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AUGUST STRINDBERG
PLAYS



SWANWHITE.....ADVENT
.....THE STORM.....

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AUGUST STRINDBERG

PLAYS

2 V. 3,

Swanwhite Advent
The Storm

Translated by
EDITH and WÄRNER OLAND

JOHN W. LUCE & COMPANY
BOSTON, 1914

LOAN STACK

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FOREWORD

THE plays contained in this volume are representative of that period of Strindberg's life and work, the marvellously productive decade of 1897 to 1907, that followed his crushing mental and spiritual experiences and culminated in the breakdown of 1896, which is the basis of the charge of insanity believed to be true by those who have not followed closely the history of his spiritual career.

Emerging from a few years of literary silence with the record of those torturing gropings for "the light" in the now famed "Inferno," Strindberg turned to a field of dramatic expression, to him wholly new, the mystery play. The result was no less triumphant than it had been with naturalism, and gave us a peculiar atmosphere of *realistic* mysticism even when introducing the realm of the magical. The dialogue is always perfectly natural and the characters are not mere symbolistic marionettes, but flesh and blood creations, characterizations as vivid as those of the great naturalistic tragedies, for it was impossible for Strindberg to write without giving us life — always life, in his astonishing plays, whatever his arrangement of its warring intricacies and passions.

"Advent," the first of the cycle of mystery

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plays, appeared in 1899, about the same time that the first two parts of the great trilogy, "To Damascus," were written. As its purpose is to show the deceit, greed, egoism and vanity of lives whose soul perceptions sense no deeper or finer code of ethics than that of a literal acceptance of the law of Moses, it is bound to hold much that is hideous in its realism, but none the less fascinating as portraiture from this uncompromising truth-teller. It is one of the plays that has never been given a stage production, but there is no reason why it should not play as interestingly as it reads as there is striking originality in the supernatural scenes, and even in this macabre piece, flashes of the grim humor of Strindberg, which is so often missed by his readers and critics, are not lacking. "Advent" certainly leaves no doubt in the reader's mind as to Strindberg's having accomplished the purpose of his stay at Lund, for it was surely written under the spell of the Swedenborgian idea that life is an earthly hell, although the Christian belief in suffering, as a liberator of the spirit, triumphs in the end.

Two years later came the first, and, from the playable point of view, the most important of the group of fairy plays: "Swanwhite," which was one of the most successful plays given at the Intimate Theatre in Stockholm. It is a charming, fanciful, poetic thing and although a genuine fairy play with a happy ending, it has, characteristically, a strain of sad philoso-

phy percolating throughout; for instance, when the little prince exclaims to "Swanwhite" —, "Where are we?" She replies, "Here below! Where the clouds shadow us, where the sea rages, where before sunrise the earth weeps upon the grass! Where the hawk tears the dove, where leaves fall and decay, where hair whitens, cheeks fade, eyes fail, and hands wither. Here below!"

Harriet Bosse, the Norwegian actress who was Strindberg's third wife, is supposed to have been his inspiration for "Swanwhite," although it was Miss Anna Flygare who played the title part when it was produced in 1908.

That Strindberg derived much from Maeterlinckian sources in this play is not only unquestionable but proven by Strindberg's own words in a passage of his "Open Letters to the Intimate Theatre." He says: "When Maeterlinck came into being, about 1890, in the last days of naturalism, I read a criticism of one of his plays. We know, of course, that when a block-head is to criticise the contents of a brilliant piece, the brilliancy sounds foolish. The criticism struck me as satire or nonsense. When, later, in Paris, I came to read Maeterlinck it was a closed book to me, so deeply was I sunk in materialism. But I experienced a certain disquiet and sorrow because I could not comprehend this beauty and depth which I divined and yearned for like one damned from the company of the blessed. Only after the 'Inferno' years,

1896-99, did I get hold of Maeterlinck again, and then he came like a new land, and a new age. . . .

“Under the influence of his wonderful marionette plays, which are not meant for the stage, I wrote my Swedish play: ‘Swanwhite.’ From Maeterlinck one can neither borrow nor steal, one can hardly become his disciple (previous to ‘Monna Vanna’), for to his world of beauty no free entrée exists; but one can be spurred on to seek gold in one’s own dross-heap, and there I confess obligation to the master. Under the influence of Maeterlinck, and borrowing his divining rod, I searched in the wells of ‘Geijer and Afzelius,’ and in Dybeck’s ‘Runics.’ Princes and princesses existed to over-flowing; the step-mother motive I had long since discovered in twenty-six Swedish sagas; the raising from the dead was there (and is also to be found in Queen Dagmar’s ‘History’). Then I put everything in the separator, with the maids and the Green Gardener and the Young King, and so the cream was thrown out, and it became mine!

“But it is also mine because I have lived that saga in fancy! A spring, in winter!”

And the disciple soon outstripped the acknowledged master for, as the English critic, Mr. Austin Harrison, Editor of the English Review, points out in one of his eminently intelligent appreciations of Strindberg which have appeared in the Review,

“— he evolved a form and frame of his own

as far in advance of Maeterlinck as is Maeterlinck, say, of the fairyland of J. M. Barrie." Does the criticism perhaps serve to emphasize the difference in tissue of optimism and pessimism as well as in the prophets thereof?

"The Storm" is one of the so-called chamber plays which Strindberg wrote in 1907 for the Intimate Theatre, where it was produced. It is autobiographical in mood; peace, peace at any cost for the few remaining years. For once the tranquillity of disillusion, rather than its turbulence, pervades a Strindberg play, and is its great charm; an atmosphere of "quiet and simplicity — where one does not give voice to everything, and where it is considered a duty to overlook the daily happenings that are not so agreeable," as Louise, one of the characters, describes it. This play was written not many years before the final peace came and one feels that the resignation of "the Gentleman" in "The Storm," is Strindberg's own when he says, "I am balancing my book with life and fellow-beings, and have already begun to pack for the journey."

E. O. AND W. O.

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ACT I

A large chamber in a medieval stone castle. The walls and ceiling are pure white, the ceiling is vaulted. In the middle at back is a large arched portal leading to a stone balcony. The opening can be closed with brocaded hangings. Through the portal, below the balcony, is seen the tops of a rose garden, tall rose-trees with pink and white blossoms. Beyond is seen a white sand beach and the blue sea. To right of the portal is a small door, which, when it is open, shows in perspective three rooms. In the first, which is the pewter chamber, pewter vessels are seen on the shelves. In the second, which is the costume chamber, are seen beautiful garments. In the third, which is the fruit chamber, one sees apples, pears, pumpkins and melons.

The floors in all the rooms are tessellated in black and red. In the middle of the chamber stands a large golden table with cover; two golden chairs, one at each side, and on the

table a clock and a vase of roses. Over the table hangs a cluster of mistletoe. On the floor in the foreground is a lion skin. Over the portal are seen two swallows' nests. To left of scene stands a white bed with a rose colored canopy and coverlid of pale turquoise silk; on the bed is a white nightgown of finest linen and lace. Back of the bed in the wall there is a linen closet. Near the bed there is a small golden Roman table and on it a Roman lamp of gold. To right is a beautifully sculptured fire-place, on the mantel shelf is a vase holding a white lily. In the left vault, near the portal, is a perch on which sits a peacock asleep — its back to the audience. In the right vault is a large golden cage with two white doves that are at rest.

When the curtain rises the three maids are discovered, one at each door of the three chambers. They are partly hidden by the door posts. The false maid Signe stands at the door of the pewter chamber, Elsa at the costume chamber, and Tofva at the fruit chamber.

The Duke comes in through the portal, then the Stepmother comes in with the whip of steel in her hand. A gloomy light pervades the scene when they enter.

STEPMOTHER. Swanwhite is not here?

DUKE. That is easily seen.

STEPMOTHER. Yes, but she is not. Signe!

SIGNE! Elsa! Tofva! [*The maids enter one after another and stand before the Stepmother.*] Where is Lady Swanwhite? [*Signe crosses her arms over her breast but is silent.*] Ignorance! What do you see in my hand? Answer quickly. Quickly! Do you hear the falcon whistling? Claws and bill has he of steel. What is it?

SIGNE. The whip of steel.

STEPMOTHER. Yes, the whip of steel. Now where is Lady Swanwhite?

SIGNE. How can I tell what I do not know?

STEPMOTHER. Ignorance is vice, but carelessness a defect. Were not you to watch over your young charge? — Take off your kerchief. [*Signe does so.*] Down on your knees. [*Signe does so. The Duke turns his back in disgust.*] Bend forth your neck, and I will encircle it with a collar that no young swain will ever want to kiss. Bend forth your neck! Nearer!!

SIGNE. Mercy in heaven's name!

STEPMOTHER. It is mercy enough that I grant your life.

DUKE [*He draws his sword and tests the edge upon his thumb nail and then upon a strand of his beard*]. Her head should fall, be placed in a sack and hung in a tree.

STEPMOTHER. Yes, it should.

DUKE. Think, we are at one!

STEPMOTHER. We were not yesterday!

DUKE. And may not be to-morrow!

STEPMOTHER [*To Signe, who is crawling away*]. Stay! Whither away?

[*She raises her whip and strikes, but Signe moves and the lash whistles through the air.*]

SWANWHITE [*Appearing from behind bed, kneeling*]. Stepmother, here am I, the guilty one; Signe is innocent.

STEPMOTHER. Call me mother! First say mother!!

SWANWHITE. I cannot. Who is born of mortal has but one mother.

STEPMOTHER. Your father's wife is your mother!

SWANWHITE. My father's second wife is my stepmother.

STEPMOTHER. You are a stubborn daughter! But the steel whip is pliant, and makes pliant! [*She raises whip to strike Swanwhite.*]

DUKE [*Raising sword*]. Guard your head!

STEPMOTHER. Whose?

DUKE. Yours!

[*The Stepmother pales, then grows angry, but calms herself and is silent. Pause.*]

STEPMOTHER [*Submissive; changing*]. Very well; then the Duke himself will tell his daughter what is in store for her.

DUKE [*Putting up his sword*]. My beloved child, rise and quiet yourself in my arms.

SWANWHITE [*Running to the Duke's arms*]. Father! You are like a king-oak, and I cannot embrace you. But under your foliage I

may hide myself from rough storms. [*She hides her head under the Duke's beard which reaches to his waist.*] And in your branches I will swing like a bird. Lift me, then I can climb to the top. [*The Duke stretches out his arms; she climbs up on his shoulder.*] Now is earth beneath me and the sky above. Now can I look out over the rose-garden, the white sand beach, the blue sea, and over the Seven Kingdoms.

DUKE. Then can you see the young King too, your betrothed?

SWANWHITE. No. And I have never seen him. Is he beautiful?

DUKE. Dear heart, how you see him depends on your eyes.

SWANWHITE [*Rubbing her eyes*]. My eyes? They see only the beautiful.

DUKE [*Kissing her foot*]. My little foot! So black! Little Moor's foot!

[*The Stepmother has motioned the maids to resume their places at the doors. She herself slinks out like a panther through arch at back. Swanwhite jumps down. The Duke places her on table and sits in chair beside her. Swanwhite looks meaningly after the Stepmother.*]

SWANWHITE. Did the sun rise? Did the wind turn to the south? Did spring return?

DUKE [*Putting his hand over her mouth*]. Little chatterbox! Joy of my old age! My evening star! Open your rosy ears and close

your little crimson shell mouth. Hear me.
Obey me, and all will go well with you.

SWANWHITE [*Sticks her fingers in her ears*].

I hear with my eyes and see with my ears.
Now I see nothing, only hear.

DUKE. Child, in your cradle you were betrothed to the young King of Rigalid. You have never seen him, for that is not according to the custom of the courts. And now approaches the day when the holy bond will be tied. But in order to teach you courtly manners and the duties of a queen, the King has sent a young Prince with whom you are to study books, learn chess, to dance a measure, and play upon the harp.

SWANWHITE. What is the Prince's name?

DUKE. My child, that you must not ask, neither of him nor any one else, for it is prophesied that whoever shall call him by his name must love him.

SWANWHITE. Is he beautiful?

DUKE. Yes, as your eyes see only the beautiful.

SWANWHITE. But is the Prince beautiful?

DUKE. Yes, he is! Take care of your little heart, for that belongs to the King. And never forget that you were a queen in your cradle. And so, my beloved child, I must leave you, for I have a warrior's journey to make. Be humble and obedient to your step-mother. She is a hard woman, but your father has loved her, and a mild spirit will melt a heart of stone. Should she, contrary

to promises and vows, in wickedness o'erstep all bounds, then blow upon this horn and help will be at hand. [*He takes a carved ivory horn from beneath his mantle.*] But, blow it not except in need, in direst, utmost need. Have you understood?

SWANWHITE. I understand.

DUKE. Very well, the Prince is already here, below in the ladies' chamber. Will you see him now?

SWANWHITE. Will I!

DUKE. Shall I say farewell first?

SWANWHITE. Is the Prince already here?

DUKE. He is here already. Already I — there — far away, where the heron, spirit of forgetfulness, hides its head under its wing. [*Swanwhite throws herself into the Duke's lap and hides her head under his beard.*]

SWANWHITE. Don't say that! Don't say that! Your little one is ashamed.

DUKE. My little one should have a whipping for forgetting her father so soon for a young Prince. Fie!! [*A horn is heard in the distance. The Duke rises hastily. Catches Swanwhite in his arms. Throws her in the air and catches her again.*] Little bird, fly! Hold yourself high above earthly dross and keep plenty of air under your wings. — So, down to the ground. Honor and strife call me! — Love and youth you! [*He girds on his sword.*] And hide now your magic horn, that evil eyes may not find it.

SWANWHITE. Where shall I hide it? Where?
DUKE. In your bed.

[*Swanwhite hides horn in bed.*]

SWANWHITE. There. Sleep well, little tooter.
When the time comes I shall awaken you.
Don't forget your evening prayer!

DUKE. Beloved child, forget not my last words;
to your stepmother be obedient.

SWANWHITE. In everything?

DUKE. In everything.

SWANWHITE. Not in what is uncleanly! — My mother gave me two clean nightgowns each eighth day. This one gives be but one. My mother gave me soap and water, which Step-mother denies me. Look at my poor little feet!

DUKE. My daughter, keep yourself clean within, and your outer self will be clean. Do you know that holy men who for penitence may not use cleansing water become white as swans, but the unholy grow black as ravens.

SWANWHITE. Then I want to be as white.

DUKE. To my arms, and so, farewell.

SWANWHITE [*Running to his arms*]. Farewell, you great war hero, glorious father. Fortune follow you, blessed in years, friendships, and triumphs!

DUKE. Be it so. And may your gentle prayers protect me.

[*He lets down the visor of his helmet.
Swanwhite jumps up and tries to kiss him.*]

SWANWHITE. The golden portals are closed, but

I see your friendly guarding eyes through the bars. [*She knocks on the visor.*] Open! Open, for a little Red Riding Hood. No one at home? "Woof," "Woof!" said the wolf lying in the bed.

