

F R E E A M A Z O N S O F G H O R

An Original Musical Skit

by

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SCENE: *An empty stage. Seated and motionless at stage left are Ms. Bee, Norman Gorman, and The Editor. Enter Chief Barbarian and Shrinking Maiden.*

CH. BARBARIAN (*Recitative*):

I am the hero of every story
that has ever been written.

SHRINKING MAIDEN (*Recitative*):

And I am always there with him.
He wants me, or he hates me,
Or he owns me. But I'm always there.

CH. BAR. & SH. MAID (*Sung: #1*):

We play our parts well,
We do as we're told;
But we rarely have voices
In choosing our mold.

CH. BAR.:

My author says: "Fight!"
"You're a man made of steel!"

SH. MAID:

My author says: "Hide
"All the fear that you feel!"

NORMAN GORMAN (*points to Chief Barbarian*):

You're strong!

MS. BEE (*Points to Shrinking Maiden*):

You're noble!

CH. BAR. & SH. MAID:

You're wrong!

(END #1)

CH. BAR. (*indicating Norman Gorman*):

He ought to try carrying a sword sometime.
Then he'd agree with me
That a blaster is much more practical!

SH. MAID (*indicating Ms. Bee*):

And sure, it's wonderful to be strong
And self-sufficient, and stubborn
And proud. But it's so much easier
To be myself. . .

CH. BAR. & SH. MAID (*Sung: #2*):

No one ever asks us
What we'd like to do.
Our parts are given to us
And we have to follow through.

CH. BAR.:

My author then says: "Woo her;
"You're romantic and you're bold."

SH. MAID:

My author then says: "No, ma'am!
"You're aloof and you are cold."

NORMAN GORMAN:

You're fascinating!

MS. BEE:

You're not interested!

CH. BAR. & SH. MAID:

You're wrong!

(END #2)

CH. BAR.:

He rules my fate like a god.

SH. MAID:

And she molds me like --
You should excuse the expression --
Virgin clay.

CH. BAR. & SH. MAID (*glaring at authors*):

And worst of all, sometimes
They can't make up their minds!

*Chief Barbarian and Shrinking Maiden become motionless
as the Editor slaps his leg loudly.*

EDITOR:

New! We've got to have something new!

MS. BEE:

But the Dimover books are selling like hotcakes.

NORMAN G.:

So who wants to read a waffle?
The *Ghor* books are the dynamite of our line --

MS. BEE:

Yes. . .
I've heard of their explosive effect on women!

EDITOR:

Now, now. . .
I've been putting a lot of thought into this matter,
And I believe I've found the answer.
You, Ms. Bee, and you, Norman Gorman,
Are my top-selling authors --
And I think you should collaborate!

Ms. Bee and Norman Gorman stand up.

MS. BEE (*Disgusted*):

Collaborate?

NORMAN G. (*Staring at Editor, incredulous*):

Collaborate?

EDITOR (*Sung: #3*):

Collaborate, collaborate,
Work together on a plot.
Each of you, yes, each of you
Has things the other hasn't got.

NORMAN G. (*turning away; recitative*):

I won't do it!

MS. BEE (*turning away*):

YOU won't do it?
I won't do it!

EDITOR:

It means more money. . .

MS. BEE & NORM. G. (*turning back, they look at each other
then at the Editor*):

We'll do it.

EDITOR (*sung*):

Collaborate! Collaborate!

MS. BEE & NORM. G.:

We'll work together on a plot!

EDITOR:

Collaborate! Collaborate!

MS. BEE & NORM. G.:

This will take a lot of thought.

*(Authors sit in thoughtful poses, keeping time
to music of interlude.)*

EDITOR:

Collaborate! Collaborate!

NORMAN G:

I've got brawn!

MS. BEE:

I've got brains!

EDITOR:

Collaborate, collaborate!

MS. BEE:

I've got spirit!

NORM. G.:

I've got chains!

EDITOR:

Produce a work that's just as great
As your audience expects.

MS. BEE:

I'll put in the violence.

NORMAN:

And I'll supply the sex!

EDITOR:

Collaborate, collaborate!
I can't wait to hear the plot.
With the two of you together,
A best-seller's what we've got.

(END #3)

MS BEE:

Let's see. . .
We'll need some Free Amazons. . .

*1st and 2nd Amazons enter stage right,
take positions and freeze.*

NORMAN GORMAN:

And, of course, a barbarian hero.

Chief Barbarian moves, taking on a masterful look.

