…[unreadable] and because His crime was so great, and so bloody, and shocking, He who had once ruled was brought in chains before the Vizier and the people of the city. The Vizier had consulted old books, and sorcerers, and things locked in the forgotten oubliettes of the palace. He declared

Fool I name you. You, who was so high, shall be brought low. You, who were beautiful, shall be made ugly. Let your skin become white as the sunless worm that gnaws upon the dead, and your nose become red and large as though it were a tick swollen with blood, and your hair become wild and [unreadable]. Your gait will be loping and amusing to all who behold you. Your clothes shall ever be ill-fitting. You who were feared above all others, shall be mocked by all others. Your lot will be cast with the base animals, and the deformed and the vulgar, and your every movement and utterance shall bring only the ridicule [unreadable]. And you shall not die, but live forever with these, the marks of judgement.

The powers beckoned forth by the Vizier rose from [unreadable]. And He screamed and pleaded as He beheld its faces and arms and mouths. And these it worked upon Him gruesomely, and fashioned Him as the Vizier instructed. Then He was released from his chains, and was cast out of the city, and the crowd stood in the street and jeered at Him as He fled, and rejoiced that His bloody footsteps would walk no more among theirs.

Long He ran, far from the city, to the edge of the desert beyond [unreadable]. There He found a pool of dank water, and saw His reflection, and what the dark powers had forged of His once comely features and He wept to see what He had become. His tears fell into the pool and rippled His
reflection, and His visage was warped further still. And laughter rose from His throat at the shapes made of His warped flesh in the thin film of water. It was then that He knew the truth to which we hold that laughter could be a mask for darkness, that His comical form could misdirect, and that He could continue the beautiful and bloody work for which He had been judged.

Here is the birth of our secret fraternity of the [unreadable], we who would mock and be mocked, for He was first among us. Fools He named us as He Himself was named, and other names besides; jester, clown, harlequin, trickster. We would stand apart, and adorn ourselves after Him in the vestments and regalia of our order; and mimic His capering prance, and bring forth laughter from the japing crowd, for these are our rites, performed in His honor. And it is His will that we would spread ourselves across the world, living in tents, amongst animals and those malformed by nature, in places of amusement and mirth, and laughter would be our trade. And only when we have drawn forth every laugh from every face, then will He call us together, and reveal what lies beneath the laughter. Thus do we hide Him among us as a sheep amidst a flock, until the day of the last laugh, and then blood [unreadable]...