DUKE [*Putting her down*]. Sweet flower, grow and spread your fragrance. If I return — well, then I will come. If not, then my eye shall watch over you from the starry heavens. There shall I never cease to see you, for there above one becomes all-seeing as the Eternal God.

[*He exits with a resolute gesture. Swanwhite falls on her knees and prays for the Duke. All the rose-trees stir and sigh in the breeze outside. The peacock stirs and shakes his wings and tail. Swanwhite rises, goes to the peacock and strokes his back and tail.*]

SWANWHITE. Pavo, little Pavo, what do you see; what do you hear? Is some one coming? Who is coming? Is it a little Prince? Is he beautiful and nice? All that can you see with your many blue eyes? [*She looks eagerly into the eye of one of the peacock's feathers.*] Will you have an eye on us, horrid Argus? Will you watch over two young, little human hearts that they do not beat too loud? You dullard! I draw the curtain on you, you see — [*She draws curtain, hiding the peacock but not the landscape outside. She then goes to the doves.*] My white doves.

White! White!! White!!! You shall see the whitest of all. Hush, wind, hush, roses, hush, doves, my Prince comes!

[She looks out. Then goes and hides behind the pewter chamber door, from where she can see, without being seen.]

[The Prince enters through the portals. He is dressed in black, and steel armor, sword and helmet. After carefully scrutinizing everything in the room, he sits down by the table. Takes off his helmet and contemplates it. He has his back to the door behind which Swanwhite is hidden.]

PRINCE. If any one be here let him answer —
[Silence.] There is some one here, for I feel the warmth of a young body bending toward me like a southern wind; I hear a breathing that is fragrant of roses, and no matter how faint, it stirs my helmet's plume. *[He places helmet to his ear.]* My helmet murmurs like a great sea-shell. It is the thoughts that my brain has collected, like a swarm of bees in a hollow tree. "Zum! Zum!!" say my thoughts — just like the bees that soar about the queen. — My thoughts, my dreams, little queen! *[He places helmet on table in front of him and contemplates it.]* Dark and vaulted like a starless night; the sombre plume turns all things dark since my mother died. But there in the darkness, within, on the other side, I see a rift of light. Has heaven opened? And in the rift I see — no,

not a star, for that is like a diamond; but a blue sapphire, the queen of precious stones. The blue of a summer heaven in a milk-white sky, vaulted like a dove's egg; — what is it? Is it my ring? A velvet black curl-cloud passes — and the sapphire smiles, but the sapphire cannot smile — now a flash of lightning — but blue! Sheet lightning, warm but without crash. — What are you? Who are you? Where are you? [*He contemplates the opposite side of his helmet.*] Not there! Not here! Nowhere! [*He puts his face to helmet.*] I draw near and you draw away! [*Swanwhite comes forward on tip-toe.*] Now there are two! — Two eyes! — Two little human eyes — I kiss you.

[*He kisses the helmet.*]

[*Swanwhite comes slowly down to table and sits opposite the Prince. The Prince rises, bows with his hand on his heart, and gazes at Swanwhite.*]

SWANWHITE. Are you the little Prince?

PRINCE. The young King's faithful servant — and — yours.

SWANWHITE. What says the young King to his bride?

PRINCE. He sends a thousand loving greetings to Lady Swanwhite. And says, that the sweet fortune that awaits him will shorten his torment of longing.

SWANWHITE [*Scrutinizing him*]. Why don't you sit down, my Prince?

PRINCE. If I should sit whilst you are sitting, I needs must kneel when you do stand.

SWANWHITE. Speak of the King. How does he look?

PRINCE. How does he look? [*Placing his hand over his eyes.*] How strange, I cannot see him any more.

SWANWHITE. What do you mean?

PRINCE. He is gone, he is invisible —

SWANWHITE. Is he tall?

PRINCE [*Gazing at Swanwhite*]. Wait! — Now I see him! — He is taller than you.

SWANWHITE. Beautiful?

PRINCE. He cannot be compared with you.

SWANWHITE. Speak of the King, not of me.

PRINCE. I do speak of the King.

SWANWHITE. Is he fair or dark?

PRINCE. Were he dark and saw you, he would become fair.

SWANWHITE. That is courteous, but not sensible. Has he blue eyes?

PRINCE [*Looking at helmet*]. I must look and see.

SWANWHITE [*Holding up her hand between them*]. You! You!!

PRINCE. The young King is tall and blond, with blue eyes, broad shoulders, and hair like a young woodland —

SWANWHITE. Why do you wear a black plume?

PRINCE. His lips are red as cherries, his cheeks are white, and his teeth would not shame a young lion.

SWANWHITE. Why is your hair damp?

PRINCE. His mind knows no fear, and his heart has never shrivelled in repentance for an evil deed.

SWANWHITE. Why does your hand tremble?

PRINCE. We should speak of the young King, not of me!

SWANWHITE. You, you, would you teach me?

PRINCE. That is my mission, my lady, to teach you to love the young King, whose throne you will share.

SWANWHITE. How came you here from over the sea?

PRINCE. With sail and cockle.

SWANWHITE. In the wind?

PRINCE. Without wind one cannot sail.

SWANWHITE. How wise you are, boy!— Will you play with me?

PRINCE. What I should do, I wish to do.

SWANWHITE. Now you shall see what I have in my chest. [*She goes to chest, kneels by it and takes out a doll, a rattle and a hobby-horse.*] Here's the doll, my little one, my child of sorrow, who never keeps her face clean. I have carried her in my arms to the wash-house and scoured her with white sand; but she only became dirtier. I have whipped her, but that does no good. But now I have thought out the worst punishment.

PRINCE. What is that then?

SWANWHITE [*Looking about her*]. She shall have a stepmother.

PRINCE. But how can that be done? First she must have a mother.

SWANWHITE. Yes, I am that, and if I marry again I shall become a stepmother.

PRINCE. No! What are you saying? That is not the way it goes.

SWANWHITE. And you shall become a stepfather.

PRINCE. Oh, no!

SWANWHITE. But you must be kind to her, even if she won't wash her face. Take her, that I may see if you can hold a child. [*Prince takes doll reluctantly.*] Oh! You don't know how yet, but you will learn. Now take the rattle and entertain her. [*Prince takes the rattle.*] Oh! I see well that you do not know how. [*She takes the doll and rattle away from him and throws them back into the chest. Then she takes up the hobby-horse.*] Here is my courser — he has a saddle of silver and golden shoes. He makes seven leagues an hour, and on him have I ridden through the Tall Forest, over the Great Heath and the King's Bridge. Over the High Way and the Way of Anguish, until I came to the Sea of Tears. And there he dropped a golden shoe which fell into the sea, and then came a fish, and then came a fisherman, and so was the golden shoe returned to me. Now you know all about that. [*Throws hobby-horse into chest. She takes out a chess board with red and white squares and gold and silver chess men.*] If you would play with me, sit

down there on the lion's skin. [*She sits down on the lion's skin, and sets up the chess men.*] Sit down now, the maids cannot see us here. [*The Prince sits down despondently. Swan-white passes her fingers through the hair of the skin.*] This is as if we were sitting on the grass, not the green grass of the meadows, but of the desert, burned by the sun. — Now you must say something to me. You like me a little?

PRINCE. Shall we play?

SWANWHITE. Play? What do I care about that! Oh! — But you are to teach me something.

PRINCE. Poor me, what can I do, save saddle a horse and carry arms. And that can be but of little service to you.

SWANWHITE. Are you sad?

PRINCE. My mother is dead.

SWANWHITE. Oh! Poor little Prince! — My mother too is with God in heaven, and has become an angel. I see her in the night sometimes. Do you see yours?

PRINCE. N-o-o.

SWANWHITE. Have you a stepmother?

PRINCE. Not yet; it is yet so soon since my mother was laid upon the bier.

SWANWHITE. You must not be sorrowful — everything passes, you see. Now I will give you a banner if you will be glad again; oh! but this I made for the young King; but now I'll make one for you. On the King's

banner are seven burning flames — you shall have one with seven red roses. [*She takes out a rose-red skein of wool from the chest, and hands it to the Prince.*] But you must first hold the skein. — One, two, three! and now I begin, but your hand must not tremble! — perhaps you would like one of my hairs mingled with the wool? Pull out a hair.

PRINCE. No, no, I could not —

SWANWHITE. Then I will. [*She does so and winds it in with the wool.*] What are you called?

PRINCE. That you must not ask.

SWANWHITE. And why not?

PRINCE. Did not the Duke tell you?

SWANWHITE. No! What should follow if one should speak one's name? Would some danger result?

PRINCE. Did not the Duke say?

SWANWHITE. Never have I heard the like, that one may not mention one's name!

[*The curtain hiding the peacock moves, and a sound like that of castanets is heard.*]

PRINCE. What was that?

SWANWHITE. It is Pavo — do you believe he understands what we are saying?

PRINCE. Who knows?

SWANWHITE. Well, what are you called?

[*Peacock claps his bill again.*]

PRINCE. I grow afraid. You must not ask me any more.

SWANWHITE. He only claps with his bill. Hold

your hand still. — Have you ever heard the fairy tale of the princess who could not call the prince by his name or something would happen? Do you know what would happen?

[The curtain hiding the peacock is drawn aside, showing the peacock. His tail is spread so that all its "eyes" seem to be spying on Swanwhite and the Prince.]

PRINCE. Who drew the curtain? Who bade the bird spy on us with its hundred eyes? You must not ask me any more.

SWANWHITE. Perhaps I should not. Lie down, Pavo, will you mind!

[The curtain is drawn back.]

PRINCE. Is this place haunted?

SWANWHITE. Do you mean that such things — can happen — Yes, so much happens here; but I am so used to it. And besides — it is said that my stepmother is a witch! — Oh! now I've pricked my finger.

PRINCE. What pricked you?

SWANWHITE. There was a splinter in the wool. The sheep have been standing in their pens all the winter — and then such things happen. Can you pull out the splinter?

PRINCE. Yes, but we must sit down at the table so that I can see.

[They rise and sit at table. Swanwhite holds out her little finger.]

SWANWHITE. Do you see anything?

PRINCE. By your hand which is red within, I see life and the world in the color of roses.

SWANWHITE. Take out the splinter, it hurts.

PRINCE. I must hurt you. Forgive me beforehand.

SWANWHITE. Well, but help me then.

[*Prince pulls out splinter.*]

PRINCE. There it is, the wicked thing that dared to hurt you.

SWANWHITE. Now you must draw the blood, or it will fester.

PRINCE [*Draws blood from the wound with his lips*]. Now have I drunk your blood; now am I your foster-brother!

SWANWHITE. Oh! now have I a little brother! Little brother, take my hand.

PRINCE [*Taking her hand*]. Little sister! [*Noticing her pulse.*] What have you here; that ticks one, two, three, four —

[*Counts in silence after looking at clock.*]

SWANWHITE. Yes, what is it that ticks? Ever, ever, ever, ever. The heart is not in one's hand but under the breast. Feel and you'll see. [*The doves move and coo.*] What is it, my little white doves?

PRINCE. Fifty-eight, fifty-nine, sixty. Now I know what ticks. It is time. Time. Your little finger is the second-hand that has ticked off sixty seconds as a minute passed. Do you believe there is a heart in the clock?

SWANWHITE [*Fingering the clock*]. We can get inside the clock just as little as we can get inside the heart. Feel my heart!

SIGNE [*Entering from the pewter chamber with*

a steel whip which she places on the middle of the table]. The Duchess commands that the children sit at opposite sides of the table.

[The Prince sits opposite. They remain silent for a moment.]

SWANWHITE. We have been separated, but are still closer.

PRINCE. One is never so close as in separation.

SWANWHITE. And you know that?

PRINCE. I am made to know it now.

SWANWHITE. Now do you begin to teach me.

PRINCE. And you me.

SWANWHITE [*Pointing to fruit tray*]. Will you eat some fruit?

PRINCE. No, to eat is ugly.

SWANWHITE. Yes, it is.

PRINCE. There stand three maids, one in the pewter chamber, one in the costume chamber and one in the fruit chamber. Why do they stand there?

SWANWHITE. To watch us, that we may not do anything forbidden.

PRINCE. May not we go into the rose garden?

SWANWHITE. I can go into the rose garden only in the morning, for there Stepmother's bloodhounds are loosed. And on the strand am I never allowed — and therefore I can never go bathing.

PRINCE. Have you never been down by the beach? Never heard the sea wash the sands?

SWANWHITE. Never! I can only hear the tossing waves when the storm rages.

PRINCE. Have you never heard the sougging of the wind when it blows over the water?

SWANWHITE. That does not reach here.

PRINCE [*Passing his helmet to Swanwhite*].

Listen and you will hear it.

SWANWHITE [*Putting helmet to her ear*]. What do I hear?

PRINCE. The song of seas, the whisper of winds.

SWANWHITE. No, I hear human voices — Hush!

Stepmother is speaking. — She speaks to the gardener. She speaks my name, and that of the young King. She speaks evil words — She swears I shall never be Queen — And she swears — that — you — shall have her daughter, the ugly Lena.

PRINCE. Truly! Can you hear that in the helmet?

SWANWHITE. Yes!

PRINCE. That I did not know. I received the helmet as a christening gift from my god-mother.

SWANWHITE. Will you give me a feather?

PRINCE. Gladly, as I live.

SWANWHITE. But you must cut it that I may write with it.

PRINCE. You know how?

SWANWHITE. My father taught me.

[*The Prince pulls a black feather from his helmet, takes a silver mounted dagger from his girdle, and makes a pen. Swanwhite takes ink and parchment from drawer in table.*]

PRINCE. Who is Lena?

SWANWHITE [*Writing*]. Ugly Lena? Would you have her?

PRINCE. Evil deeds are brewing in this house.

SWANWHITE. Fear not! My father has honored me with a gift which will bring aid in the hour of need.

PRINCE. What is it called?

SWANWHITE. The Helpful Horn.

PRINCE. Where is it?

SWANWHITE. Read that in my eyes. I dare not divulge it before the maids.

PRINCE [*Looking into her eyes*]. I see it.
[*Swanwhite pushes ink and parchment over to Prince.*]

SWANWHITE. Write. [*The Prince writes.*]

Yes, it is there. [*She continues writing.*]

PRINCE. What do you write?

SWANWHITE. Names. All the beautiful names of princes.

PRINCE. Except mine!

SWANWHITE. Yours also.

PRINCE. Do not do that.

SWANWHITE. Now have I written twenty names, all that I know, and your name must be among them. [*Passes the parchment to the Prince.*] Read!

[*The Prince reads.*]

SWANWHITE [*Clapping her hands*]. Oh! I read it in your eyes!

PRINCE. Speak it not! In God's merciful name speak it not!

SWANWHITE. I read it in your eyes!

PRINCE. But speak it not, speak it not!

SWANWHITE. Why not? What would happen?
Shall Lena say it — your bride, your loved
one?

PRINCE. Oh! hush, hush!

