

**ACT TWO**

**SCENE 10**

(The sounds of the ocean can still be heard from the darkened stage. The moon rises and a soft glow of light envelopes the stage. PEER is still lying unconscious on the stage. The CANDLE MAKER slowly enters and walks to where PEER is lying.)

**CANDLE MAKER**

God rest ye, friend.

**PEER**

(awakening)

What? Where am I? What happened to the ship...?

**CANDLE MAKER**

There was a storm last night.

**PEER**

(holding his head)

Oh, yes...a storm. It was terrible. I remember the ship going down. How did I...? Where am I?

**CANDLE MAKER**

Home.

**PEER**

Home? You mean...(he looks around)...Norway...Solveig...(he takes a few steps toward the mountain)

**CANDLE MAKER**

You seem anxious to get somewhere.

**PEER**

Yes, home! My home and... my wife.

**CANDLE MAKER**

Excuse me...my eyes aren't what they used to be...your name wouldn't be Peer by any chance?

**PEER**

Why, yes. How did you know? My name is Peer Gynt.

**CANDLE MAKER**

Then I'm afraid you're too late, Peer.

**PEER**

Too late? What do you mean? You don't mean Solveig...? Has anything happened to Solveig?

**CANDLE MAKER**

No, no, no. Nothing like that. She's fine, as far as I know. No...It's you who are too late. You must come with me.

**PEER**

Come with you? Why? Who are you?

**CANDLE MAKER**

Me? I'm just a Candle Maker.

**PEER**

A candle maker? Why should I go with you?

**CANDLE MAKER**

You must go into the melting pot: The pot we use to melt the wax.

**PEER**

Your melting pot? What are you talking about?

**CANDLE MAKER**

You must be melted down and used for the Master's new creations.

**PEER**

Melted down? New creations? What are you talking about?

**CANDLE MAKER**

(explaining)

As I said, I'm a Candle Maker. I take the wax that the Master gives me and melt it down to make fresh new candles. Some burn brighter than others, some burn hotter, and some burn at both ends at the same time. Of course those are the ones that are finished before their time is up.

**PEER**

What are you talking about? I still don't understand. What does this have to do with me?

**CANDLE MAKER**

Peer... how can I say this? I'm sorry but your coffin has been prepared and they've already dug your grave. The Master has ordered me to collect your soul and melt it down with the others.

**PEER**

What are you saying? This can't be true! Not without a warning.

**CANDLE MAKER**

I'm afraid that it's a custom to keep the date of a funeral a secret from the guest of honor.

**PEER**

(understanding)

Yes, of course. I didn't know what I was saying. (after a pause)  
And you are here to melt me down?

**CANDLE MAKER**

Exactly.

**PEER**

Then you are...?

**CANDLE MAKER**

As I told you, just a Candle Maker.

**PEER**

Of course, of course. Everyone's entitled to call themselves whatever they want. (pause) So this is the end? But, my good man this is a little unjust. After all I'm not so bad as you seem to believe. I've done quite a number of good deeds in my life. At the worst I may possibly have been a bit of a fool but I've never been a real sinner.

**CANDLE MAKER**

That is precisely the point. By the highest standards you aren't a sinner at all. So you escape the horrors of torment and must go with others into the melting pot.

**PEER**

It doesn't matter to me what you call it: Melting pot or pool of fire, it's all the same to me.

**CANDLE MAKER**

(insulted)

My good sir! I'm sure you don't mean to insult me by suggesting that I have horns on my head?

**PEER**

Horns, tail, pitchfork...what difference do they make?

**CANDLE MAKER**

(angry but controlled)

My friend, you seem to be making a very serious mistake. I'll explain, if I may. You are not what one would call a major sinner, you're hardly even a minor one...

**PEER**

Now you're talking sense.

**CANDLE MAKER**

You're not exactly a saint either.

**PEER**

I never claimed...

**CANDLE MAKER**

You're neither one nor the other. A man must have a certain intention to become a sinner.

**PEER**

One has to be ruthless and think of nothing else.

**CANDLE MAKER**

Exactly, but you weren't like that. You took your sinning very lightly.

**PEER**

Some men drown themselves in sin, I just splashed around on the surface, as it were.

**CANDLE MAKER**

Ah, we shall soon agree. The pool of fire is not for those who merely splash around on the surface.

**PEER**

And therefore, my friend, I can go as I came...

**CANDLE MAKER**

And therefore, my friend, I must melt you down. You must go into the melting pot with the other souls I am to collect tonight.

**PEER**

(shocked)

You don't intend to melt me down with other men?

**CANDLE MAKER**

That is exactly what I intend.

**PEER**

To mix my soul up with others?

**CANDLE MAKER**

Yes.

**PEER**

Oh no! I'll fight you with all the strength I have. Anything but that!

**CANDLE MAKER**

But what else is there? Be reasonable Peer, you're hardly good enough for Heaven.

**PEER**

I'm not aiming as high as that. I'm easy to please. Punish me, if you must, but not this other business. To end one's days as a tiny speck in someone else's body...to be melted down and to be Peer Gynt no more...No! I won't let it happen. I won't!

**CANDLE MAKER**

There's really no need to get so upset. What does it matter if you're melted down? After all you've never really been happy with yourself...

**PEER**

Never been...? What are you talking about? Have I ever been anything but happy with myself? If you could look into my heart you'd find a happy Peer Gynt and nothing else.

**CANDLE MAKER**

(taking out an official looking piece of paper)

It can't be. Look, here are my orders...it is written: "Thou shalt claim Peer Gynt, He has defied the Master's wishes, He has never been happy with himself and must go into the melting pot."

**PEER**

That's ridiculous! He must mean someone else.

**CANDLE MAKER**

Just come along quietly and don't waste my time.

**PEER**

I'll be damned if I will! (realizing what he said) I didn't mean that. I just mean that it would be a fine thing if it turned out tomorrow he meant some one else.

**CANDLE MAKER**

I have it in writing.

**PEER**

At least give me time.

**CANDLE MAKER**

Time for what?

**PEER**

I'll bring you proof that I've always been happy with myself.

**CANDLE MAKER**

And how do you intend to do that?

**PEER**

Uh...Witnesses...testimonials...

**CANDLE MAKER**

I'm afraid the Master won't...

**PEER**

I'll get some proof. I don't know how but I will. Just give me a chance. Just a few more hours.

**CANDLE MAKER**

All right, one chance. But remember, just a few more hours.

**(End Scene 10)**