THE MYSTERY OF IRMA VEP

Cast of Characters
LADY ENID HILLCREST
LORD EDGAR HILLCREST
NICODEMUS UNDERWOOD
JANE TWISDEN
AN INTRUDER
ALCAZAR
PEV AMRI
IRMA VEP

The Mystery of Irma Vep is a full-length quick-change act. All roles are portrayed by two performers.

ACT I

Scene 1: The library drawing room of Mandacres, the Hillcrest estate near Hampstead Heath, between the wars.

(The study is a large room with French doors at the back that open out on a garden. There is a desk and chair. A fireplace with a mantel over which is a portrait of Lady Irma in her bloom. Two deep armchairs flank the fireplace. There are signs that the Hillcrests have traveled: African masks and a painted Japanese screen. There is a bookcase with Morocco-bound volumes and doors left and right. At rise NICODEMUS enters from the garden, through the French doors, carrying a basket. His left leg is deformed and the sole of his shoe is built up with wood. JANE is arranging flowers in a bowl.)

JANE: Watch what you’re doing! You’re soaking wet! Don’t track mud in here!
NICODEMUS: It’s God’s good rain, my girl.
JANE: It’s the devil’s rain. That’s what it is!

(Lightning flashes, then thunder is heard.)

NICODEMUS: Would you rather the drought went on and on? It’s thankful you should be. And that mightily.
JANE: And don’t clump so with that wooden leg. You’ll wake Lady Enid.
NICODEMUS: And wasn’t it to save Lord Edgar from the wolf that me leg got mangled so? I should think she’d be glad to hear me clump after what I did for him.
JANE: That was a long time ago. Lady Enid doesn’t know anything about it.
NICODEMUS: She’ll find out soon enough.
JANE: Now, now, Nicodemus, I won’t have you frightening Lord Edgar’s new bride with your wolf tales.
NICODEMUS: And the sooner she does find out the better, I say!
JANE: Hush. Your tongue will dig your grave, Nicodemus. There are some things better left unsaid.
NICODEMUS: Pah! It’s a free country, ain’t it?
JANE: Shhhh!
NICODEMUS: Well, ain’t it?
JANE: If Lord Edgar hears you you’ll see how free it is. You’ll find yourself without a situation.
Charles Ludlam & Everett Quinton in
*The Mystery of Irma Vep* (Anita & Steve Shevett)
NICODEMUS: That's a little bit too free for me. I'll bite me tongue.
JANE: We must stand by Lord Edgar. I'm afraid he'll be needing us now more
than ever.
NICODEMUS: Why now more than ever? I'd say the worst was over. He's finally
accepted the fact that Miss Irma's in her grave.
JANE: Don't talk like that. I can't bear the thought of her in a grave. She was
always so afraid of the dark.
NICODEMUS: He's accepted it and you must too. Life has begun again for him.
He mourned a more than respectable length of time and now he's brought
home a new Lady Hillcrest.
JANE: That's just it. That's just the very thing! I don't think Lady Enid will ever
make a fit mistress for Mandacrest.
NICODEMUS: And why not?
JANE: She's so, so . . . common. She'll never live up to the high standard set
by Lady Irma.
NICODEMUS: That, my girl, is not for you or me to decide.
JANE: I can't stand the thought of taking orders from that vulgarian.
NICODEMUS: Come come, I won't have you talking that way about Lady Enid.
JANE: Lady Irma had a commanding presence and her manners were impecca-
ble.
NICODEMUS: It takes more to please a man than fancy manners.
JANE: I would think a man—a real man—would find nothing more pleasing than
fine breeding and savoir faire.
NICODEMUS: If that French means what I think it does you'd better wash your
mouth out with soap. Here's eggs and milk. The turtle was laying rather well
today.
JANE: And where's the cream?
NICODEMUS: I skimmed it.
JANE: Again? Ah, you're incorrigible.
NICODEMUS: In what?
JANE: Now what will I tell Lord Edgar when he wants cream for his tea, huh?
NICODEMUS: Tell him what you like.

(Lightning and a clap of thunder.)