SWANWHITE [*Has risen and dances about the
room*]. I know his name, the most beautiful
name in the land! [*The Prince catches her
and holds his hand over her mouth.*] Now I
bite your hand, now I draw your blood, now
are we doubly kin. Do you know what that
means?

PRINCE. That we are brother and sister.

SWANWHITE [*Throwing back her head*]. O-ho-
ho-ho! Look, there is a hole in the roof, and
I see the sky, a little bit of heaven, a glass,
and behind the glass a face. Is it an angel's?
No, but look, look — it is your face!

PRINCE. Angels are little girls, not boys!

SWANWHITE. But it is you!

PRINCE [*Looking up at roof*]. It is a mirror.

SWANWHITE. Woe to us! It is Stepmother's
magic mirror. She has seen all!

PRINCE. And in the mirror I see a chimney-
piece, and in the chimney-piece hangs a
pumpkin.

SWANWHITE [*Takes a bright-colored and pecu-
liarly formed pumpkin from the chimney-
piece*]. What is this? It is shaped like an
ear! The witch has heard us also! Woe to
us! [*She throws the pumpkin back into the*

fireplace. Runs toward the bed, but stops suddenly, seizing one of her feet.] Oh! She has strewn the floor with needles. [She sits down and rubs her foot. The Prince falls on his knees by Swanwhite to aid her.] No, you must not touch my foot! You must not!

PRINCE. Dear heart, bare your foot that I may help you!

SWANWHITE [*Sobbing*]. You must not, you must not see my foot!

PRINCE. But why not?

SWANWHITE. I cannot tell, I cannot. Go, go away! To-morrow I will tell. To-day I cannot.

PRINCE. But your little foot is hurt; I must take out the needle.

SWANWHITE. Go, go, go — Oh! no, you must not! Had mother lived this had not happened. Mother, mother, mother!

PRINCE. I do not understand. Do you fear me?

SWANWHITE. You must not question. Only leave me. Oh!

PRINCE. What have I done?

SWANWHITE. Oh, don't leave me! I did not mean to wound you. But I cannot tell — if I could only go to the beach, in the white sand —

PRINCE. What then?

SWANWHITE. I cannot tell. I cannot! [*She hides her face in her hands. The peacock claps his bill, the doves move, the three maids appear in a row; a gust of wind is heard, and*

the rose-bushes sway. Golden clouds pass by over the sea. The sea grows dark.] Does heaven sit in judgment over us? Has misfortune entered? Could I but mourn my mother out of the black earth!

PRINCE [*Laying his hand on his sword*]. For you I will give my life!

SWANWHITE. You cannot. It is in her power to turn the edge of steel! Oh, that I could mourn my mother out of the earth! [*The swallows twitter in their nest.*] What was that?

PRINCE [*Seeing the swallows' nest*]. A swallows' nest. I saw it not before.

SWANWHITE. Nor I. How came it here? When came it? 'Tis a good omen! Yet I tremble with fear — I am oppressed. — You see even the rose begins to wither as the evil woman approaches; for 'tis she who comes.

[*The rose on the table begins to close, and the leaves droop.*]

PRINCE. But the swallows, whence came they?

SWANWHITE. Not from the evil woman, for they are good birds — now she is here!

[*The Stepmother comes in through the portal like a panther. The rose on the table withers.*]

STEPMOTHER. Signe! — Take the horn from the bed. [*Signe goes to the bed and takes out horn.*] Prince, where do you wish to go?

PRINCE. The night is falling, the sun has gone to rest, and my cockle would for home.

STEPMOTHER. 'Tis past the hour, the portals are shut, and the dogs are loosed. Do you know my dogs?

PRINCE. Yes, well. But know you my sword?

STEPMOTHER. Is it a worthy blade?

PRINCE. Worthy of blood perhaps!

STEPMOTHER. Oh, ho! But hardly woman's blood? But hear, would the Prince sleep in the blue chamber?

PRINCE. No, by heaven. I would home and sleep on my own couch.

STEPMOTHER. Are there others who would like that?

PRINCE. Many!

STEPMOTHER. How many? As many as wish to have you sleep here? One! Two!

[As the Stepmother begins to count the attendants of the castle file by, the steward, the bailiff, the castellan, the master of the kitchen, the jailer, the master of the stables, the head groom, and others, out on the balcony; they are all solemn-visaged, some bear arms and none look into the chamber.]

PRINCE. I will sleep in the blue chamber.

STEPMOTHER. I thought as much. Then I will say a thousand good nights to His Loveliness. Swanwhite no doubt will do the same.

[A white swan flies over the rose garden, and drops a poppy on the Stepmother. She and the maids fall asleep.]

SWANWHITE *[Going to Prince]*. Good night, Prince.

PRINCE [*Taking her hand and speaking in a low voice*]. Good night. Oh! I am to sleep under the same roof as my Princess. My dreams will embrace your dreams, and to-morrow we'll awake to other play — other —

SWANWHITE [*Softly*]. Now you are my all — my all on earth — you are my father — since she has robbed me of his mighty protection. See, she sleeps!

PRINCE. Saw you the swan?

SWANWHITE. No, but I heard it. It was my mother.

PRINCE. Fly with me!

SWANWHITE. No, we must not do that. Patience. We shall meet in our dreams, shall we not? But to be able to do that you must care for me above all on earth. Care for me — you — you — you —!

PRINCE. But my King and my — fealty —

SWANWHITE. Your queen and your heart — am I.

PRINCE. I am — a knight.

SWANWHITE. No knight am I, therefore I take you, Prince —!

[*She puts her hands to her mouth and whispers his name.*]

PRINCE. Woe! What have you done?

SWANWHITE. You have captured me through your name. Re-capture yourself but with me on your wings.

[*She whispers his name again.*]

PRINCE [*As if catching his name in the air*].

Was it a rose you threw?

[*He kisses an imaginary flower and throws it to her.*]

SWANWHITE. You gave me a violet. That is your soul. Now I drink you; now I have you in my breast, in my heart, now you are mine.

PRINCE. And you are mine. Who is the owner then?

SWANWHITE. We!

PRINCE. We! You and I! — ROSA.

SWANWHITE. VIOLA!

PRINCE. ROSA!

SWANWHITE. VIOLA!

PRINCE. I love you.

SWANWHITE. You love me?

PRINCE. You love me?

SWANWHITE. I love you. [*The scene lights up.*

The rose on the table revives. The faces of the Stepmother and the maids are illuminated and assume a tender expression. The Stepmother raises her head and with closed eyes seems to contemplate the happiness of the children with a smile.] Look! Look! The cruel one smiles as if stirred by memories of childhood. Behold, false Signe is all truth and faith, ugly Tofva is beautiful, and little Elsa is big.

PRINCE. That is our love.

SWANWHITE. That is love. Blessed be God, the Mighty Creating God!

[*She falls on her knees and weeps.*]

PRINCE. You are weeping?

SWANWHITE. Yes, because I am so happy.

PRINCE. Come to my arms, and you shall smile.

SWANWHITE. In your arms I should die.

PRINCE. Smile and die!

SWANWHITE [*Rises*]. Let me die!

[The Prince takes her in his arms. The Stepmother wakes, takes the steel whip and strikes the table when she sees the children.]

STEPMOTHER. I believe I have slept. Ho! Ho! are we there! — Said I the blue chamber! I mean the blue tower. There the Prince shall sleep with the iron maiden! — Maids! [*The maids awake.*] Show the Prince the shortest way to the blue tower. If you should fail, then call the castellan, the bailiff, the stable master and the jailer!

PRINCE. There is no need. I will go through fire, through water, beneath the earth, above the clouds, and still will I meet my Swanwhite, for where I am there too is she. And now I go to meet her in the blue tower! If you are a witch, then practice your witchery; it will be hard, for you know not love!

[He goes out followed by maids.]

STEPMOTHER [*To Swanwhite*]. You deserve but few words. Therefore express yourself briefly. Your wishes?

SWANWHITE. My first and greatest wish is some clean water that I may bathe my feet.

STEPMOTHER. Hot or cold?

SWANWHITE. Hot, if I may choose.

STEPMOTHER. Anything else?

SWANWHITE. A comb to fix my hair.

STEPMOTHER. Gold or silver?

SWANWHITE. Are you — are you so good?

STEPMOTHER. Gold or silver?

SWANWHITE. Horn or wood is good enough for me.

STEPMOTHER. Anything else?

SWANWHITE. A clean nightgown.

STEPMOTHER. Silk or linen?

SWANWHITE. Linen.

STEPMOTHER. Good. I have heard your wishes.

Now hear mine! I wish you to have no water, neither hot nor cold! I wish you to have no comb, neither horn nor wood, still less gold or silver! That is how good I am! I wish you to have no linen, but go at once to the costume chamber and put the robe of sack-cloth on your body! I have spoken! And should you go from within these chambers, which you cannot do since I have surrounded it with snares, then shall you be put to death, or I shall disfigure your comely features with the whip of steel, so that neither princes nor kings shall look at you again. Go now, and then to bed!

[She strikes the table with the steel whip. Goes to portals and closes the gates, which creak and screech.]

CURTAIN.

ACT II

Same scene. But the golden portals are closed. Dark clouds now hang over the darkened sea and land. Swanwhite is asleep on her bed, clad in sackcloth. The doors of the pewter, costume and fruit chambers are open. The three maids stand motionless, with closed eyes; each has a lighted Roman lamp in her hands.

A swan flies over the rose garden outside. One hears a call such as swans make when they are about to migrate. Then Swanwhite's mother appears outside the portals; she carries a swan's skin on one arm and a small gold harp on the other. She hangs the swan's skin on the portal, which opens of itself and closes after she comes in. The mother enters, puts the harp on the table. She looks about and sees Swanwhite. The harp begins to play. Then one by one the lamps which the maids are holding go out, the most distant first, and the doors of each chamber close, the most distant door first. The clouds and sky take on a rosy color. The mother lights a lamp on the golden table and goes to the bed and falls on her knees.

The harp plays during the following scene. The mother rises. She lifts Swanwhite from

the bed and puts her in the big chair, without Swanwhite waking. Then she falls on her knees, takes off Swanwhite's sandals and puts them away under the bed. She bends, weeping, over Swanwhite's feet, as if moistening them with her tears and wipes them with a white linen cloth and kisses them. She replaces the sandals on Swanwhite's feet, which are now white. She rises and takes out a golden comb with which she combs Swanwhite's hair. Then she places Swanwhite in her bed again. Then she takes out a white dress from her pouch and spreads it on the bed. She kisses Swanwhite's forehead and prepares to go. Now one hears another swan call as when Swanwhite's mother appeared, and the Prince's mother, dressed in white, comes in through the portal on which she hangs her swan's skin.

SWANWHITE'S MOTHER. Well met, Sister. Is it long till cock crow?

PRINCE'S MOTHER. None too long! The dew is lifting from the roses, the crows are calling, and sunrise blows in from over the sea.

SWANWHITE'S MOTHER. Let us hasten to our purpose, Sister.

PRINCE'S MOTHER. Thou hast called me that we may speak of our children!

SWANWHITE'S MOTHER. I wandered in a green meadow in the land that knows no sorrow, and there I found thee, whom I had never met,

but whom I had always known. Thou didst lament thy poor boy left to wander alone in the Vale of Sorrow. Thou didst open my heart, and my thoughts, loath to dwell here below, sought my poor forsaken girl — destined for the young King, who is cruel and evil.

PRINCE'S MOTHER. Then I spoke and you listened! May the worthy mate with the worthy; may Love, the mighty, rule; and unite the young orphaned hearts that they may comfort each other!

SWANWHITE'S MOTHER. And their hearts have exchanged kisses; their souls embraced. Oh! may sorrow change to gladness, and earth rejoice in their young happiness!

PRINCE'S MOTHER. May the High Powers give sanction!

SWANWHITE'S MOTHER. That shall the fire of suffering test.

PRINCE'S MOTHER [*Taking up helmet left behind by the Prince*]. May grief turn to joy, with this day's dawn, the anniversary of sorrowing for his mother.

[*She changes the black plumes on helmet for white and red ones.*]

SWANWHITE'S MOTHER. Give me thy hand, Sister. And may the test begin.

PRINCE'S MOTHER. Here is my hand, the hand that has clasped my boy's hand. Now have we united them!

SWANWHITE'S MOTHER. In chastity and honor!

PRINCE'S MOTHER. And now I go to open the blue tower that the children may take each other in their arms.

SWANWHITE'S MOTHER. In chastity and honor!

PRINCE'S MOTHER. And we shall meet again in the meadow that knows no sorrow.

SWANWHITE'S MOTHER [*Crossing to Swanwhite*].

Hark! She dreams of him. That foolish evil woman believed two lovers could be parted. Now they wander hand in hand through the land of dreams, under whispering pines, beneath murmuring lindens, and they laugh and they play.

PRINCE'S MOTHER. Hush! Morning wakes. The robin pipes and the stars vanish from the firmament. Farewell, Sister.

[*She goes, taking her swan's skin with her.*]

SWANWHITE'S MOTHER. Farewell!

[*She makes a gesture over Swanwhite as if blessing her. Then, after taking her swan's skin, she closes the gate and goes out. The clock on the table strikes three times. The harp stops playing for a moment, then strikes up another beautiful melody. Swanwhite awakens, looks about her, listens to the harp; rises from the bed. She feels of her hair, looks at her clean feet with happy surprise. She notices the white dress on the bed. She sits at her place at the table. She seems to contemplate some one opposite, where the Prince sat. She*

smiles as if recognizing him and offers her hand. Her lips move as if she were talking to some one, then she is silent, as if listening to the answer. She points to the red and white plumes in the Prince's helmet and bends forward and whispers something. She throws back her head and breathes through her nostrils as if inhaling a fragrance; she reaches out with her hand as if catching a kiss which she tosses back after kissing her finger-tips. Then she takes the parchment and writes, and, caressing it like a bird, pushes it across the table as if expecting an answer, following "his" pen with a smile. Then she takes parchment and reads and tucks it in her breast. She smooths the folds of her black garb, indicating the sorry change her attire has undergone; she smiles at the suppositious answer and breaks into ringing laughter. She indicates that her hair has been combed. She rises and walks about, lifts one foot, showing, with a shy glance, that it is white again. She pauses, waiting for the reply, which she receives with embarrassment and hastily hides her foot. Then she goes to the chest and takes out the chessboard and goes to the lion's skin; she makes an inviting gesture, sits down and begins to play with her invisible companion. The harp stops for a moment and begins a new melody. The chess game stops and

Swanwhite seems to talk to the invisible one. Suddenly she moves away as if he had come too near and jumps up. She runs to the bed, takes up the white dress left by her mother and disappears behind the bed. The Prince appears outside the portals. He attempts to open the portals in vain, and casts a glance of sorrow and despair at the heavens.]

SWANWHITE [*Coming forward*]. Who comes with the rising of the sun?

PRINCE. Your heart's desire, your Prince, your all.

SWANWHITE. Whence comes my heart's desire?

