</b> I am a lawyer. A man has a right to expect coherence...</p> <p>(scene continued)</p> <p><b>Lyse:</b> ...That's how it has to end.</p> <p><b>Pridamant:</b> Their all in league against him! I don't want to watch anymore.</p> <p><b>Alcandre:</b> But he's your son. Surely you want to see how he fares in this sea of sharks.</p> <p><b>Pridamant:</b> Not really, no. It's too upsetting, and I don't like what's going on.</p>	<p>to measure</p> <p>to explode her</p>	<p>I can't see very well in the cave.</p> <p>I have come to accept my son's name as Calisto and now it is being changed.</p> <p>My son is being set up and I can't change anything.</p>	<p>Matamore</p> <p>Alcandre</p> <p>Alcandre</p>

TEXT	TACTIC	OBSTACLE	FOCUS
<p><b>Alcandre:</b> But it’s history, it’s memory, it’s all already happened, and your closing your eyes can’t alter that-</p> <p><b>Pridamant:</b> I can leave!</p> <p>(scene continued)</p> <p><b>Clindor:</b> ...Your punishment, to speak no more.</p> <p><b>Pridamant:</b> This isn’t dangerous, is it, it looks dangerous...</p> <p><b>Alcandre:</b> I’ll make it disappear if it upsets you.</p> <p><b>Pridamant:</b> No wait, let me....Oh! Look at that! Look at him go. It’s wonderful! Thrust! Thrust! Thrust! Thrust! Parry, hah! I... oh I must be careful not to get overexcited...Wow! What technique he has, he fences like an aristocrat, elegant but not fopish, not affected, what a fighter he...Oh he’s dropped his dagger, how clumsy, he was always so easily distracted, I...Careful, fool, careful, put a little life in it boy, for the love of God you can do better than that, head up, eyes front, straighten your spine, no slouching around and ..after him, after him, do something right for once, you...Oh!</p> <p>What’s happened? Where’s Clindor?</p> <p><b>Alcandre:</b> In prison of course, where murderers go.</p> <p><b>Pridamant:</b> He’s not a murderer! I know the law! Self defense, he was attacked!</p>	<p>to smack</p> <p>to jet propel</p> <p>to sidestep</p>	<p>I don’t know if my son knows how to fight.</p> <p>He is an embarrassment when he screws up.</p> <p>My son will be put to death.</p>	<p>Alcandre</p> <p>Clindor</p> <p>Alcandre</p>



TEXT	TACTIC	OBSTACLE	FOCUS
<p><b>ACT II</b>  <b>Alcandre: We must begin, begin, begin.</b></p> <p><b>Pridamant: Your spirits seem to lift as my son's fortunes decline. It's perverse and insulting.</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;">(scene continued)</p> <p><b>Lyse: ...Even if I followed this man to the moon.</b></p> <p><b>Pridamant: Narrow the vision, this isn't what I've paid for, you digress and I want to see Clindor, find out how he's doing-I've visited prisons often enough, they're terrible places, he's probably wretched. Show me that.</b></p> <p><b>No, no, not the girl, I...</b></p> <p><b>Alcandre: Soon your son, but first this: a handsome young woman, at twilight prayers, watched over by her father-</b></p> <p><b>Pridamant: Her father! At last, the father arrives. And now her entreaties will move him to free poor Clindor, and he'll bring it all to a pleasant resolution.</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;">(scene continued)</p> <p><b>Geronte: When the sun appears, he dies.</b></p> <p><b>Pridamant: It's abominable isn't it, the way some people treat their children?</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;">(scene continued)</p>	<p>to prick</p> <p>to prick</p> <p>to pat on the back</p> <p>to burn</p>	<p>Alcandre is enjoying my son's suffering. In turn she is enjoying mine.</p> <p>I'm not seeing what I paid for. Everything should be about my son, not others.</p> <p>Clindor must be exonerated by the head of state in order to save his life.</p> <p>Geronte has sentenced my son to death.</p>	<p>Alcandre</p> <p>Alcandre</p> <p>Geronte</p> <p>Geronte</p>