JANE: (Sobbing) Ahhh!
NICODEMUS: There there. Don't be skeered. Nicodemus is here to protect you.
(Tries to put his arm around her)
JANE: (Eluding bit embrace) Keep your hands to yourself. You smell like a stable.
NICODEMUS: If you slept in a stable you'd smell like one too.
JANE: Keep your distance.
NICODEMUS: Someday, Janey my girl, you're going to smile on me.
JANE: Yeah, when hell freezes over and little devils go ice-skating.
NICODEMUS: If I was cleaned up and had a new white collar and smelled of bay
rum and Florida water you'd think different.
JANE: Don't you get any ideas about me. You are beneath me and beneath me
you're going to stay.
NICODEMUS: Someday you might want to get beneath me.
JANE: UGH! How dare you speak to me in such manner? I've had education.
NICODEMUS: What education have you ever had?
JANE: I've read Bunyan's Pilgrim's Progress from cover to cover, the Holy Bible,
the almanac, and several back issues of Godsey's Lady's Book.
NICODEMUS: Well I've read the Swineberg's Manual from kiver to kiver.
JANE: (Contemptuously) Hurmph!
NICODEMUS: You got no reason to look down your nose at me, miss. We're cut from the same bolt o' goods.
JANE: Don't go giving yourself airs. Go on back to your pigsty before I say something I'll be sorry for.
NICODEMUS: I'm not leaving until you give me a kiss.
JANE: I'll see you hanged first.
NICODEMUS: (Chasing her around the room) Give me a little kiss and then I'll show you how I'm hung.
JANE: Get away from me you beast with your double entendres.
NICODEMUS: Double what?

(Thunder, footsteps above.)

JANE: Now you've done it. You've waked Lady Enid. Go quick before she sees you in the house.
NICODEMUS: What's she gettin' up now for? It's just about evening.
JANE: That's her way. She sleeps all day and she's up all night.
NICODEMUS: It's them city ways of hers. Lord Edgar told me she'd been on the stage.
JANE: (Shocked) The stage! Ugh! How disgusting!
NICODEMUS: To think, a real live actress here at Mandacrest!
JANE: Yes, it's utterly degrading. But she is the mistress of the house now and we must adjust to her ways.
NICODEMUS: That's not what I meant. I think Lord Edgar has really done well for himself.
JANE: You men are all alike. You're so easily taken in. (Footsteps) I hear her footsteps. Go!
NICODEMUS: But I want to get a look at her.
JANE: She's just an ordinary woman and she doesn't need you gawking at her.
Go on back to your pigsty.
NICODEMUS: I found better company there than ever I found at Mandacrest.
(Exit)

LADY ENID'S VOICE: (Off) Jane, were you talking to someone?
JANE: Just Nicodemus. He came to bring the eggs.
LADY ENID: (Off) Is he gone?
JANE: Yes, Lady Enid.
LADY ENID: Has the sun set?
JANE: It's pouring down rain, your ladyship. There's very little out there that could be called sun.
LADY ENID: Draw the draperies and light a fire. I'm coming down.
JANE: Ah Lord, my work is never done. (Draws the draperies across the French door, cutting off the view of the garden. She takes a quick look at herself in the mirror; fans herself with her handkerchief; straightens her hair and collar.)
LADY ENID: Ah, you've made the room warm and cheery. Thank you, Jane.
JANE: Can I fix you a nice cup of tea?
LADY ENID: If it's no trouble.
JANE: (Sternly) That's what I'm here for.
LADY ENID: Is Lord Edgar about?
JANE: He was up and out at the crack of dawn.
LADY ENID: Out? Out where?
JANE: He goes riding in the morning. It’s a custom with him. *(Teakettle whistles off)* Ah, there’s the kettle calling. *(Exits)*

*(Lady Enid looks about the room and examines the paintings and books. She looks out the French doors into the garden and out to the moors beyond. Then the portrait over the mantel catches her attention. She stands before it and stares at it a long time.)*

JANE: *(Returning with the tea things)* How do you take it?

LADY ENID: I beg your pardon?

JANE: Your tea, miss.

LADY ENID: Plain.

JANE: *(Incredulous)* No cream or sugar?

LADY ENID: No, quite plain.

JANE: That’s queer.

LADY ENID: Queer?

JANE: Tea ain’t much without cream and sugar.

LADY ENID: I’m on an eternal diet. The stage you know.

JANE: But that’s all behind you now.

LADY ENID: *(With a sigh)* Yes, I suppose it is. But the habit’s ingrained. I shall probably refuse bread and potatoes ‘til I die. *(Indicating the portrait)* Who is that woman?

JANE: Why, that’s Lady Hillcrest. . . . I mean, that’s the last Lady Hillcrest.

LADY ENID: She was very beautiful, wasn’t she?

JANE: There will never be another woman who’s her equal—oh, I beg your pardon, miss.