PRINCE. From the Land of Dreams, from the rosy dawn that lies behind the mountains, from the whispering pines and murmuring linden trees.

SWANWHITE. What did my love in the Land of Dreams beyond the rosy dawn?

PRINCE. He frolicked and he laughed, he wrote her name, he played chess on the lion's skin.

SWANWHITE. With whom did he play?

PRINCE. With Swanwhite.

SWANWHITE. That is he. Welcome to my castle, my table, and my arms!

PRINCE. But who can open the golden portal?

SWANWHITE. Reach me your hand. It is as cold as your heart is warm.

PRINCE. My body slept in the blue tower, but my soul wandered in the Land of Dreams. In

the blue tower it was cold. In the blue tower it was dark.

SWANWHITE. With my breast will I warm your hand — With my eyes will I warm your hand — With my kiss will I warm your hand.

PRINCE. Dispel my darkness with the light of your eyes!

SWANWHITE. Is it dark with you?

PRINCE. In the blue tower shines neither sun nor moon.

SWANWHITE. Rise, O sun, blow warm, wind, heave gently, sea! Oh, golden gate, do you believe that you can part two hearts, two hands, two lips? Nothing can part them!

PRINCE. Nothing!

[Two doors shut across the portal, from each side, so that Swanwhite and the Prince cannot see each other.]

SWANWHITE. Alas! what have we said; who heard; who punishes us?

PRINCE. I am not parted from you, love; the sound of my voice pierces copper, steel and stone and gently caresses your little ear. In my thoughts I embrace you, in my dreams I kiss you. Nothing on earth can part us! Nothing!

SWANWHITE. Nothing!

PRINCE. I see you although my eyes see you not.

SWANWHITE. But I would have you in my arms!

PRINCE. I am there!

SWANWHITE. I would sleep on your arm! I

would feel your heart against mine! Dear God, give me my Prince.

[The swallows twitter, and a little white feather falls to the ground. Swanwhite picks it up and discovers it is a key. She then opens both doors and portal. The Prince comes in. Swanwhite rushes to his arms. He kisses her.]

SWANWHITE. You do not kiss me.

PRINCE. But I did.

SWANWHITE. I felt it not.

PRINCE. Then you do not love me.

SWANWHITE. But I do.

PRINCE. Then give me your soul.

SWANWHITE. I gave it in the Land of Dreams.

PRINCE *[Taking her hand]*. And I mine. Then I have yours, and you have mine!

SWANWHITE *[Pulling her hand away]*. I would have mine back again.

PRINCE. Then I want mine!

SWANWHITE. But where are they?

PRINCE. Alas, we're lost! You are I, and I am you.

SWANWHITE. Then we are one.

PRINCE. The good God heard our prayer! We have been given to each other!

SWANWHITE. We have been given to each other but I have you no longer; I feel not the touch of your hand nor your caressing lips; I see not your eyes, hear not your voice. You are gone.

PRINCE. I am here.

SWANWHITE. Here below ; but I would meet you
up there, in the Land of Dreams.

PRINCE. Let us fly thither, on the wings of sleep.

SWANWHITE. On your arm!

PRINCE. In my embrace!

SWANWHITE. In your arms!

PRINCE. This is bliss!

SWANWHITE. Eternal, flawless, without end!

PRINCE. Can any part us?

SWANWHITE. None!

PRINCE. Are you my bride?

SWANWHITE. Are you my bridegroom?

PRINCE. In the Land of Dreams! Not here!

SWANWHITE. Where are we?

PRINCE. Here below!

SWANWHITE. Where the clouds shadow us, where
the sea rages, where before sunrise the earth
weeps upon the grass! Where the hawk tears
the dove ; where leaves fall and decay, where
hair whitens, cheeks fade, eyes fail, and hands
wither. Here below!

PRINCE. Let us fly!

SWANWHITE. Let us fly!

*[The Green Gardener appears suddenly
from behind the table. He is dressed in
green, with cap, apron and knee breeches,
knife and shears in his belt, and he carries
a small winnow in his hand. He goes about
sowing seed.]*

PRINCE. Who are you?

GARDENER. I sow, I sow!

PRINCE. What do you sow?

GARDENER. Seed, seed, seed.

PRINCE. What kind of seed?

GARDENER. Once beaten and twice beaten. One pulls hither, two pull yon. When the bride's veil is on, harmony is past. In discord will I sow, in harmony shalt thou reap. One and one make one, but one and one make three; one and one make two, but two make three. Dost thou understand?

PRINCE. Earth-worm, dust-grubber, you go with your face to the ground, your back toward heaven. What would you teach me?

GARDENER. That thou art an earth-worm and a dust-grubber. Because thou turnest thy back to the earth, the earth shall turn its back to thee! Farewell.

[He sinks out of sight behind table.]

SWANWHITE. What was that? Who was that?

PRINCE. That was the Green Gardener.

SWANWHITE. Green? He was blue.

PRINCE. He was green, dear one.

SWANWHITE. How can you say what is not so?

PRINCE. My heart's beloved, I said only what was so!

SWANWHITE. Alas, he speaks not truth!

PRINCE. Whose voice do I hear? Not my Swanwhite's.

SWANWHITE. Whom do I behold? Not my Prince, whose very name could once draw me like music of the water-sprite; like the song of mermaids on the green waves. Who are you? A stranger with evil eyes and grey hair.

PRINCE. Now only do you see that in the tower
my hair turned grey from grief, through
longing for Swanwhite, who is no longer
here.

SWANWHITE. But Swanwhite *is* here.

PRINCE. No! here stands a dark maiden clad in
black.

SWANWHITE. Saw you not before that I was clad
in black? Then you do not love me.

PRINCE. Love her who stands here evil and
ugly? No!

SWANWHITE. Then you were false just now.

PRINCE. No, for another stood here then. Now
you throw stinging nettles in my mouth.

SWANWHITE. Now your violets smell rank!

PRINCE. Oh! This is punishment for disloyalty
to my young King.

SWANWHITE. Would I had awaited the young
King!

PRINCE. Wait! He will come.

SWANWHITE. I shall not wait. I go to him!

PRINCE. Then I remain!

SWANWHITE [*Goes to back of stage*]. Was this
love?

PRINCE [*Beside himself*]. Where is Swanwhite?
Where, where, where? Swanwhite, the beauti-
ful, the loving!

SWANWHITE. Seek her!

PRINCE. Not here below then!

SWANWHITE. Elsewhere! [*Goes.*]

[*The Prince alone; seats himself at the
table, covers his face with his hands and*

weeps. A gust of wind blows through the chamber, so that the curtains and draperies flutter and the strings of the harp vibrate. The Prince rises, goes to the bed and remains sunk in contemplation as he views the pillow which has preserved the imprint of Swanwhite's profile. He takes the pillow and kisses it.

Noise without. He seats himself at the table.

The door of the room is burst open. The maids, now with dark faces, appear. The Stepmother, also with dark face, comes in from the rear.]

STEPMOTHER [*Softly*]. Good morrow, good Prince. How have you slept?

PRINCE. Where is Swanwhite?

STEPMOTHER. She has gone to wed with the 'young King. Does not my Prince, too, think of wedding soon?

PRINCE. But a single thought have I.

STEPMOTHER. And that of young Swanwhite?

PRINCE. Is she too young for me?

STEPMOTHER. Grey hairs should bring wisdom.

Now I have a sensible daughter —

PRINCE. My grey hairs!

STEPMOTHER. He knows it not, he believes it not! Maids! Signe, Elsa, Tofva! Look at the young suitor with his grey hair!

[The maids break into laughter; the Stepmother chimes in.]

PRINCE. Where is Swanwhite?

STEPMOTHER. Follow her tracks! Here is one.

[*Hands him a written parchment.*]

PRINCE [*Reads*]. She has written this?

STEPMOTHER. You know her hand! What has she written?

PRINCE. That she hates me and loves another — that she has played with my feelings, that she spits out my kisses, and throws my heart to the swine. Now will I die! Now I am dead!

STEPMOTHER. A knight dies not through the sport of a maid! He shows that he is a man and chooses another!

PRINCE. Another? When there is only one?

STEPMOTHER. At least there are two! And my Magdalena possesses seven kegs of gold!

PRINCE. Seven?

STEPMOTHER. And even more! [*Pause.*]

PRINCE. Where is Swanwhite?

STEPMOTHER. And Magdalena is versed in many arts.

PRINCE. Can she, too, bewitch?

STEPMOTHER. She could bewitch a little prince.

PRINCE [*Contemplating the parchment*]. Has Swanwhite written this?

STEPMOTHER. Magdalena would never do so!

PRINCE. Is Magdalena good?

STEPMOTHER. Goodness itself! She trifles not with holy feelings, she does not revenge a small injustice, she is true to those whom she holds dear.

PRINCE. Then she is beautiful!

STEPMOTHER. Not beautiful — but —

PRINCE. Then she is not good! — Speak more of her.

STEPMOTHER. See her!

PRINCE. Where?

STEPMOTHER. Here!

PRINCE. Swanwhite has written this? —

STEPMOTHER. Magdalena would have written lovingly.

PRINCE. Of what would she have written?

STEPMOTHER. Of — *[Falters.]*

PRINCE. Speak the word! Say “love” if you can!

STEPMOTHER. Shove!

PRINCE. You cannot say that word!

STEPMOTHER. Dove!

PRINCE. No!

STEPMOTHER. Magdalena can say it! She shall come!

PRINCE. She may come.

STEPMOTHER *[Rises and addresses the maids]*.

Bind the Prince's eyes, then shall he take to his arms a princess the like of whom there is not in the Seven Kingdoms!

[Signe comes forward and blindfolds the Prince.]

STEPMOTHER *[Claps her hands]*. Well? Comes she not?

[The peacock claps his bill, the doves coo.]

STEPMOTHER. Has my magic art forsaken me?

What means this? Where is the bride?

[Four maidens carrying baskets of red and white roses enter from the back. Music is

heard from above. The maidens go to the bed and strew it with roses. Then enter two knights with closed visors. They take the Prince by the hand and conduct him to the rear, where they join the false Magdalena, who is escorted by two lady attendants. The bride is thickly veiled. The Stepmother motions all to leave the bridal pair. She then departs, after pulling the curtains and closing the portals.]

PRINCE. Is my bride here?

THE FALSE MAGDALENA. Who is your bride?

PRINCE. I remember not her name! Who is your bridegroom?

THE FALSE MAGDALENA. He whose name may not be spoken.

PRINCE. Say it if you can!

THE FALSE MAGDALENA. I can, but I will not!

PRINCE. Say it if you can!

THE FALSE MAGDALENA. First say mine!

PRINCE. Seven kegs of gold, Crookback, Malice, Harelip! What am I called? Say it if you can!

THE FALSE MAGDALENA. Prince Grey Hair!

PRINCE. That is right.

[The False Magdalena throws off her veil.]

SWANWHITE *[Stands there in a white robe, a crown of roses in her hair]*. Who am I now?

PRINCE. You are a rose!

SWANWHITE. You are a violet!

PRINCE *[Takes the bandage from his eyes]*.
You are Swanwhite.

SWANWHITE. And you — are —

PRINCE. Hush!

SWANWHITE. You are mine!

PRINCE. But you went away, away from my
kisses —

SWANWHITE. But returned, because I hold you
dear!

PRINCE. And you wrote evil words —

SWANWHITE. Which I take back, because I love
you!

PRINCE. And you said that I was false!

SWANWHITE. What matters that when you are
true and I love you?

PRINCE. And you wished to go to the young
King?

SWANWHITE. But I came to you, because you
are my love!

PRINCE. Now you shall reproach me!

SWANWHITE. No, I have forgotten my re-
proaches because I hold you dear.

PRINCE. If you hold me dear then are you my
bride?

SWANWHITE. I am!

PRINCE. Then may heaven bless our nuptials!

SWANWHITE. In the Land of Dreams!

PRINCE. On my arm!

*[The Prince conducts Swanwhite to the
bed, in the middle of which he places his
sword; Swanwhite lies at one side of the
sword, the Prince at the other; purple
clouds pass by, the harp plays sweetly.]*

PRINCE. Good night, my queen!

SWANWHITE. Good morrow, my soul's delight.
I hear your heart beat like the hoofs of a
courser, I hear your heart sigh like a wave of
the sea, like an eagle's wing. Take me by the
hand.

PRINCE. There! Now we lift our wings —

STEPMOTHER [*Comes in with the maids bearing torches. All four are grey-haired*]. My work must be finished before the Duke comes — Magdalena, my daughter, espoused to the Prince, while Swanwhite sits in the tower. [*Goes to the bed.*] They sleep in each other's arms. Maids, bear witness! — [*The maids go to the bed.*] What do I see? You have all grey hair!

SIGNE. And your Grace has also!

STEPMOTHER. Let me see!

[*Elsa holds up a mirror.*]

STEPMOTHER. The sport of evil powers! Mayhap the Prince has his dark locks again? Light here!

[*The maids illuminate the sleepers.*]

STEPMOTHER. By heaven, it is the truth! — Too late! Beautiful it is — but the sword! Who has placed the sword there which makes the espousal invalid?

[*She seeks to take away the sword but the Prince holds it firmly without waking.*]

SIGNE. Duchess, here's some bedevilment!

STEPMOTHER. Why so?

SIGNE. This is not the Lady Magdalena!

STEPMOTHER. Who is it? Aid my eyes.

SIGNE. Look, it is the Lady Swanwhite!

STEPMOTHER. Swanwhite? Is this a delusion of the devil, or have I done that which I would not!

[The Prince moves and approaches his lips toward those of Swanwhite.]

STEPMOTHER *[Struck by the beautiful sight]*.

Never saw I anything more beautiful! Two roses that meet in the wind; two stars that fall from the firmament, and falling come together; no, it is all too beautiful! Youth, beauty, innocence, love! Memories! Sweet memories of days at my father's court, where *he* loved me, the youth whom I never wed — What did I say?

SIGNE. The Duchess said that he *loved*.

STEPMOTHER. Then spoke I right that mighty word. Beloved! So he named me, "Beloved," before he went forth to the war. *[Sinks into thought.]* He never returned! And they forced me to take another whom I could not suffer. Now my life is spent; and I must rejoice — in others' happiness — yet happiness; in others' love — yet love! But my Magdalena? Will she rejoice? Almighty love, eternal, creative God; how hast thou softened my lion heart! Where is my power? Where is my hate? Where is my revenge? *[She seats herself and regards the sleepers.]* I recall a song, a love song which *he* sang in my youth, that last evening — *[Rises, wakes as from a dream and falls into*

a rage. Shrieks.] Attendants, hither! Hither, bailiff, castellan, jailer, all! [*She takes the sword and throws it into the back-ground.*] Attendants, hither!

[*Noise: the attendants enter as before.*]

STEPMOTHER. Behold! The Prince, the young King's vassal, has dishonored the bride of his sovereign lord. Bear witness to the shameful deed. The King's betrayer shall be sent in bonds and chains to his lord, and the concubine placed in the spiked barrel!