EDITOR (*puzzled*):

There's something missing. . .

MS. BEE & N. G.:

A damsel in distress!

*Chief Barbarian drags Shrinking Maiden across stage and
dumps her front and center; she cowers at his feet.*

EDITOR:

That's it! That's it!

And I've got just the title --

(*Recitative*):

Free Amazons of Ghor!

*Ms. Bee, Norman Gorman, and Editor all FREEZE;
action begins, stage right.*

1ST AMAZON:

Free that poor wretch, you beast!

CH. BARB.:

If she's wretched, it's because she's lonely.
You're not much, but you'd be company for her
While I'm out doing manly things. . .
How about it?

Chief Barbarian begins to sing (#4)

Come live with me and be my slave.

What's more secure than a warrior's cave?

I'll use you, I'll beat you,

I know how to treat you.

Try it -- you'll like it!

(END #4)

2ND AMAZON:

Keep your disgusting ideas to yourself!

And turn over that woman to our protection.

1ST AMAZON:

This is your last chance!

CH. BARB. (*laughing*):

Only two women -- against me?

*Chief Barbarian's laughter is interrupted when
1st Amazon punches him in the stomach.*

*Chief Barbarian is getting the worst of the struggle
when 1st and 2nd Assistant Barbarians enter and join in.
They capture and hold an Amazon each.*

1ST & 2ND ASST. BARBARIANS (*Sung; reprise of #4*):

Come live with us and be our slaves.

What's more secure than our warrior's caves?

We'll use you, we'll beat you.

We know how to treat you.

Try it -- you'll like it!

(END #4)

*1st and 2nd Amazons struggle briefly, then feel
the muscles of the men holding them, speculative
looks on their faces. They look out at the audience,
at each other, and then back at the Barbarians holding
them. They look at the authors. Norman Gorman smiles
and nods.*

1ST & 2ND AMAZONS (*Sung; #5*)

We'll come live with you and be your slaves.

We'll warm your beds and clean your caves.

We're weary of fighting.

Your offer's inviting.

Like it? We'll love it!

(END #5)

*Chief Barbarian, Shrinking Maiden, Amazons and Barbarians
become motionless as action begins stage left.*

MS. BEE:

Are you kidding?

NORMAN GORMAN:

Ch, come on now. You know all women
need a strong man. . .

MS. BEE:

To take out the garbage!

NORMAN GORMAN:

No -- to put it in chains!

EDITOR:

Hold it! Hold it!

Nasty words won't get us anywhere.

Now, Ms. Bee, just what is it about that scene

You don't like. . .?

MS. BEE:

My Free Amazons wouldn't --

They couldn't behave like that!

(She stands; sings #6):

The sisters of Amazon choose

What they'll be,

Who they are.

What's normal and easy they lose;

They follow a dangerous star.

No man may an Amazon wed,

Though his love

She may share.

Providing her own board and bed

Is the vow that each sister must swear.

To earn her own way

In a land full of strife;

Her sisters protect

With her wits and her knife;

The Amazon oath

Is the keystone

Of her life.

(END #6)

NORMAN GORMAN *(stands)*:

But the women on Ghor --

MS. BEE:

That's just it. These are Free Amazons,
And on Ghor or Dimover, they'd never allow
Their principles to fall away
From them like that.

NORMAN GORMAN *(grudgingly)*:

Well. . .maybe you're right. . .

Both authors sit down.

EDITOR (*relieved*):

Good! Now, shall we try it again?

Ms. Bee, Norman Gorman and Editor glare, grumble softly as action begins stage right. 1st and 2nd Assistant Barbarians stand behind Chief Barbarian; other characters assume the positions they had originally.

1ST AMAZON:

Free that poor wretch, you beast!

CH. BARB.:

If she's wretched, it's because she's lonely.
You're not much, but you'd be company for her
While I'm out doing manly things. . .
How about it?

Sings reprise of #4:

Come live with me and be my slave.
What's more secure than a warrior's cave?
I'll use you, I'll beat you. . .
I know how to treat you.
Try it -- you'll like it!

(END #4)

2ND AMAZON:

Keep your disgusting ideas to yourself!
And turn over that woman to our protection.

1ST AMAZON:

This is your last chance!

CH. BARB. (*laughing*):

Only two women -- against me?

The fight proceeds as before; Shrinking Maiden again avoids involvement. The Barbarians end up holding the Amazons.