LADY ENID: That’s all right, Jane. You were very fond of her, weren’t you?

JANE: *(Bringing her a cup of tea)* She was like a part of myself, miss.

LADY ENID: I see. *(Sits and sips tea. Sharp reaction to the tea)* You do make strong tea, don’t you?

JANE: *(Indignant)* When I makes tea I makes tea. And when I makes water I makes water.

LADY ENID: God send you don’t make them in one pot.

JANE: *(Beat. Then realizing that a joke was made at her expense)* Hurmph!

LADY ENID: You don’t like me, do you, Jane?

JANE: I don’t hate you.

LADY ENID: I should hope not! That would be a terrible thing, wouldn’t it? If you hated me and we had to live here together.

JANE: Yes, I suppose it would. I said I don’t hate you.

LADY ENID: You don’t hate me. But you don’t like me.

JANE: I’m not used to you. You’ll take getting used to.

LADY ENID: *(Shivers* I felt a chill. A cat walked over my grave.

JANE: Isn’t there a draft there, where you’re sitting, Lady Enid?

LADY ENID: Yes, there is a little. Perhaps you’d better close the French doors.

JANE: Did Nicodemus leave them open again? If I’ve told him once I’ve told him a thousand times . . . Why, isn’t that the master coming over there?

LADY ENID: *(Quickly)* Where? *(Getts up)* Yes, it’s he. *(Hiding behind the curtain)* Stand back! Don’t let him see us.

JANE: What’s that he’s carrying? Arms full of heather and he’s dragging something behind.

LADY ENID: Dragging something?

JANE: It looks like a big animal. Why, I believe he’s killed the wolf.

LADY ENID: *(Nervously)* Wolf?
JANE: The wolf that's been killing our lambs. Well we'll all sleep better too without that devil howling all night.
LADY ENID: He killed a wolf?
JANE: Yes, and he's brought the carcass back with him.
LADY ENID: Is it dead? Is it really dead?
JANE: It's dead and it won't get any deader.
LADY ENID: Which way is he coming?
JANE: He's taking the path by the pyracanthas.
LADY ENID: He's done that before. But will he take the footbridge?
JANE: That's just what I was asking meself. He's getting closer—no he's turned off—he's going the long way 'round and through the ivy arches.
LADY ENID: Then he's still not over it.
JANE: Ah, you can't blame him for not taking the footbridge after what happened there.
LADY ENID: They cling to their dead a long time at Mandacrest.
JANE: Nay, I think it's the dead that cling to us. It's as if they just don't want to let go. Like they can't bear to leave us behind. (Comes back to herself abruptly) The master will be wanting his dinner. (Turning at the door) How do you like your meat, miss?
LADY ENID: Well done.
JANE: No red meat?
LADY ENID: Not for me.
JANE: See, there's another difference. Miss Irma liked it bloody. (Exits)
LADY ENID: (Turns sharply and looks at the portrait) Don't look at me like that. I didn't take him away from you, you know. Someone was apt to take your place sooner or later. It happened to be me. I know how you must feel seeing us so happy under your very nose. But there's nothing to be done about it, old girl. Life must go on.
LORD EDGAR: (Enter with arms full of beast, dragging wolf carcass as described) Rough weather.
LADY ENID: (Rushing to EDGAR and planting a kiss on his lips) Edgar, darling, you're back.
LORD EDGAR: Please, Enid, not in front of . . .
LADY ENID: In front of who? There's no one looking. (Pause) Unless you mean her. (Points to the painting)
LORD EDGAR: It does seem a bit odd. I mean kissing right in front of her.
LADY ENID: She looks vaguely sinister.
LORD EDGAR: Please, Enid. She's dead.
LADY ENID: Perhaps that's the reason.
LORD EDGAR: Let's don't talk about her.
LADY ENID: Yes, let's don't.
LORD EDGAR: Are you quite comfortable?
LADY ENID: Yes, quite. Jane doesn't like me but I think I'll win her over.
LORD EDGAR: I hope you'll like it here.
LADY ENID: I'm sure I will. Oh, Edgar, Edgar.
LORD EDGAR: Oh, Enid, Enid.
LADY ENID: Oh Wedgar, Wedgar, Wedgar.
LORD EDGAR: Oh Wenid, Wenid, Wenid.
LADY ENID: (With a qualm) Edgar.
LORD EDGAR: (Slightly reprimanding) Enid.
LADY ENID: (Reassured) Edgar.
LORD EDGAR: (Condescendingly) Enid.
LADY ENID: (Snuggling his chest, with a sigh) Edgar Edgar Edgar.
LORD EDGAR: (Comforting and comfortable) Enid Enid Enid.
LADY ENID: (Passionately) Edgar!
LORD EDGAR: (Aroused) Enid!
LADY ENID: (More passionately) Edgar!
LORD EDGAR: (More passionately) Enid!
LADY ENID: (Rapturously) Edgar!
LORD EDGAR: (Likewise) Enid!
LADY ENID: (Climatically) Edgar!!
LORD EDGAR: (Orgasmically) Enid!!
LADY ENID: (Cooing) Edgar.
LORD EDGAR: (Drowsily) Enid.
LADY ENID: Edgar?
LORD EDGAR: Enid.
LADY ENID: Take the painting down.
LORD EDGAR: I couldn’t do that.
LADY ENID: Why not?
LORD EDGAR: I just couldn’t.
LADY ENID: She’s been dead three years.
LORD EDGAR: Yes, I know, but . . .
LADY ENID: Let’s make a fresh start. Forget about the past.
LORD EDGAR: I want to, Enid, believe me, I do.
LADY ENID: We’ll never feel comfortable with her watching every move we make.
LORD EDGAR: No, I suppose not.
LADY ENID: Then why not put her things away in a chest somewhere or make a little shrine where you can visit her once in a while? But not our home.
LORD EDGAR: You’re right of course. I know you are. It’s just that . . .
LADY ENID: What?
LORD EDGAR: She made me promise that I would always keep a flame burning before her picture.
LADY ENID: What nonsense.
LORD EDGAR: I tell you she made me promise.
LADY ENID: Blow it out.
LORD EDGAR: I couldn’t break my word.
LADY ENID: I thought you belonged to me now. That we belonged to each other.
LORD EDGAR: We do, but that was before we met.
LADY ENID: Which means more to you? Your love for me or your promise to her?
LORD EDGAR: Enid, please. Don’t put it that way.
LADY ENID: Which is it, Edgar? Which will it be?
LORD EDGAR: Please don’t make me choose.
LADY ENID: Do you love me?
LORD EDGAR: How can you doubt it?
LADY ENID: Then the choice is already made. Blow it out!
LORD EDGAR: Dare I? (Blows out the candle)
LADY ENID: You see, nothing happened.
LORD EDGAR: Weird that we thought it would.
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(THEY LAUGH.)