[*The Prince and Swanwhite awaken.*]

STEPMOTHER. Jailer and bailiff, seize the Prince!

[*The jailer and bailiff seize the Prince.*]

PRINCE. Where is my sword? Not to use against wickedness but to prove innocence.

STEPMOTHER. Whose innocence?

PRINCE. My bride's!

STEPMOTHER. The concubine's innocence! Prove it.

SWANWHITE. O, mother, mother!

[*The white swan flies by outside.*]

STEPMOTHER. Give me the shears, maids! I will clip the harlot's locks.

[*Signe hands her a pair of shears.*]

STEPMOTHER [*Takes Swanwhite by the hair and attempts to cut it; but the shears stick and will not come together.*] Now shall you be shorn of your beauty and your love! [*She is overcome with panic, which seizes the maid also.*] Is the fiend upon us? Why do you tremble?

SIGNE. Duchess, the dogs bay, the horses neigh
— foreboding the approach of strangers.

STEPMOTHER. Quick, all to the drawbridge!
All! To the walls! Fire! Water! Swords!
Axes!

[*The Prince and Swanwhite are left alone.*]

THE GREEN GARDENER [*Appears from behind
the table with a heavy rope in one hand and
the Duke's horn in the other*]. Pardon to him
who hath erred! Comfort for the sorrowful,
help for the needy!

SWANWHITE. My father's horn! Help is nigh!
But the Prince?

GARDENER. Prince, follow me! This under-
ground passage leads to the strand; there lies
your cockle-shell; the wind is good! Come!
[*Swanwhite is left alone. She blows horn.
There is a distant answering horn. The
jailer enters with a spiked barrel. Swan-
white blows again. The answer is nearer.
The Duke enters. The Duke and Swan-
white alone.*]

DUKE. Dearest heart, what's amiss?

SWANWHITE. That which concerns your child,
father. See, the spiked barrel!

DUKE. In what has my child erred?

SWANWHITE. Love taught me the Prince's name.
I whispered it and he became dear to me.

DUKE. That should not cost your life! What
else?

SWANWHITE. I slept by his side with the
sword —

DUKE. *That* should not cost your life, though it was hardly prudent. What more?

SWANWHITE. Nothing more.

DUKE [*To the jailer*]. Roll out the spiked barrel! Now, my child, where is the Prince?

SWANWHITE. He is sailing in his cockle-shell homeward.

DUKE. Now, in this raging storm, — alone?

SWANWHITE. Alone! What could happen?

DUKE. That lies in God's hands!

SWANWHITE. Is danger nigh him?

DUKE. The brave have oft good fortune —

SWANWHITE. He is worthy of it!

DUKE. If he is innocent he will receive it! —

SWANWHITE. He is — more than I!

[*The Stepmother comes in.*]

STEPMOTHER. How came you here?

DUKE. By the nearest way. Would I had come sooner.

STEPMOTHER. Had you come sooner, your child might not have fallen upon misfortune.

DUKE. What misfortune?

STEPMOTHER. One that cannot be undone.

DUKE. Have you proofs?

STEPMOTHER. Living witnesses.

DUKE. Call the steward.

STEPMOTHER. He knows nothing!

DUKE [*Shaking his sword*]. Call the steward!

[*The Stepmother trembles, claps her hands four times. The steward comes in.*]

DUKE. Prepare at once a venison pasty, well

seasoned with onions, parsley, fennel and thyme.

[*The steward looks toward the Stepmother.*]

DUKE. Where are you looking? At once!

[*The steward goes.*]

DUKE. Call the head gardener!

STEPMOTHER. He knows nothing!

DUKE. And will continue to know nothing. But come he shall. Call him!

[*The Stepmother claps her hands six times. The head gardener comes in.*]

DUKE. Fetch three lilies — one white, one red, and one blue.

[*The head gardener glances toward the Stepmother.*]

DUKE. Take care of your head!

[*The head gardener goes.*]

DUKE. Call the witnesses.

[*The Stepmother claps her hands once. Signe comes in.*]

DUKE. Bear witness, but in seemly words. What have you seen?

SIGNE. I have seen Lady Swanwhite and the Prince sleeping by each other's side.

DUKE. With the sword?

SIGNE. Without!

DUKE. I believe it not! More witnesses! [*The two knights enter.*] Are these the bride's knights? — Bear witness!

FIRST KNIGHT. I conducted Lady Magdalena to the sleeping couch!

SECOND KNIGHT. I conducted Lady Magdalena to the sleeping couch.

DUKE. What is this? Treachery that has failed! — More witnesses! [*Elsa comes in.*] Bear witness!

ELSA. By the righteous and avenging God, I have seen Lady Swanwhite and the Prince, fully clad, lying by each other's side asleep, with the sword.

DUKE. One for and one against, and two outside the question! — I leave it to the judgment of God! — The flower test shall decide!

[*Tofva comes forward.*]

TOFVA. Stern lord, merciful knight!

DUKE. What do you know?

TOFVA. That my gracious Lady Swanwhite is innocent!

DUKE. Oh, you child! Make us know it.

TOFVA. When I say it is the truth —

DUKE. Then no one believes it; but when Signe says what is not true, then one must believe it! What does Swanwhite herself say? Does not her pure brow, her clear glance, her innocent mouth say that she has been slandered? Do not my father's eyes tell me that is so! So be it! God the Almighty shall speak in judgment that all may believe!

[*The head gardener comes in with three lilies in vases. The Duke sets the flowers in a semi-circle on the table. The steward comes in carrying a smoking pasty on a*

platter. The Duke places the pasty so that the flowers surround it.]

DUKE. Who is the white lily?

ALL, SAVE SWANWHITE AND THE STEPMOTHER.

Swanwhite!

DUKE. Who is the red lily?

ALL, SAVE SWANWHITE AND THE STEPMOTHER.

The Prince!

DUKE. Who is the blue?

ALL, SAVE SWANWHITE AND THE STEPMOTHER.

The young King!

DUKE. 'Tis well! — Tofva, my child, you believe in innocence because you are innocent yourself. Interpret now for us the judgment of God, and tell us the secret of the flowers. What do you see?

TOFVA. I cannot speak of that which is evil.

DUKE. Then I will; and you shall speak of what is good. By the reek of the blood of the lustful deer, by the reek of the herbs of passion, what comes to pass?

TOFVA [*Contemplates the three lilies*]. The white lily closes to protect itself from impure insinuation. That is Swanwhite.

ALL. Swanwhite is innocent!

TOFVA. And the red one, that is the Prince, it closes also; but the blue one, the King, opens its cup to inhale the passion!

DUKE. Well interpreted! What more do you see?

TOFVA. I see the red lily bend in honorable love

to the white; but the blue writhes in envy and jealousy!

DUKE. Well interpreted! Who shall have Swan-white?

TOFVA. The Prince; because his longing is pure, and therefore the stronger.

ALL, SAVE SWANWHITE AND THE STEPMOTHER.

The Prince shall have Swanwhite!

SWANWHITE [*Rushes into her father's arms*].
Oh, my father!

DUKE. Call back the Prince! Sound horns and trumpets! All vessels to sea! But first, who shall sit in the spiked barrel?

[*All are silent.*]

DUKE. Then I will say it! The Duchess! The liar, the sorceress! See, evil woman, your arts rule everything save love! Go, and go quickly!

[*The Stepmother makes a gesture with her hand, which seems to benumb the Duke.*]

DUKE [*Draws his sword and directs the point against the Stepmother, while he shelters Swanwhite on his left shoulder*]. Ah, evil one! The point of my steel shall spoil your magic arts!

[*The Stepmother retires backward with slinking steps like a panther.*]

DUKE. Now to the Prince!

[*The Stepmother stands as if turned to stone in the entrance, opens her mouth as if venting her spleen. The peacock and the doves fall down dead. Then the Step-*

mother begins to swell; her clothes expand like an inflated balloon, and soon hide her head and the upper part of her body. Her garments appear to flame with a pattern of serpents and twigs. The sun begins to rise. Then the roof settles slowly upon the chamber; smoke and fire pour from the fireplace.]

DUKE [*Holds the cross on his sword toward the Stepmother*]. Call upon the name of the Redeemer!

ALL. Christ have mercy!

[The roof returns to its proper place, the smoke and fire disappear. Noise outside. The murmur of voices.]

DUKE. What has happened now?

SWANWHITE. I know it! I see it! I hear the water dripping from his hair; I hear his heart is stilled; I hear that he no longer breathes! I see that he is dead!

DUKE. What see you? Whom?

SWANWHITE. I see it!

DUKE. I see nothing!

SWANWHITE. May they come quickly; as come they must!

[Four little girls enter carrying baskets of white lilies and sprigs of yew, with which they strew the floor; after them come four little boys ringing silver bells tuned to different notes; then the Dean with the crucifix; then a golden bier upon which lies the Prince, beneath a white shroud strewn

with red and white roses. His hair is dark once more and his face young, rosy and radiantly beautiful, with a smile on his lips. The harp plays; the sun rises. The Stepmother's embodiment as a witch bursts and she then appears as usual. The bier is set down in the rays of the rising sun.

Swanwhite throws herself on her knees by the bier, and kisses the Prince's face.

All hide their faces and weep.]

DUKE. Tell us, fisherman, the short story.

FISHERMAN. Stern lord, it lies before thy eyes.

The youthful Prince, well over yonder sound, seized with love's mad longing to return, essayed to swim the flood, spite springtide, wind and waves, 'gainst which his cockle-shell could make no way. I saw his young head top the waves, I heard him call her name and then his corpse on the white sand was slowly laid. Grey was his hair from the night in the blue tower; withered his cheeks from sorrow and from grief, and nothing brought a smile to his parched lips. Now, in death his body seemed both young and fair; his dark locks crowned his rosy cheek, and the corpse smiled — behold, it smiles yet! The people, gathered on the sands below, marvelled to view the wondrous sight and whispered, man to man: Look, that is love!

SWANWHITE [*Lays herself down near the corpse of the Prince*]. He is dead, his heart sings no more, his eyes light not my life, he breathes

no longer on me. He smiles, but he smiles not on me, but upon heaven. I will with him on his way.

DUKE. Kiss not the lips of the dead. 'Tis poison.

SWANWHITE. A loving poison when it gives me death, death which is to me but life.

DUKE. It is said, my child, the dead do not meet according to their own desires, and that the one loved here seems of little worth there beyond.

SWANWHITE. And love — shall it not triumph there over death?

DUKE. The wise dispute it.

SWANWHITE. Then must he return hither! Merciful God, send him back from thy heaven!

DUKE. A useless prayer!

SWANWHITE. Alas, I cannot pray, the evil eye still rules us!

DUKE. You mean the troll that flew to pieces in the sun? She shall be burned at once upon the scaffold!

SWANWHITE. Burned, and living? No, not so, let her go her way.

DUKE. Living, she shall be burned. A pyre shall be erected on the strand that her ashes may be strewn to the winds.

SWANWHITE [*On her knees to the Duke*]. Oh no, I pray for her, my executioner. Have mercy!

STEPMOTHER [*Comes in greatly changed and free from her witchcraft*]. Mercy! Who speaks that holy word?

SWANWHITE. 'Tis I, your daughter, mother!

STEPMOTHER. Oh, heavenly power, she calls me mother! Who taught you that?

SWANWHITE. Love!

STEPMOTHER. Blessed be love that can such wonders work! 'Tis well, my child, then can you call the dead back from the realm of death. That can I not, as love was me denied. But you!

SWANWHITE. What can I, poor I, do?

STEPMOTHER. You can love; you can forgive. Truly, you can do all, you powerful little one! Take the lore from me who cannot use it. Go, call the name of your beloved and lay your hand upon his heart! And with the help of the Most High — but only with His help — will your beloved hear you, if you have faith.

SWANWHITE. I believe! — I will! — I pray!

[Goes to the bier of the Prince, lays one hand upon his heart and raises the other on high. Then she bends and whispers three separate times. The third time the Prince awakens and Swanwhite throws herself upon his breast. All sink upon their knees as if in thanks and praise. Music.]

CURTAIN.

ADVENT
A Mystery Play

SCENES

- Act I. The vineyard and mausoleum.
- Act II. Living room.
- Act III. The wine cellar. The orchard.
- Act IV. The cross-roads. "The waiting
 room." The cross-roads. The
 court room.
- Act V. The living room. "The waiting
 room."

CHARACTERS

THE DEEMSTER

THE WIFE

AMALIA

ADOLPH

THE NEIGHBOR

ERIC

THYRA

THE OTHER

THE FRANCISCAN

} **The same person**

THE PLAYMATE

THE WITCH

THE PRINCE

**SUBORDINATE FIGURES AND
SHADOWS**

ADVENT

ACT I

The back of scene represents a vineyard. To left a mausoleum. A small brick building, plastered white, door and windows in Gothic style, without window sashes or panes; a red brick roof; over the gable a cross. Clematis with the violet cruciform flowers climbs the wall. At the bottom of the wall different kinds of flowers.

In the foreground there is a peach tree laden with fruit, under which the Deemster and his wife are sitting.

The Deemster's clothes are of the 1820 period; yellow knee-breeches, blue swallow-tail coat, green hat, etc. The wife has a scarf over her head, a stick, glasses, and snuff-box. She has the appearance of "a witch."

To the right is a small expiation-chapel with a figure of the Madonna; on the railing before the Madonna are hung wreaths and bouquets. In front of the railing, a prayer-stool.

THE DEEMSTER. The evening of life has at last given us the sunshine its morning promised;

morning rain and evening rain have blessed field and meadow, and the song of the wine-treader will soon be heard over the countryside.

THE WIFE. Don't say that; some one may hear you!

THE DEEMSTER. Who should be listening here, and what harm is there in my thanking God for all the good gifts?

THE WIFE. One mustn't talk about one's good fortune; misfortune may be listening.

THE DEEMSTER. What would that matter, when I am born with the caul of triumph!

THE WIFE. Take care, take care! Many are envious of us and evil eyes lie in wait.

THE DEEMSTER. Let them do so; it has never been otherwise. But I have prospered nevertheless.

THE WIFE. Yes, up to the present. But I don't believe any good of our neighbor; he goes about the village saying that we have deprived him of his goods through treachery, and many other things that I don't care to mention. But it can do no harm when one has a clean conscience and a spotless life behind one. The slander cannot harm me; I go to confession and mass and am ready to close my eyes when the moment comes; to re-open them some time and behold my judge's face. And I know also what my answer shall be.

THE DEEMSTER. What shall you answer?

THE WIFE. This: faultless I am not, Lord, but

if I was a poor sinful being, at least I was a bit better than my neighbor.

THE DEEMSTER. I don't know why you have come to think about these things, and I take no pleasure in them. Perhaps it is because our mausoleum is about to be consecrated?