1ST & 2ND ASST. BARBS. (*Reprise of #4*)

Come live with us and be our slaves.
What's more secure than our warrior's caves?
We'll use you, we'll beat you.
We know how to treat you.
Try it -- you'll like it.

(END #4)

1ST AMAZON (*Sung; #7*)

I don't think that I could stand you.

2ND AMAZON:

You're so smug and you're so filthy.

1ST AMAZON:

I'd rather die . . .

2ND AMAZON:

I'd rather die. . .

1ST AMAZON:

Than spend a night. . .

2ND AMAZON:

A single night. . .

1ST & 2ND AMAZONS:

Beside your smelly bod!
WE'D RATHER DIE!

(END #7)

1st and 2nd Amazons strain away from their captors, look out at the audience, grimace and go slack. They slide slowly through the arms of the Barbarians to lie motionless on the floor. The Barbarians stare down at them.

1ST ASST. BARBARIAN:

It's the old poison in the hollow tooth trick!

2ND ASST. BARBARIAN:

That's the third time this year!

CHIEF BARBARIAN:

Foolish women.

Grabs Shrinking Maiden.

At least you've got some sense. . .

SHRINKING MAIDEN (*Melodramatically*):

No. These were my sisters in spirit,
And they died nobly rather than share the fate
You have planned for me. Their deaths
Will serve no purpose
If I do not profit by their example!

Breaking away from Chief Barbarian, Shrinking Maiden catches up a knife from the belt of the 1st Amazon and stabs herself. She falls slowly.

I have seen my duty, and it is done!

CH. BAR. (*looking down at her, disappointed*):

Well -- piffle!

The Barbarians freeze, the corpses stop twitching, as action begins stage left.

EDITOR:

Oh no you don't! Not in one of our books!
Not a downer ending like that!
Why, that kind of tragedy went out with. . .
With. . .with. . .Shakespeare!

MS. BEE (*rises, as if to recite a lesson; sung: #8*)

Our readers must have a story that's fun.
The opening scene must always be one
That catches the interest
Of casual readers
As well as the long-faithful fans.

NORMAN GORMAN (*rises and joins in*);

And when at the end of a story like this,
The hero's alive and the heroine's kiss
Is all that the reader
Foresees at the start,
He's happy as happy can be!

(END # 8)

EDITOR (*despairingly*):

Okay, okay. Let's try it once more.

The authors resume their chairs as action resumes stage right. Shrinking Maiden returns the dagger, and all characters assume their original positions, this time with muttering and grumbling.

1ST AMAZON:

Free that poor wretch, you beast!

CH. BARB:

If she's wretched, it's because she's lonely.
You're not much, but you'd be company for her
While I'm out doing manly things. . .
How about it?

(Reprise of #4):

Come live with me and be my slave.
What's more secure than a warrior's cave?
I'll use you, I'll beat you,
I know how to treat you.
Try it -- you'll like it!

(END #4)

2ND AMAZON:

Keep your disgusting ideas to yourself!
And turn over that woman to our protection.

1ST AMAZON:

This is your last chance!

CH. BARB. *(laughing)*:

Only two women -- against me?

*Fight begins as before, but this time the Amazons win.
Shrinking Maiden shrieks and attacks Chief Barbarian.
At conclusion, all three Barbarians are kneeling before
Shrinking Maiden and the Amazons.*

CH. BARB. & ASST. BARBARIANS *(Sung; Reprise of #5)*

Spare our lives, and we'll be your slaves!
Just ask, and we'll show you our treasure caves!
Whatever you want us
To do, we'll perform --
Just say when!

1ST AMAZON *(Considering)*:

Well. . . We do need someone to take out the garbage.

2ND AMAZON:

Maybe if we clean them up a little. . .

SHRINKING MAIDEN (*eagerly*):

I know where he keeps his whips!

1st & 2nd Amazons look at her sternly; then at each other.

1ST AMAZON (*speculatively*):

It might be fun at that. . .

NORMAN GORMAN (*leaps up, aghast*):

No! No! No!

CH. BARB. (*angry*):

Don't interrupt us now!

It's just getting interesting. . .

NORMAN GORMAN:

Traitor!

(*Sings; #9*)

You can NOT sell any story
If you do not make it gory,
And you need a mighty swordsman
Who has ropes and chains and whips.
You need suffering and slaughter --
You need someone else's daughter,
Who wears nothing but a filmy
Piece of gauze around her hips.

If I have a prediliction
For the tough and bloody fiction,
Full of broads and lots and lots of
Sado-masochistic sex,
It's because my style of action
Gives the reader satisfaction!
And I get a lot of chicks,
Because I get a lot of checks.