LADY ENID: And now, darling, as to this matter of dragging dead animals into the drawing room—it's really got to stop.

LORD EDGAR: I say, you're really out to reform me, aren't you?

LADY ENID: Just a little.

LORD EDGAR: I'll have Nicodemus tend to it. Why don't you change for dinner?

LADY ENID: Good. I'm famished.

LORD EDGAR: Don't be long.

LADY ENID: I won't. I promise. (Exits)

LORD EDGAR: (GOES TO THE PAINTING) Forgive me, Irma, please. Please forgive me!

(ENTER NICODEMUS.)

NICODEMUS: Where is the new lady?

LORD EDGAR: Changing. You know how slow women are.

NICODEMUS: So you've finally killed the beast, eh, Master Edgar.

LORD EDGAR: Yes, I've killed it. It will rage no more.

NICODEMUS: But what about the beast within? Is that through with raging?

LORD EDGAR: It's resting peacefully at the moment. That's about the most we can expect, don't you think?

NICODEMUS: You're a man of will, you are, Edgar Hillcrest.

LORD EDGAR: Nicodemus, take the guts out and burn it.

NICODEMUS: Don't you want to save the skin?

LORD EDGAR: No, burn every hide and hair of it.

NICODEMUS: And the ashes? What should I do with them?

LORD EDGAR: Scatter them on the heath.

NICODEMUS: And let the wind take up its howling?

LORD EDGAR: Then throw them in the mill run.

NICODEMUS: After her?

LORD EDGAR: Yes, after her. And Nicodemus . . .

NICODEMUS: Yes, Master Edgar?

LORD EDGAR: Take down the painting.

NICODEMUS: And what do you want me to do with it?

LORD EDGAR: Burn it with the wolf. (Exits)

(UNDERWOOD goes toward the mantel and tries to take down the painting. Enter JANE.)

JANE: And what do you think you're doing?

NICODEMUS: The master wants the painting down.

JANE: You can't do that. You can't take Lady Irma!