THE WIFE. Perhaps it is, for otherwise I have no thoughts of death. Haven't I all of my teeth still, isn't my hair as thick as when I stood up as a bride —

THE DEEMSTER. Yes, yes, you have eternal youth even as I have, but nevertheless we must depart from this life, and as fortune has been friendly to us we wished to make use of the privilege of lying in our own earth; and therefore we built this little vault for ourselves, where every tree knows us, where each flower will whisper of our work, our hardships and conflicts —

THE WIFE. Conflicts, indeed, against envious neighbors and ungrateful children —

THE DEEMSTER. You said it: ungrateful children. Have you seen Adolph?

THE WIFE. No, I have not seen him since morning when he went out to try to find the money for his rent.

THE DEEMSTER. The money he will never get — and I still less. But now the time of grace is at an end, and he knows it, for this is the third quarterly he has failed to pay.

THE WIFE. Yes, out with him, out into the world to learn how to work instead of sitting here

as son-in-law. Amalia and the children I will keep —

THE DEEMSTER. Do you think Amalia will allow herself to be separated from Adolph —

THE WIFE. Yes, indeed, when it concerns her children and disinheritance, then — But look! Now it's there again!

[A sun cat is seen on the wall of the mausoleum; it trembles as if it were the reflection of running water.]

THE DEEMSTER. What is it? What is it?

THE WIFE. On the mausoleum! Can't you see?

THE DEEMSTER. It's the sun reflecting from the river. That forebodes —

THE WIFE. It forebodes that we shall see the sunlight for a long time yet —

THE DEEMSTER. Or just the opposite. But have no fear; a clean conscience is a good pillow and the recompense of the righteous is unfailing. See, there is our neighbor.

THE NEIGHBOR *[Comes in]*. Good evening, Deemster, and you, lady.

THE DEEMSTER. Good evening, Neighbor: how are things with you? It is long since we have had this pleasure. How goes the wine? I should have asked!

THE NEIGHBOR. The wine; I ran into mildew, and now the starlings are here.

THE DEEMSTER. To be sure! I have no mildew in my casks and I have neither seen nor heard any starlings.

THE NEIGHBOR. The lots of fate fall unevenly;
one shall be taken and the other left.

THE DEEMSTER. There is of course good reason
for that!

THE NEIGHBOR. I understand! The wages of
the righteous never fails and the punishment
of the unrighteous is not to be put off.

THE DEEMSTER. Not so ill meant! But admit
at all events that it is strange; two tracts lie
side by side, the one bears good fruit, the
other poor —

THE NEIGHBOR. The one bears starlings and the
other does not bear starlings; I really think
that is more strange. But we are not all born
with the lucky caul like you, Deemster.

THE DEEMSTER. What you say is true, and for-
tune has been kind to me; I am thankful
therefore and I have moments when I feel as
proud as if I had earned it. — But listen now,
Neighbor, you come as if sent for — The
little farm has been vacated and I want to ask
if you would like to take it over.

*[The Wife has risen and gone up to the
mausoleum and busies herself with the
flowers.]*

THE NEIGHBOR. So-o; the little farm is vacated!
Hm! When did that happen?

THE DEEMSTER. This morning!

THE NEIGHBOR. Hm! Indeed! Your son-in-
law is going then?

THE DEEMSTER. Yes, that good-for-nothing
cannot make his way.

THE NEIGHBOR. Tell me: Has not the Deemster heard a rumor that the government intends to build a military road here across the meadows?

THE DEEMSTER. I have heard an idle rumor, but it's probably nothing but talk.

THE NEIGHBOR. But I saw it printed in the paper. In that case an expropriation would be made here and the tenant would be the loser.

THE DEEMSTER. I cannot believe that; and I would never allow that to happen to me. I would leave this sod where I intended to end my days in peace; where I have prepared a resting place to escape lying in common ground —

THE NEIGHBOR. Wait now! Where one may come to lie one never knows, and my father who owned this ground had also thought he would be able to rest in his own earth, but that did not come to pass. As for the renting of the land, I must refrain.

THE DEEMSTER. As you will; the proposal is a disinterested one on my part as you are a man of bad luck. It is really no secret that you are unfortunate in everything you undertake, and people have their own opinions about any one who is always alone and without a friend like you. Isn't that true? Isn't it a fact that you haven't *one* friend?

THE NEIGHBOR. Yes, that is true! I have not

one friend; and things always look bad!
That cannot be denied!

THE DEEMSTER. Tell me now, to change the subject, is what they say true, that this vineyard was once a battlefield and that therefore the wine has its own peculiar fire?

THE NEIGHBOR. No, I have not heard it that way. My father used to say that this had been the place of execution and there where the mausoleum now stands, the gallows stood.

THE DEEMSTER. That was ghastly! Why should you tell that?

THE NEIGHBOR. I only answered your question! — And the last to be hung was an unjust judge; and he lies buried there beside many others, among them his unjustly doomed victims.

THE DEEMSTER. No, what kind of stories are these! [*Calls.*] Carolina!

THE NEIGHBOR. And therefore his ghost walks.
— Have you never seen him?

THE DEEMSTER. I have never seen him!

THE NEIGHBOR. But I have seen him; and he usually comes at vintage time, when he is heard at the wine press down in the cellar!

THE DEEMSTER [*Shouting*]. Carolina!

THE WIFE. What is it?

THE DEEMSTER. Come here!

THE NEIGHBOR. And he can never know peace until he has suffered all the torments his victims endured.

THE DEEMSTER. Go your way! Go.

THE NEIGHBOR. Very well! I did not know that you were so sensitive. *[Goes out.]*

THE WIFE. What was it?

THE DEEMSTER. Oh, he told some stories that amazed me! But, but — he has an evil mind, that man!

THE WIFE. That's what I have said; but you must always prate when you see any one — What did he have to cluck about this time?

THE DEEMSTER. I don't want to say; it makes me sick just to think about it! I will tell you some other time! — See, there is Adolph.

ADOLPH *[Coming in]*. Good evening!

THE DEEMSTER *[After a pause]*. Well?

ADOLPH. Things are going badly with me! I haven't been able to get any money.

THE DEEMSTER. There must be good reasons why.

ADOLPH. I cannot understand why it goes well with some people and ill with others.

THE DEEMSTER. You cannot? Go to yourself, examine your deeds and thoughts and you will see that you yourself are to blame for your misfortunes.

ADOLPH. It is possible that I am not a righteous man, but I carry no irreparable deeds on my conscience!

THE DEEMSTER. Reflect carefully —

ADOLPH. I don't think it is necessary, for one's conscience keeps one awake —

THE DEEMSTER. Conscience can be put to sleep —

ADOLPH. Is that really so? To be sure I have heard tell of rogues who have grown gray in crime, but just before death their consciences have awakened, and I have also heard of criminals whose consciences have awakened only after death.

THE DEEMSTER [*Shaken*]. So that their ghosts have walked, you mean? Have you heard that story too? It is strange that all have heard it except me —

THE WIFE. What are you talking about now? You had both better stick to business instead.

ADOLPH. Yes, I think that would be more sensible! — And as we have come back to it now, I shall state my proposition to you, father-in-law.

THE DEEMSTER. Listen now, my boy. I find it more fitting that I state my decision to you; which is that from this day you have ceased to be my tenant and that even before the sun goes down, you take yourself away into the world and seek work!

ADOLPH. Are you in earnest?

THE DEEMSTER. Shame! I never jest! And you cannot complain; for twice you have had respite.

ADOLPH. And thrice a bad harvest; is that my fault?

THE DEEMSTER. I have not said that; but it is my fault still less. And I am not your judge. Here is the contract, and here the broken agreement. Have I broken the agreement?

No! That is to say that I am not at fault and I wash my hands of the whole matter.

ADOLPH. That is legally right but I had thought that between relatives some leniency would exist, especially as, in accordance with nature's course, this property will fall to the offspring.

THE WIFE. There, nature's course! He is wishing the life out of us! But look at me, you, I can still live twenty years: and I *shall* live if only to annoy you.

THE DEEMSTER [*To Adolph*]. What brutality, what lack of human feeling, to ask old people to their faces: aren't you going to die soon? Shame! Shame! But you have broken all ties, and all I say is: depart from here and never show yourself again!

ADOLPH. That is a decision! And I shall go, but not alone —

THE WIFE. Indeed! You believe that Amalia, our child, will follow you along the highways and that you can go on sending us one young brat after another! That was all foreseen and prevented —

ADOLPH. Where is Amalia? Where?

THE WIFE. You may as well know it. She is on a visit to the Clarise cloister; only on a visit. So now you know it is not worth while to look for her here!

ADOLPH. Sometime you shall pay the full penalty for robbing one in distress of his only support; and if you have severed my mar-

riage you shall bear the punishment of adultery.

THE DEEMSTER. You should feel shame to throw guilt on the innocent, and go, go, hunger, thirst before closed doors, until you have learned gratitude.

ADOLPH. I wish you the same in double measure! Let me but say farewell to my children and I will go.

THE WIFE. As you do not wish to spare your children the pangs of parting, I will do so; and have already done so!

ADOLPH. That too! Now I believe you capable of all the evil that rumor has claimed for you; and now I understand what the neighbor meant when he said that you — could not endure the sun!

THE DEEMSTER. Not another word; or you shall feel the law strike you with the hand of justice —

[He lifts his right hand in such a way that one sees that the index finger is missing. Adolph comes forward and takes the Deemster's hand to examine it.]

ADOLPH. The hand of justice, the hand of perjury, that lacks the finger that stuck to the Bible when he swore a false oath! Woe unto you! Woe unto you both! For the day of retribution is at hand and your deeds shall rise like the corpses out of the hills, and accuse you.

THE WIFE. What is he saying? — It is as if he

blew fire on us! Go, you spirit of lies, and may hell be your recompense!

ADOLPH. May heaven reward you — as you deserve, and may God protect my children.

[*Goes.*]

THE DEEMSTER. What was that? Who was it that was speaking? It seemed to me as if the voice came from a big vault under the earth.

THE WIFE. Did you hear that too?

THE DEEMSTER. God help us then! — Do you remember what he said about the sun! That seemed to me the strangest of all! How could he know that — that it is so? That I was born so peculiarly that the sun always burns me; they say that it was because my mother had a sun-stroke when she bore me, but that you too —

THE WIFE [*Frightened*]. Silence! — When one speaks of trolls, then — Tell me, hasn't the sun gone down?

THE DEEMSTER. Yes, of course it's down.

THE WIFE. Then how can the sun cat still be on the mausoleum?

[*The sun cat moves.*]

THE DEEMSTER. Jesu Maria! A miracle!

THE WIFE. A miracle, you say; and on the grave! That does not happen every day — and only certain few people who have lived in faith in the highest things —

[*The sun cat disappears.*]

THE DEEMSTER. It's uncanny here this evening; quite horrible. But what stirred me

most was that that good-for-nothing wished the life out of us to get the property. Do you know that I — yes, I, I wonder if I dare say it —

THE WIFE. Speak!

THE DEEMSTER. Well, have you heard it said that this ground used to be the place of execution?

THE WIFE. Indeed, you have got hold of that too?

THE DEEMSTER. Yes; and you know it? Now, if we should give the ground to the cloister the earth would become consecrated and then we could rest in peace. While the children are growing up the rent could go to them. And at the same time Adolph would be tricked out of his speculation about the inheritance. That seems to me to be a particularly fortunate solution of the perplexing dilemma; to give without taking anything from oneself.

THE WIFE. Once more your superior intellect has not deserted you, and I quite agree with you. But supposing now that the expropriation should be carried out — what would happen then?

THE DEEMSTER. It will be time enough to consider that then. However: first and foremost, let us consecrate the mausoleum —

THE FRANCISCAN [*Comes in*]. God's peace, Deemster, and you, lady!

THE WIFE. You come at an opportune time,

pater, to hear something concerning the cloister —

THE FRANCISCAN. It gladdens me.

[*The sun cat appears on the mausoleum.*]

THE WIFE. And then we wanted to ask when the mausoleum could be consecrated.

THE FRANCISCAN [*Fixing her with his eye*]. Indeed!

THE DEEMSTER. But look, pater, see the miracle there —

THE WIFE. Yes, is not that a holy place —

THE FRANCISCAN. That is phosphorescent fire —

THE WIFE. Is it not a good foreboding; does it not foretell something, and does it not urge a pious spirit to reflection; should not this spot become a gathering place for pilgrims who seek —

THE FRANCISCAN. Lady; let me have a word with you in private. [*He moves to right.*]

THE WIFE [*Going toward him*]. Pater!

THE FRANCISCAN [*Speaking half aloud*]. Lady! You enjoy a reputation here in the neighborhood that you do not deserve, for you are the greatest sinner that I know. You would buy your forgiveness and you would steal the kingdom of heaven, you who have robbed the Lord.

THE WIFE. What do I hear?

THE FRANCISCAN. When you lay ill and death approached, you promised God to give a monstrance of pure gold to the cloister

chapel if you recovered. Your health was restored and you gave the holy vessel, but it was of silver, plated. Not for the sake of the gold, but for the broken promise and for the deception, you are already doomed!

THE WIFE. I did not know it; the goldsmith cheated me.

THE FRANCISCAN. That is false, for I have the goldsmith's bill.

THE WIFE. Cannot that be forgiven?

THE FRANCISCAN. No! For it is a deadly sin to deceive God!

THE WIFE. O woe!

THE FRANCISCAN. As for your other crimes, you will have to settle them with yourself; but harm only a hair of the children's heads, and you shall know who protects them, and you shall feel the iron rod!

THE WIFE. What a devilish monk to stand here saying such things to me! If I am damned I wish to be damned. Ha! Ha!

THE FRANCISCAN. Yes, at least blessings will not fall on your house, and peace you shall not have until you have suffered the pain you have caused others! May I have a word with the Deemster!

[*The Deemster comes forward.*]

THE WIFE. Now give him his share, then we will be more evenly matched.

THE FRANCISCAN [*To the Deemster*]. How did you conceive the idea of building your tomb where the gallows stood?

THE DEEMSTER. The devil must have inspired the idea!

THE FRANCISCAN. Likewise the idea of driving your children out on the highway and depriving them of their inheritance. But you have also been an unrighteous judge, broken oaths and taken bribes.

THE DEEMSTER. I?

THE FRANCISCAN. And now you would erect a monument for yourself, build an eternal dwelling in heaven! Hear me now: this ground will never become consecrated, and you may consider yourself blessed if you are allowed to lie in common ground among all the small sinners. Damnation rests on this earth, for it holds blood guilt, and it was unjustly acquired.

THE DEEMSTER. What shall I do?

THE FRANCISCAN. Repent, and restore the stolen goods!

THE DEEMSTER. I have not stolen; everything has been lawfully acquired.

THE FRANCISCAN. You see, that is the worst of it, because you look upon your crimes as being lawful. Yes, I understand that you considered yourself especially favored by heaven on account of your righteousness. But you shall see what you will reap; alone and unprotected shall you go, and the peace of your old age shall change to contention and strife!

THE DEEMSTER. Oh, the devil!

THE FRANCISCAN. Call not on him, he'll come without it!

THE DEEMSTER. May he come! No fear exists here; for here lives faith!