(END #9)

Norman Gorman sits again, looking self-satisfied.

EDITOR:

Hold it one damn minute!
None of you understands the purpose
Of our existence at all!

All characters turn to look at the Editor.

ALL:

We don't?

EDITOR:

Bloody well right you don't!
All of us -- editors, writers, and characters alike --
All of us exist for one reason and one reason only.
Well, perhaps two.
We exist to entertain the public!

MS. BEE (*after a moment*):

What is the other reason?

EDITOR:

To make money, of course.
But that is only the Second Law.
Pay attention, and I'll tell you. . .

Sings; #10:

About three thousand years ago,
The Greeks were fond of fighting.
They laid their Trojan neighbors low,
And found it quite exciting.

The story-teller Homer
 Made his tales of that fight glow;
The people loved each one of them,
 And spread them on, and so
It's likely that old Homer made a decent bit of dough.
You've got to make it good to be a seller!

And then, we know, in Ancient Rome,
That warrior Horatius
Sent poor old Lars Porsena home --
His manner wasn't gracious.

A story-teller told the tale --
 With tension it abounds!
Told how he held the bridge,
 Of how he swam the Tiber -- ZOUNDS!
And you can bet Macaulay made a lot of pence and pounds.
You've got to make it good to be a seller!

And then we come to Charlemagne,
A king both bold and clever.
He had a brilliant fighter's brain;
He won at each endeavor.

The story-tellers told the tales
 With quite a bit of dash;
With combat and compassion
 That reminds a guy of M*A*S*H --
And I believe the story-tellers made a lot of cash!
You've got to make it good to be a seller!

Then skip another thousand years,
To times Napoleonic:
All Europe filled with songs and tears!
Both love and hate were chronic!

A story-teller told this tale
 Of battle without cease,
And wrote a huge, voluminous
 Account of war and peace --
And you just know old Tolstoy made his bank account increase!
You've got to make it good to be a seller!

And right up to this very day,
It's still the same old story
Of hatred, murder, and decay --
Of honor, love, and glory.

If you can handle all that stuff,
 And really do it well,
Just set your story any place
 From Paradise to Hell,
Any time from the Creation
 To the Horn of Gabriel. . .
Use pure hard-core science
 Or a wicked witch's spell;
Use robots, monsters, demons, apes,
 Or even a gazelle --
Provided they are basically human personnel!
Then you will please your readers
 And you'll make your pockets swell!
 But you've GOT to make it good!

Authors and Editor sing:

 You'd better make it good!

All sing:

 You HAVE to make it good to be a seller!

(END # 10)

NORMAN GORMAN:

Well, of course it has to be good!
All of my books are good!
They sell, don't they?

MS. BEE:

So do mine!

EDITOR:

In that case, a collaboration
Should sell twice as well!
We can rope in both your fans.

MS. BEE:

Both our fans? Are you implying
We only have one fan each?

EDITOR (*exasperated*):

Don't be cute! You know what I mean.

CHIEF BARBARIAN:

Hey, what about us?

SH. MAID, ALL BARBARIANS, ALL AMAZONS (*in chorus*):

Yeah! What about us?

EDITOR (*startled*):

Well -- what about you?

CH. BARB.:

Don't we have anything to say about this?
Are we just puppets?
Don't we have any life of our own?

SH. MAID:

If we aren't anything but cardboard, it's
gonna be an extremely dull book. . .

MS. BEE:

Why -- uh -- certainly. I've always said so.
We'll make you living, breathing people.
Right, Norm?

NORMAN G.:

Right!

Aside, to Shrinking Maiden:

We'll make sure you're well-rounded. . .

ALL CHARACTERS:

That's great!

EDITOR:

So that takes care of everybody involved.
Right?

ALL:

Right!

EDITOR (*Recitative; reprise of #1*):

You're wrong!

NORMAN GORMAN:

But -- who else is there?

EDITOR:

Them!

Editor points out at the audience. All others turn toward audience and pause, puzzled.

ALL (*joyously*):

Of course!

MS. BEE (*Sung; reprise of #3*):

For you are the important ones!

NORMAN GORMAN:

The ones we want to please!

SHRINKING MAIDEN:

For you, we'll wear a filmy gown!

CHIEF BARBARIAN:

Or even B.V.D.s!

ALL:

Collaborate! Collaborate!
The characters and writers, too!
Collaborate! Collaborate!
We'll do the best we can for you!