

PEER GYNT by Henrik Ibsen

Summary of plot

Peer Gynt is the son of the once rich and highly regarded Jon Gynt, who had become a drunkard and lost all his money, leaving Peer and his mother Aase to live in poverty.



Peer wants to restore what his father had wrecked, but gets lost in boasting and day-dreams. He is involved in a fight and carries off the bride, Ingrid of Hægstad, on her wedding-day.

He is outlanded and has to flee from the parish. During his flight he meets three amorous dairy-maids, the woman clad in green, the daughter of the old man of the Dovre mountains, whom he wants to marry, and Boygen (the great obstacle).



Solveig, whom Peer met at the Hægstad wedding, and fell in love with, comes to his cabin in the forest to live with him, but he leaves her and goes on his travels.

He is away for many years, takes part in various occupations and plays various roles including that of a businessman engaged in shady enterprises on the coast of Morocco,





wanders through the desert, passes the Memnon and the Sphinx, becomes a Bedouin chief and a prophet, tries to seduce Anitra, daughter of a Bedouin,

and ends up as a guest in the madhouse in Cairo, where he is hailed as emperor.



Back home in the parish, he attends a peasant funeral and an auction where he offers for sale everything from his earlier life.

He also meets the Button-moulder, who maintains that Peer's soul must be melted down with other faulty goods unless he can explain when and where in life he has been "himself", and the Lean one, who believes he cannot be accounted a real sinner who can be sent to hell.



Peer, in ever greater despair, reaches Solveig, who has been waiting for him in the cabin ever since he left. She tells him that he has always been himself in her belief, hope and love.