THE FRANCISCAN. The devils have faith too, and tremble! — Farewell!

[*Goes out.*]

THE DEEMSTER [*To his wife*]. What did he say to you?

THE WIFE. You believe that I would tell that? What did he say to you?

THE DEEMSTER. And you believe that I would tell that?

THE WIFE. Do you intend to keep secrets from me?

THE DEEMSTER. And you then? You have always kept secrets from me but I shall some day detect your smuggling.

THE WIFE. Just give me time and I will discover where you have hidden the money unaccounted for.

THE DEEMSTER. Indeed, so you have hidden away money too! Now it's not worth while to simulate any longer; but show yourself in all your horror, witch!

THE WIFE. I believe you have lost your reason; but there wasn't much to keep! But at least keep decency if you can —

THE DEEMSTER. And keep your beauty, if you can! And your eternal youth — ha, ha, ha, — and your righteousness. You must have been able to bewitch and pervert the sight,

for now I see how horribly ugly and old you are.

THE WIFE [*Who is now lighted up by the sun cat*]. Woe! It is burning me!

THE DEEMSTER. Now one can see how you really look! [*The sun cat lights up the Deemster.*] Woe! It is burning me!

THE WIFE. And that is the way you look!
[*They both rush out right.*]
[*The Neighbor and Amalia come in from left.*]

THE NEIGHBOR. Yes, my child, justice does exist, both human and divine justice, but we must have patience.

AMALIA. I want to believe that things are carried on justly, although it looks bad; but I cannot, I have never been able to love my mother. There is something within me that tells me that she is a stranger to me and even inimical.

THE NEIGHBOR. Indeed! You have felt that!

AMALIA. She hates me, and a mother could not do that.

THE NEIGHBOR. Indeed, indeed!

AMALIA. And I suffer because I cannot fulfill my duty as a child and love her.

THE NEIGHBOR. Very well, as it has made you suffer, you shall soon, when the moment of retribution has come, know your life's great secret.

AMALIA. And I would endure everything if only she would be kind to my children!

THE NEIGHBOR. Be at ease about that, for her power is at an end, the measure of injustice has been filled to overflowing.

AMALIA. Do you believe that? But even to-day she wrenched Adolph from us, and as you see, she has degraded me and dressed me like a servant and put me to do the kitchen work.

THE NEIGHBOR. Patience!

AMALIA. Yes, say that! I can understand just suffering but undeserved —

THE NEIGHBOR. My good child: just suffering, that is what prisoners do, and there is no honor in that, but to suffer unjustly, that is grace and a test from which the steadfast reap golden fruits.

AMALIA. You speak so beautifully and I feel that all you say is true! — Hush, there come the children; but I don't want to be seen dressed like this!

[They step to one side where they are hidden by a bush. Eric and Thyra come in; the sun cat appears and shines on the children, from one to the other.]

ERIC. Look, the sun cat!

THYRA. Oh, the beautiful sun! But didn't it go to rest just now?

ERIC. Perhaps it was allowed to stay up longer to-night because it has been good to-day.

THYRA. The sun can't be good, how foolish you are, Eric.

ERIC. Of course the sun can be good; for it is the sun that makes the wine and the peaches.

THYRA. But couldn't it give us a peach then, if it is good?

ERIC. It would do that too if we were only able to wait. Aren't there any lying on the ground?

THYRA [*Looking on the ground*]. No, but we could get at the tree.

ERIC. No, grandmother has forbidden that.

THYRA. Grandmother has said that we must not shake the tree, but I meant that we could play around the tree, so that they would drop anyway.

ERIC. How foolish you are, Thyra, that would be the same thing! [*Looks up at the tree.*] Oh, if a peach would only fall!

THYRA. None will fall unless it is shaken!

ERIC. You must not say that for it is wicked.

THYRA. Shall we pray to God that one will fall?

ERIC. One must not pray to God for something good — to eat, of course! — Oh, little peach, fall, fall! I want you to fall! [*A peach falls from the tree; Eric picks it up.*] See, how good the tree was!

THYRA. But now we must divide it fairly for it was I who first said that we ought to shake the tree —

THE WIFE [*Comes in with a big rod*]. So, you are there shaking the tree — come along, you wicked brats, and I'll teach you —

ERIC. No, grandmother, we haven't shaken the tree!

THE WIFE. So, you are telling falsehoods too!

Didn't I hear Thyra say that the tree ought to be shaken? Come now, and I shall lock you in the cellar so you will see neither the sun nor the moon shine. —

AMALIA [*Comes forward*]. The children are innocent, mother!

THE WIFE. How charming, to stand behind the bushes and listen, and then to teach your own children to tell lies!

THE NEIGHBOR [*Comes forward*]. Only the truth has been spoken here.

THE WIFE. Two witnesses behind the bushes, it's just like at court. But, you see, I know your tricks, and what I have heard and seen is proof enough for me! Come now, brats!

AMALIA. Mother, it is a sin and a shame —

[*The Neighbor puts his finger to his lips, warning Amalia not to speak.*]

AMALIA [*Going to the children*]. Don't cry, little dears! Obey grandmother, there is no danger! Rather suffer evil than commit evil, and I know that you are innocent. God protect you! And don't forget your evening prayer!

[*The Wife goes out with the children.*]

AMALIA. It is difficult to have faith, but it is beautiful to be able to do so.

THE NEIGHBOR. Is it so difficult to believe good of God, even when he wishes us to have the best?

AMALIA. Tell me a few good, great words for

the night that I may sleep on them as on a soft pillow.

THE NEIGHBOR. You shall have them, let me think. This: Isaac was to be sacrificed —

AMALIA. No, no!

THE NEIGHBOR. Control yourself! — Isaac *was* to be sacrificed — but he was not sacrificed!

AMALIA. Thanks! Thanks! and good night.

[Goes out right.]

THE NEIGHBOR. Good night, my child!

[Goes slowly toward back.]

[The shadow procession comes out of the mausoleum to right with a distance of five steps between the figures; they move noiselessly.]

DEATH *[With scythe and hourglass]*.

THE WHITE LADY *[Blonde, tall and slender; a ring on her finger with a gleaming green stone]*.

THE GOLDSMITH *[With the counterfeit mon-strance]*.

THE HEADLESS SAILOR *[With his head in his hand]*.

THE AUCTIONEER *[With his mallet and notebook]*.

THE CHIMNEY-SWEEP *[With his rope, scraper and broom]*.

THE FOOL *[Carrying his cap with donkey ears and bells on a stick with the inscription "The caul of triumph"]*.

THE LAND-SURVEYOR *[With level and tripod]*.

THE JUDGE *[His wry face and his dress sug-*

gest the Deemster; he has a rope around his neck; his raised right hand shows that his index finger is missing. It has grown darker with the coming of the procession. The scene is empty during the march. The Deemster comes in from left. Soon after the Wife appears].

THE DEEMSTER. What are you doing out so late, prowling around like a spook?

THE WIFE. What are you doing?

THE DEEMSTER. I could not sleep.

THE WIFE. Why not?

THE DEEMSTER. Don't know! Thought I heard the crying of children in the cellar.

THE WIFE. That is not possible! Oh no! You dare not sleep because you fear that I would search for your hiding places.

THE DEEMSTER. And you feared I would go rooting in yours! This will be a pleasant old age for Philemon and Baucis!

THE WIFE. At any rate they had no gods come to visit them.

THE DEEMSTER. Not gods precisely! [*The procession starts again from the mausoleum and out right.*]

THE WIFE. Mary, Mother of God, what is this?

THE DEEMSTER. Heaven protect us! [*Pause.*]

THE WIFE. Pray! Pray for us!

THE DEEMSTER. I have tried, but I cannot!

THE WIFE. Nor I! I find no words, and no thoughts!

[*Pause.*]

THE DEEMSTER. How does the Lord's Prayer begin?

THE WIFE. I have forgotten but I knew it this morning.

[*Pause.*]

THE WIFE. Who is the woman in white?

THE DEEMSTER. It is she, Amalia's mother, the memory of whom you tried to kill.

THE WIFE. Are they shadows, or ghosts, or our own sick dreams?

THE DEEMSTER [*Taking out his jack-knife.*]
They are the devil's delusions! I will throw steel at them!— Pull out the knife blade, Carolina; I cannot, as you see!

THE WIFE. No, I understand, it is not easy to do without the index finger!— Well, I cannot either for that matter.

[*She drops the knife.*]

THE DEEMSTER. O woe! In this matter steel cannot help! Woe! There is the headless sailor! Let us go!

THE WIFE. That is easy to say; but I can't move from this spot!

THE DEEMSTER. And I am as if glued to the earth! No, I don't want to see any more!

[*Holds his hand over his eyes.*]

THE WIFE. But what is this? Is it vapors from the earth, or is it, or is it shadows from the trees?

THE DEEMSTER. No, it is ourselves that we see in apparitions! There am I, but I stand here! If I can only sleep one night I will

stick out my tongue at the whole thing!

The devil! will the procession never end!

THE WIFE. Why do you look at it then?

THE DEEMSTER. But I see through my hand, I see in the darkness through my eyelids!

THE WIFE. But it is over now!

[The procession has passed out.]

THE DEEMSTER. Praised be — think, I cannot say it! — How can I sleep this night! We must send for the doctor!

THE WIFE. Or Pater Colomba, perhaps!

THE DEEMSTER. He cannot help, and He who could, will not! — Then may the Other do it!

[The Other appears from behind the Madonna's Chapel. He is very thin and moth-eaten; scant, parted, snuff-brown hair; thin beard, outgrown and worn clothes, without linen, a red woolen scarf wound around his neck; he wears spectacles and carries a rod under his arm.]

THE DEEMSTER. Who is there?

THE OTHER *[Half aloud]*. It is I, the Other!

THE DEEMSTER *[To the Wife]*. Make the sign of the cross! I cannot, I!

THE OTHER. The sign of the cross does not frighten me, for I am going through my time of trial to be able to carry it!

THE DEEMSTER. Who are you?

THE OTHER. I became the Other, because I wanted to be the First; I was an evil being and as punishment I must serve the Good!

THE DEEMSTER. Then you are not the Evil One?

THE OTHER. Yes; and I have been given the task of driving you onward to the cross, where sometime we are to meet.

THE WIFE [*To the Deemster*]. Don't listen to him! Ask him to go!

THE OTHER. That will not help! You have called on me and now you must bear with me!

[*The Deemster and the Wife go out left.
The Other follows them.*]

CURTAIN.

ACT II

A large white plastered room, ceiling with black beams, small deep windows with iron gratings. All kinds of furniture, cupboards, chiffoniers, bureaux, chests, and tables are heaped up with things, silver services, candelabra, candle sticks, pans, center-pieces, vases, statuettes, etc. A door at back; on each side of the door hang portraits of the Deemster and the Wife. Near a small sewing table and arm-chair stands a harp. The sunlight streams in from window at back. Amalia stands at a table to right polishing a coffee service of silver.

THE NEIGHBOR [*Coming in*]. Well, child, how is it with your patience?

AMALIA. Thanks, Neighbor, fairly well. But the severest test has been with this silver service, which I have scrubbed for one half hour without getting it bright.

THE NEIGHBOR. That is strange, but there must be good reason, as the Deemster says. Were you able to sleep last night?

AMALIA. Thanks, I slept well! But as you know, father was out in the vineyard the whole night with the hare rattle —

THE NEIGHBOR. Yes, I heard it — What was that preposterous idea?

AMALIA. He thought he heard the starlings that had come to eat up the wine!

THE NEIGHBOR. Poor man! The starlings are not out at night! — How about the children?

AMALIA. The children! She still has them in the cellar; if only she does not forget to give them food.

THE NEIGHBOR. Mistress Amalia! He who feeds the birds, forgets not the children! And now I will tell you something which ordinarily one does not mention. You see, from my wine-cellar there is a little hole into the Deemster's. This morning, when I was down there to air out, I heard voices. And when I looked in through the hole I saw Eric and Thyra playing with a strange little boy!

AMALIA. You saw them, Neighbor? And —

THE NEIGHBOR. They were merry and well —

AMALIA. But who was the playmate?

THE NEIGHBOR. Well, that I cannot imagine.

AMALIA. This whole terrible house is full of mysteries.

THE NEIGHBOR. That is true, but it is not for us to pry into them.

THE DEEMSTER [*Comes in with a rattle*]. So, Neighbor, you are here conspiring. Is it not enough that you put the starlings into my vineyard, with your evil eye. You have an evil eye, but we will soon prick that! I too can work witchery.

THE NEIGHBOR [*To Amalia*]. Is it worth while to enlighten him? He does not believe what one says.

AMALIA [*Going*]. We can do nothing here!

THE DEEMSTER. Amalia: Have you noticed where mother prowls about most when she thinks herself alone?

AMALIA. No, my father!

THE DEEMSTER. I saw by your eyes that you knew. You looked up here. [*He goes to a bureau, but runs into the rays of the sun.*] The damned sun that always burns. [*He goes and pulls down a shade and returns to the bureau.*] It must be here! — Let us see now! We must look in the most foolish places, for that would be most cunning; for example, here in the perfume basket! Quite right! [*He takes out money and papers of value.*] What is this? Twelve English bank-notes at one pound each. Twelve! — Ha, ha! One can surmise the rest. [*He places the papers in his pocket.*] But what do I hear out there! — It's the starlings again! [*He goes to the open window and shakes the rattle.*] Get out of there!

THE WIFE [*Comes in*]. What are you snooping around here for?

THE DEEMSTER. Aren't you in the kitchen?

THE WIFE. No, as you see! [*To Amalia.*]

Have you stopped scouring now?

AMALIA. No, mother, that will never end, for the silver won't brighten; it cannot be genuine.

THE WIFE. Not genuine! Let me see, then!
To be sure, the silver is black. [*To the
Deemster who has pulled down the second
window shade.*] Where did you get this
service?

THE DEEMSTER. That one? — Oh, that one I
got from the heirs of an estate.

THE WIFE. Because *you* were the administrator
of the estate. The gift came out of the
same net.

THE DEEMSTER. You must not use slanderous
expressions, they are punishable according to
law.

THE WIFE. Are you angry, or did I say any-
thing that was wrong?

THE DEEMSTER. It was silver, for that matter,
assayed silver.

THE WIFE. Then it is Amalia's fault!

A VOICE [*From window, outside*]. The Deem-
ster can turn white into black, but he cannot
turn black into white!

THE DEEMSTER. Who said that?

THE WIFE. I thought it was a starling talking!

THE DEEMSTER [*Pulling down the last window
shade*]. Now the sun is here. I thought it
was there just now.

THE WIFE [*To Amalia*]. Who was it that
spoke?

AMALIA. I think it was the strange schoolmaster
with the red scarf.

THE DEEMSTER. Ugh! Let us talk of some-
thing else!

A MAID [*Comes in*]. The dinner is served!
[*Goes out. Pause.*]

THE WIFE. Go down and eat, Amalia!

AMALIA [*Going out*]. Thanks, mother.