TEXT	TACTIC	OBSTACLE	FOCUS
<p><b>Lyse: ...Moderation is best, Aristotle said it: everyone feasts, but no one is full.</b></p> <p><b>Pridamant: Well, if the maid is rich, my son's a fool not to choose her-the other one's a bit high strung and likely to be a spend thrift. On the other hand, the maid is a bit too scheming, it'd be constant work keeping up with her. I only hope he doesn't make a mistake...Ah! The prison.</b></p> <p><b>Clindor: I'm thinking of my father....The hooded stranger with his hand on the handle of the axe and then</b></p> <p><b>Pridamant: No...</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>(scene continued)</b></p> <p><b>Geronte: ...Mine! Mine! All mine! All mine!</b></p> <p><b>Pridamant: Thank God that's over. I can breath again. Light? Hello?</b></p> <p><b>Yes, yes, I know, time's passing. No need for the reminder. Ah! It was you! That was amazing, you... incarnated him, you did, I've known tight old bastards just like that, I found myself despising you... Tell me about it, crossing over. Is it as bad as the old charlatan says it is?</b></p> <p><b>Amanuensis: It's worse. She doesn't know. She's never been.</b></p> <p><b>Pridamant: She said she had.</b></p> <p><b>Amanuensis: She lies</b></p>	<p>to fluff</p> <p>to envelop</p> <p>to fluff</p> <p>to control</p>	<p>My son id and idiot and he might not choose the girl who has money.</p> <p>My so is going to die.</p> <p>I have to get the Amanuensis to trust me.</p>	<p>Alcandre</p> <p>Clindor</p> <p>The Amanuensis</p>



TEXT	TACTIC	OBSTACLE	FOCUS
<p><b>Pridamant: I thought as much. If you want to get the dirt on someone, make small talk with their servants. You probably never had your tongue cut out or your earplugs pierced, either...</b></p> <p><b>Amanuensis: I did! I do!..... while your refuse and sewage runs through me like a...</b></p> <p><b>Alcandre: Has my servant been amusing? What did he say to you?</b></p> <p><b>Pridamant: I’ve no idea. He seemed upset about something.</b></p> <p><b>Alcandre: Ah, well, he usually is-it’s this back-and-forth business, it wears on the nerves. The last vision is ready.</b></p> <p><b>Pridamant: Proceed. The married life of Clindor my son, and Isabelle his wife. I wonder if I have grandchildren.</b></p> <p><b>Clarina: This is an endless walk, Hippolyta. It’s taken half the day.</b></p> <p><b>Hippolyta: I need the exercise and air, Clarina; this grove is a popular place. There’s the palace of the Prince Florilame...</b></p> <p><b>Pridamant: I see they’ve changed the names again. This time I won’t let it upset me. It’s pleasant to see they’ve become friends. I had a maid once come into some money, she packed and left without so much as a thank-you-goodbye.</b></p> <p>(scene continued)</p>	<p>to deflect</p> <p>to prod</p>	<p>Alcandre has been lying to me.</p> <p>If she finds out I was scheming about her, she might hurt me or might decide not to give my son back.</p> <p>Everything is running smoothly and I want it to stay that way.</p>	<p>The Amanuensis</p> <p>Alcandre</p> <p>Alcnadre</p>

TEXT	TACTIC	OBSTACLE	FOCUS
<p><b>Hippolyta:</b> Forgiveness is for people who admit that they've transgressed. How can I forgive you when you swear you're guilty of nothing at all?</p> <p><b>Pridamant:</b> Oh this isn't at all how it should be! They're wrangling like fish peddlers! Surely after all they've been through they've become more elevated and ennobled!</p> <p><b>Alcandre:</b> They seem instead to have gotten rather tarnished in the process.</p> <p><b>Pridamant:</b> Well I don't like this dissolution. That first vision was the best by far. I'll see if I can remember that and forget the rest of it.</p> <p><b>Alcandre:</b> Considering what they'll cost, I can't believe you won't try to retain them all...</p> <p><b>Pridamant:</b> I came to you to launder the fabric of my recollected life. You haven't lived up to your promises.</p> <p><b>Alcandre:</b> I gave you back your son.</p>	<p>to spank</p>	<p>My son is not the man I thought he would be.</p> <p>I need Alcandre to change the scene again.</p>	<p>Alcandre</p>
<p>(scene continued)</p> <p><b>Pridamant:</b> No! Stop! Alcandre, stop this! He's being murdered! That man is murdering my son!</p> <p><b>Hippolyta:</b> No! Please! Your Grace! Help! Murder! Murder!</p> <p><b>Pridamant:</b> He isn't dead, he isn't dead...</p> <p><b>Clarina:</b> Oh pity my soul, Your Majesty, what</p>	<p>to bomb</p>	<p>My son s being murdered before my eyes.</p>	<p>Theogenes</p>