NICODEMUS: I can and I will. It's the master's orders.

JANE: Stop it! Stop it! Don't touch that picture. Agh! The sanctuary light's gone out. Oh God, this will never do.

NICODEMUS: Don't blame me. It was out when I came in. Lord Edgar must have extinguished it.

JANE: (INDICATING THE CARCASS) And what's this here?

NICODEMUS: You've got eyes in your head to see with. It's the wolf. He's killed the wolf.

JANE: Glory be! Is it possible?

NICODEMUS: It's cause for rejoicing.
JANE: (Approaching the carcass warily) It’s no rejoicing there’ll be this night, Nicodemus Underwood. He’s killed the wrong wolf.

(Blackout.)

Scene 2

(The scene is as before. It is late evening. The household is asleep. Jane is stooping the last embers of the fire. Lady Enid enters silently in her dressing gown. She stands over Jane, whose back is to her, and watches. Jane suddenly becomes aware of her presence and, frightened, gasps. This in turn frightens Lady Enid, who gasps also.)

LADY ENID: I didn’t mean to frighten you.
JANE: I didn’t mean to frighten you either. You shouldn’t creep up on a person like that.
LADY ENID: I’m sorry, Jane. You have lived here a considerable time. Did you not say sixteen years?
JANE: Eighteen, miss. I came when the mistress was married, to wait on her; after she died, the master retained me as his housekeeper. Though I knew him from childhood. I was raised at the Framby Parsonage.
LADY ENID: Indeed.

(Long silence between them.)

JANE: Ah, times have greatly changed since then!
LADY ENID: Yes, you’ve seen a good many alterations, I suppose?
JANE: I have; and troubles too.
LADY ENID: The Hillcrests are a very old family, aren’t they?
JANE: Oh, Lord, yes. Why the Hillcrests go back to... back to... well, I don’t know exactly who. But they’ve been descending for centuries.
LADY ENID: Lord Edgar told me he was an only child.
JANE: Yes, a strange flower upon the old solid wood of the family tree.
LADY ENID: Was he always so fond of hunting, even as a child?
JANE: Nay, he only took that up after the mistress passed away. Oh, but that’s a long story. I won’t be after boring you with it.
LADY ENID: Oh, do go on, Jane. Everything about Lord Edgar fascinates me.
JANE: Where is himself?
LADY ENID: Sleeping soundly. Jane, it will be an act of charity to tell me something of the family history. I know I shall not be able to rest if I go to bed, so be good enough to sit and chat for an hour.
JANE: Oh, certainly, miss! I’ll just fetch a little sewing and then I’ll sit as long as you please. Listen to that wind! It’s an ungodly night. Can I get you a hot toddy to drive out the cold?
LADY ENID: If you’re having one.
JANE: Sure I loves me toddy and me toddy loves me.

(She crosses to the table, gets her sewing, and pours out two toddies from a pan she has nestled among the embers. She gives one drink to LADY ENID and settles into the chair opposite her before the fire.

Howling sound.)

LADY ENID: That wind!
JANE: That’s not the wind. That’s a wolf howling.
LADY ENID: It seems you've been troubled by wolves of late.
JANE: Not wolves. It's one wolf in particular. Victor.
LADY ENID: Victor?
JANE: He was captured as a pup and tamed. But his heart was savage. Miss Irma kept him as a pet.
LADY ENID: Like a dog.
JANE: He was bigger than a dog, so big the boy used to ride about on his back. Though Victor didn't like that much, I can tell you. Though he bore it for the mistress's sake, for it was to her he belonged. His happiest hours were spent stretched out at Miss Irma's feet, his huge purple tongue lolling out of his mouth. He never left her side the whole time she was carrying. Lord Edgar locked him out when it came time for her to deliver. And when he heard her labor pains, he howled.
LADY ENID: Lord Edgar told me that he'd had a son but that he died when he was still a child.
JANE: Ah, there's a tragic story, miss. But your toddy's gettin' cold. Finish that and I'll fix you another.
LADY ENID: (Drains her cup and passes it to JANE) He was taken off with chicken pox, wasn't he?
JANE: Chicken pox? Now who told you that?
LADY ENID: No one told me. I was just supposing.
JANE: If Lord Edgar told you it was chicken pox, then chicken pox it was. We'd better leave it at chicken pox.
LADY ENID: No, really, he didn't tell me anything. The chicken pox was pure conjecture.
JANE: It's understandable that he didn't go into it. It's not an easy subject to talk about. Here's your toddy.
LADY ENID: Thanks.
JANE: And here's one for me.
LADY ENID: I'd like to know the true history, if you don't mind relating it.
JANE: (The toddy lowering her tongue) One clear winter day Victor and the boy went out to the heath to play in the new-fallen snow. The wolf came back without the boy. We waited. We watched. We called ourselves hoarse. And at dusk we found him in the mill run, dead. His throat had been torn apart.
LADY ENID: Horrible.
JANE: Lord Edgar wanted Victor destroyed. But Lady Irma fought against it. She said it wasn't Vic had done it.
LADY ENID: Perhaps it wasn't.
JANE: His throat was torn. What else could it have been? They fought bitterly over it. He said she loved the wolf more than her own child. But I think it was the double loss she dreaded, for when Victor was gone she'd have nothing else. When the master came to shoot Victor, Lady Irma turned him loose upon the heath and drove him away with stones, crying, "Run, Vic, run, and never come back!" I don't think the poor beast understood what happened because he still comes back to this day, looking for Lady Irma.
LADY ENID: Poor Victor. Poor boy. Poor Irma.
JANE: Poor Lord Edgar.
LADY ENID: Yes, poor poor Lord Edgar!
JANE: But here's the strangest part of all.
LADY ENID: Yes?
JANE: The fresh snow is like a map. I traced their tracks meself. Victor's trail turned off. The boy was killed by a wolf that left human tracks in the snow.
LADY ENID: Human? You mean the boy was murdered?
JANE: But that takes us to the subject of werewolves.
LADY ENID: Werewolves?
JANE: Humans who take the form of a wolf at night.
LADY ENID: But that's just superstition.
JANE: Yes, superstition, the realm beyond the explainable where science is powerless. Of course everything pointed to Victor. The boy fell down and skinned his knee. He let the loving beast lick his wound. He tasted blood. The killer was aroused. He turned on the child and sank his fangs into its tender neck. A perfectly logical explanation. But then there were those tracks in the snow. Wouldn't it be convenient for a werewolf to have a real wolf to blame it on?
LADY ENID: Didn't you show them to anyone? The tracks, I mean.
JANE: Ah, they wouldn't listen. They said they were my tracks. That I'd made them meself. I didn't push it, miss, or they'd have packed me off to Dottyville. It's hard to convince people of the supernatural. Most people have enough trouble believing in the natural.
LADY ENID: Of course you're right. But those footprints.
JANE: I wish I had 'em here as evidence. But where are the snows of yesteryear?
And that's the werewolf's greatest alibi—people don't believe in him. Well miss, I must be gettin' meself to bed. My rheumatism is starting to act up again.
LADY ENID: Leave the light, Jane. I think I'll stay up and read a while.
JANE: Here's a good book for you. It's the master's treatise on ancient Egyptian mythology.
LADY ENID: Thanks!
JANE: Don't stay up too late now. We're having kippers and kidneys for breakfast and I know you wouldn't want to miss that.
LADY ENID: Jane, what was the boy's name?
JANE: Didn't you know? That was Victor too. Good night, Lady Enid. (Exeit)
LADY ENID: (Sits in chair with her back to the glass doors and reads: The shadow of the stranger can be seen through the sheer organdy curtains illuminated intermittently by flashes of lightning. A bony, almost skeletal hand feels for a latch. It drumms its ﬁngernails against the windowpane.) What—what was it? Real or a delusion? Oh God, what was it? (Suddenly a single pane of the French door shatters. The bony hand reaches in through the curtains and opens the latch. A gaunt ﬁgure enters the room slowly. A ray of light strikes the pallid face. He ﬁxes her with a stare.) Who are you? What do you want? (The clock chimes one. The INTRUDER emits a hissing sound). What do you want? Oh God, what do you want of me?

(She tries to run to the door but the INTRUDER catches her by her long hair and, winding it around his bony ﬁngers, drags her back toward the mantel. She takes rose from the vase and presses their thorns into his eyes. The INTRUDER grawns and releases her. She runs across the room. He follows her. She stabs him with scissors from Jane's sewing basket. INTRUDER staggered back and falls through open door down right. LADY ENID crossed to the mantel and tries to get control of herself. She sighs with relief. INTRUDER reenters and clapping his hand over her mouth drags her to the door, locks it, then crosses up center to the double doors where shrill follows strangled shriek as he seizes her neck in his fanglike teeth and a hideous sucking noise follows. LADY ENID