TEXT	TACTIC	OBSTACLE	FOCUS
<p><b>Alcandre: ...gumstuck machinery, erect the rickety carpentry of my illusions. For this: to see your granite heart soften, just a bit.</b></p> <p><b>Pridamant: My heart magician, doesn't soften, though under considerable duress, it breaks. Scar tissue forms. He's dead. His poor unhappy wife. I'll join him soon. They could have dug a single grave for us both. I never dreamed I'd outlive him. Terrible day, to have seen that...My eyes hurt, I want never to see again.</b></p> <p><b>Alcandre: I have nothing more to show. It's over now.</b></p> <p><b>Pridamant: Finished, yes. It's over.</b></p> <p><b>Alcandre: and I'm sure you're anxious to be on your way; at a steady gallop you might make Paris by morning.</b></p> <p><b>Pridamant: Paris? Why on earth would I go there?</b></p> <p><b>Alcandre: To... see your son, of course.</b></p> <p><b>Pridamant: To see...? Is he buried in Paris, then?</b></p> <p><b>Alcandre: Buried?</b></p> <p><b>Pridamant: I don't want to see his tomb; I hate boneyards, visiting the dead, wax flowers and weeping, it's a ghoulish custom.</b></p> <p><b>Alcandre: There seems to be some... misunderstanding here, he's... Oh my.</b></p>	<p>to beseech</p> <p>to push</p> <p>to shove</p>	<p>I have lost the only thing that has kept me going; my son.</p> <p>Alcandre is trying to sweeten things up.</p>	<p>Alcandre The red scarf.</p> <p>Alcandre The red scarf.</p>

TEXT	TACTIC	OBSTACLE	FOCUS
<p><b>Pridamant: Yes?</b></p> <p><b>Alcandre: Your son.</b></p> <p><b>Pridamant: What about him?</b></p> <p><b>Alcandre: Well- he isn't dead.</b></p> <p><b>Pridamant: He....I beg your pardon.</b></p> <p><b>Alcandre: Your son's not dead, sir. Not really dead. I merely showed him to you in his occupation, these...these scenes you watched are from a theatrical repertoire. Scenes from plays. Your son...</b></p>	<p>to brush away</p>	<p>I don't want to talk.</p>	<p>Alcandre The red scarf.</p>
<p><b>Pridamant: Is alive?</b></p> <p><b>Alcandre: Is an actor</b></p> <p><b>Pridamant: Alive?</b></p> <p><b>Alcandre: Oh, but yes, alive!</b></p> <p><b>Pridamant: Alive! Alive my son! Alive! I thought...</b></p>	<p>to cling to</p>	<p>I can't trust Alcandre.</p>	<p>Alcandre</p>
<p><b>Alcandre: you didn't think this was real? Oh I do apologize for that, sir, I do, I thought anyone could see...Oh dear, oh dear, these mooncalves and mock turtles of illusion and reality made, they slip and they slither, I ought to be more careful, more punctilious; really, the distress you must have felt, it's inexcusable.</b></p> <p><b>Pridamant: Where? Where is he?</b></p>	<p>to hug</p>	<p>I need Alcandre to tell me where my son is.</p>	<p>The cave  Alcandre</p>



TEXT	TACTIC	OBSTACLE	FOCUS
<p><b>Alcandre: ...the earth is such a rock, and love only a breeze that dreams across the surface, weightless and traceless. And yet love's more mineral, more dense, more veined with gold and corrupted with lead, more bitter and more weighty than the earth's profoundest matter. Love is a sea of desire stretched between shores-only the shores are real, but how much more compelling is the sea. Love is the world's infinite mutability; lies, hatred, murder even, are all knit up in it; a magnificent rose smelling faintly of blood. A dream which makes the world seem...an illusion. The art of illusion is the art of love, and the art of love is the blood-red heart of the world. At times I think there's nothing else. My servant has prepared the bill.</b></p> <p><b>Pridamant: I pay my bills promptly. I thank you for your services.</b></p> <p><b>Alcandre: We try to please our patrons, don't we, my friend?</b></p> <p><b>Pridamant: I may, if health permits, go to Paris this spring, providing they've put straw down on the muddy roads and made them passable. Though heaven knows what anyone can expect from such a reunion. Still and all, it might be good to see my son, Theoge...No. it started with a "C." Crispin? Hmm...all these memories, and I've forgotten his name.</b></p> <p><b>Alcandre: There were heavy rains this February and March. I'd expect a lot of mud. Well, goodnight, dogsbody, make sure the lights are out.</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>End of Play</b></p>	<p>to swim move</p> <p>to deflect</p>	<p>Alcandre is telling me everything I know is true, but I don't want to hear.</p> <p>I am losing my mind.</p> <p>I am lost again.</p>	<p>Alcandre</p> <p>The Amanuensis</p> <p>The mouth of the cave.</p>

## **VITA**

Brace Easton Harris was born on June 26, 1979, in Fort Smith, Arkansas. He received his primary and secondary education in Morrilton, Arkansas. He received his Bachelor of Arts degree in theatre from the University of Arkansas in May of 2002.