[*The Deemster sits in a chair beside a chest. The Wife moves toward the bureau where the perfume basket stands.*]

THE WIFE. Aren't you going to eat?

THE DEEMSTER. No, I am not hungry. —
Aren't you going?

THE WIFE. I have just eaten. [*Pause.*]

THE DEEMSTER [*Taking bread out of his pocket*]. Then you will pardon my eating.

THE WIFE. There is venison on the table!

THE DEEMSTER. No, what are you saying!

THE WIFE. You believe I would poison the food?

THE DEEMSTER. Yes, for it tasted of creosote this morning.

THE WIFE. What I ate tasted of metal —

THE DEEMSTER. If I now assure you that I did not put anything into your food —

THE WIFE. I would not believe you! And if I protest that —

THE DEEMSTER. I would not believe! [*Eating the bread.*] Venison steak is very good, its smell reaches even here, but bread is not bad!

[*Pause.*]

THE WIFE. Why do you sit there watching the chest?

THE DEEMSTER. For the same reason that you are watching your perfume basket.

THE WIFE. So, you have been there, house thief!

THE DEEMSTER. Corpse plunderer!

THE WIFE. Think, such words between us! Us!
[Weeps.]

THE DEEMSTER. Yes, the world is evil, and human beings are evil.

THE WIFE. Yes, you can well say that, and ungrateful above all things! Ungrateful children that rob one of rental, ungrateful grandchildren who steal the fruit from the trees; you are quite right; the world is evil —

THE DEEMSTER. I know that best, I who have seen all kinds of wretchedness; and have been compelled to give death sentences. But therefore the people hate me, as if I had written the law —

THE WIFE. What the people say means nothing if only one has a clean conscience — [*Three knocks are heard from inside the largest cupboard.*] What is that? Who is there?

THE DEEMSTER. It was the cupboard; and that always cracks when it's going to rain.

[*The three knocks are repeated but louder.*]

THE WIFE. It is some jugglery that that wandering fakir has conjured up.

[*The lid of the coffee-pot that Amalia was just scouring lifts up and shuts with a slam several times.*]

THE DEEMSTER. What is *that* then?

THE WIFE. Oh, it is that sorcerer practicing his tricks but he does not frighten me.

[*The pot lid slams again.*]

THE DEEMSTER. You believe he is one of those mesmerizers?

THE WIFE. Well, what they are really called —

THE DEEMSTER. No matter, but how can he know our secrets?

THE WIFE. Secrets? What do you mean?

[*The clock strikes innumerable times.*]

THE DEEMSTER. Now I am frightened!

THE WIFE. May the fiend take me if I stay here any longer! [*The sun cat falls on the portrait of the Wife.*] Do you see, he knows that secret too.

THE DEEMSTER. You mean because there is a portrait of her behind yours?

THE WIFE. Come out of here and we will go down to eat; and later we can talk over how we can sell the place and everything else at auction —

THE DEEMSTER. Yes, you are right, sell stock and block, clean house of the past and begin a new life! — Let us go and eat!

[*The Other appears in the doorway. The Deemster and the Wife are startled.*]

THE DEEMSTER. This is no ordinary mortal!

THE WIFE. Speak to him!

THE DEEMSTER [*To the Other*]. Who are you?

THE OTHER. I have told you twice; but that you do not believe me is one of your punishments, for if you believed it would shorten your sufferings.

THE DEEMSTER. It must be — he! For I am freezing into ice. How shall we be rid of

him? They say that unclean spirits cannot endure the sound of music. Play to him on the harp, Carolina.

[The Wife in fear sits at the table, takes the harp and plays a serious prelude in the minor.]

[The Other listens devoutly and is moved.]

THE WIFE *[To the Deemster]*. Has he gone?

THE OTHER. Thanks, my lady, for the music; it deadens the pain, and awakens memories of something better, even in one accursed. — Thanks, my lady! — Now, as far as the auction is concerned I believe you are doing entirely right, although it is my opinion that an honest bankruptcy would have been better — yes, cedera bonis and let each and every one have his returned to him.

THE DEEMSTER. Bankruptcy? I have no debts —

THE OTHER. No debts!

THE WIFE. My husband has no debts!

THE OTHER. No debts! Fortunate he who has no debts!

THE DEEMSTER. Yes, it is so! But others are in debt to me —

THE OTHER. Pardon them then!

THE DEEMSTER. This is not a matter of pardon but of payment —

THE OTHER. Good! Then you shall be made to pay! — Farewell for now. We shall meet often hereafter, at the latest at the great auction! *[Starts out backward.]*

THE DEEMSTER. He is afraid of the sun, he too!
Ha, ha!

THE OTHER. For a time yet, yes. But when
once I am used to the light, I shall hate darkness!
[Goes.]

THE WIFE [*To the Deemster*]. Do you believe
that it is — the Other?

THE DEEMSTER. That is not the common conception of him; times change and we change with them. Formerly it was said that he gave out gold and honors, but this one comes and demands —

THE WIFE. He is a good-for-nothing and a charlatan, that is the whole matter; a dog who dares not bite although he is eager to do so!

THE OTHER [*In the doorway*]. Beware of me!
Take care.

THE DEEMSTER [*Lifting his right hand*]. Take care of yourself!

THE OTHER [*Lifts his arm and pretends to shoot a pistol with his hand*]. Infamy!

THE DEEMSTER [*Stands as if petrified in the act of lifting his hand*]. O woe!

THE OTHER. You have never believed in goodness; now you shall be made to believe in the Evil One! You see the All Good One cannot do evil, therefore he assigns it to such wretches as myself. But for surer results you two shall torture each other and yourselves!

THE WIFE [*On her knees before the Other*]. Spare us! Help us! Mercy!

THE OTHER [*As if tearing his clothes*]. Rise, woman! Woe unto me! There is only One you may pray to! Rise, or — well, now you believe, although I have not a red cloak and sword and money bag and do not say facetious things; but beware of taking me lightly; I am as serious as sin and as stern as retribution! I have not come to tempt you with gold and honors, but to discipline with rod and scorpions — [*The clock strikes again, it grows dark.*] Your days are hastening to an end, therefore set your house in order, for you must die! [*A rumble is heard, as of a storm.*] Whose voice is speaking now? Name it, and scare it with your rattle when it blows forth over your vineyard. Storm and hail, he is called, and he carries devastation under his wings and punishment in his claws. Put on your caul of triumph now and clothe yourself in your good conscience —

[*The hailstorm is heard pelting down.*]

THE DEEMSTER. Mercy!

THE OTHER. Yes, if you promise repentance!

THE DEEMSTER. I promise and swear —

THE OTHER. You cannot swear, for you have already sworn yourself away! But first of all promise to liberate the children — and later, all the other things.

THE DEEMSTER. I promise that the children shall be here before sundown!

THE OTHER. That is the first step forward

then, but if you turn back, then you shall see
that I do justice to my name, for I am called:
Legio!

*[Lifts the rod, whereat the Deemster is
loosened from his tetanus.]*

CURTAIN.

ACT III

A wine cellar with barrels in a row to right, another row to the left. An iron door at back. The barrels have different markings; on the first near foreground are small trays attached over the faucets and on these stand glasses. To right in the foreground is a wine press and a couple of cane chairs.

Bottles, funnels, syphons, baskets, etc., here and there.

[Eric and Thyra are sitting near the wine press.]

ERIC. I think this is tiresome.

THYRA. And just because grandmother is ugly.

ERIC. One must not speak like that!

THYRA. No, that may be, but she *is* ugly.

ERIC. You must not speak like that, Thyra; for then the little boy will not come to play with us again.

THYRA. Then I won't speak like that any more. If only it were not so dark.

ERIC. Don't you remember, Thyra, the boy said we must not complain —

THYRA. Then I won't do so any more — [*The sun cat appears on the floor.*] Oh, look, the sun cat! [*She springs up and stands on the sun cat.*]

ERIC. You mustn't trample on the sun, Thyra, that is wicked!

THYRA. No, I am not trampling on it purposely. I only want to have it with me; look, now I have it in my arms, and now I pat it — But see, it is kissing me on my mouth.

[The Playmate comes from behind a wine cask; he is dressed in a white blouse that reaches below his knees and a blue belt around his waist; sandals on his feet; he is blond, and when he comes in the cellar lights up.]

ERIC *[Goes to meet him]*. Good day to you, little boy. Come and greet him, Thyra! What is your name, boy, to-day you must tell us!

[The Playmate looks at him.]

THYRA. Eric, you must not be so forward, for then the boy will become bashful. — But who is your father, little boy?

THE PLAYMATE. You must not be so curious! When you have learned to know me better you shall know all that. — But now we must play something.

THYRA. Yes, but not anything useful, for that is so tiresome. It must just be beautiful.

THE PLAYMATE *[Smiles]*. Shall I tell a story?

THYRA. Yes, but not from the Biblical History, for that we know by heart.

[The Playmate smiles.]

ERIC. You say things, Thyra, that grieve the boy —

THE PLAYMATE. No, little friends, I won't be grieved — But now if you are real good we will go out into the open and play —

ERIC. Oh yes, oh yes! But come to think of it, we are not allowed to on account of grandmother —

THE PLAYMATE. Yes, grandmother has said that she would rather see you free, and therefore we had better go before she changes her mind. Come then!

THYRA. Oh, what fun! Oh —

[The door at back opens; outside one sees a yellow rye field lighted up by the sun, with daisies and marigolds.]

THE PLAYMATE. Come, children! Out into the sunshine to rejoice at life!

THYRA. Can we take the cat with us; it's a pity to have him stay here in the darkness?

THE PLAYMATE. Yes, if he would like to follow you! Call him!

[Eric and Thyra go toward the door, the sun cat follows them on the floor.]

ERIC. But see how nice he is! *[Prattles to the sun cat.]* Nice little pussy cat, kitty cat!

THE PLAYMATE. Take him in your arms now, Thyra, for otherwise he won't be able to get over the threshold.

[The sun cat appears on Thyra's shoulder; they all go out; the door closes of itself. Pause. The Deemster comes in with a lantern. The Wife follows with the rod.]

THE WIFE. It is beautifully cool here, and then one is not tortured by the sun.

THE DEEMSTER. And it's quiet also. But where are the youngsters? [*They look for the children.*] I believe they have taken us at our word.

THE WIFE. Us? Mark you, I promised nothing, for he — you know — spoke only to you toward the end.

THE DEEMSTER. That may be, but this time we must obey, for I don't want any more mischief with hailstorms and the like. — However, the children are not here, but they will come back when they get hungry.

THE WIFE. And I'll give them a warm reception! [*The rod is pulled from her hand and is seen dancing away behind a cask.*] Now witchery is afoot again.

THE DEEMSTER. Well, but yield then, and do as he — you know — says. For my part I dare not do anything unjust any more. The wine in the fields is ruined and one must be grateful for what is safely under cover. Come here, Carolina, and we will strengthen ourselves a little with a glass of something good! [*He knocks on a cask and draws a glass.*] This is from the year of the comet, anno 1869, when the great comet came and they said that it foreboded war. And the war came too.

[*He offers the Wife a filled glass.*]

THE WIFE. You drink first!

THE DEEMSTER. Come now, do you believe that there is poison in this too?

THE WIFE. I didn't really think that — but, we will never have any more peace nor happiness.

THE DEEMSTER. Do as I do: compromise.

[*Drinks.*]

THE WIFE. I want to and I am trying, too, but when I think how others have ill-treated us, then I feel that I am about as good as the others. [*Drinks.*] That is really a fine wine!

[*She sits.*]

THE DEEMSTER. The wine is good and lightens the spirit. — Yes, the sage say that we are equally good cabbage heads and so I can't understand why one should censure another. [*Drinks.*] For my part, I have always acted honestly, that is to say, within valid laws and statutes; if others have been ignorant of the law, then it is their fault, for no one should be ignorant of the law! That is to say, if Adolph does not pay his rent, it is he who has broken the law and not I.

THE WIFE. And you get the blame just the same, and go about like a criminal; but it is as I say: There is no justice in the world. If you had done the right thing, you would have proceeded against Adolph and ejected his family, but it is not too late yet —

[*Drinks.*]

THE DEEMSTER. Yes, you see, if I wished to take the strict legal course, I should advocate

a dissolution of his marriage, and then he would be disinherited —

THE WIFE. Well, do it then!

THE DEEMSTER [*Looks about*]. Ye-es! — That would be radical procedure! The divorce might not be granted, but one could get the marriage declared void on the grounds of a flaw —

THE WIFE. But if there is no flaw?

THE DEEMSTER [*Somewhat affected by the wine*]. There is always a technical flaw if only one looks for it.

THE WIFE. Well, then, think of that good-for-nothing who is wishing the life out of us, but now he shall feel nature's law — how it drives drones out on the highway —

THE DEEMSTER. Ha, ha! You are quite right, quite right! And, do you know, when I reflect carefully about it all, for what can we reproach ourselves, what wrong have we done? As for the monstrance, that is too trivial to talk about and it has not harmed any one, and that I should ever have committed perjury, that is simply a lie. I had a felon on my finger, that's all there was to that, and perfectly natural.

THE WIFE. Who knows that better than I — and I want to add that all that about the hailstorm was as natural as if it was down in the almanac!

THE DEEMSTER. Yes, there you are! That is my opinion too. And therefore, Carolina, we

had better forget all that nonsense, and if you feel as I do we will call in another priest and have the mausoleum consecrated.

THE WIFE. Why shouldn't we do that?

THE DEEMSTER. Why shouldn't we do that? Perhaps because that mesmerizer goes about working his tricks.

THE WIFE. Tell me, do you believe that he is just a mesmerizer?

THE DEEMSTER [*Boastfully*]. He! He is a charlatan of the first rank. A char-la-tan.

THE WIFE [*Looking around*]. I am not so sure, I.

THE DEEMSTER. But I am sure, certain! And if he appeared before my eyes once more, now, for instance, I should drink to him, saying, "Here's to you, old joker!" [*His uplifted glass is wrenched from his hand and soars out through the wings.*] What was that?

[*The lantern goes out.*]

THE WIFE. Help us!

[*A blast of wind is heard after which all is silent again.*]

THE DEEMSTER. Just go and get some matches and I will clear this up, for from now I fear nothing. Nothing!

THE WIFE [*Going*]. Well, well, if you get out of this with your life, then —

THE DEEMSTER. Silence! You! Silence!

THE OTHER [*Comes forward from behind a cask*]. Now, we'll have a talk in private.

THE DEEMSTER [*Frightened*]. Where do you come from?

THE OTHER. That does not concern you.

THE DEEMSTER [*Straightening up*]. What kind of talk is that?

THE OTHER. Your kind! — Off with your cap! [*He blows at the Deemster, whose cap is lifted and falls on the floor.*] Listen now to what judgment pronounces: You have wished to part those whom He, whose name I may not speak, has joined. Now shall you be parted from the prop of your declining years and alone shall you run your gauntlet; alone shall you suffer the anguish of sleepless nights.

THE DEEMSTER. Is that mercy?

THE OTHER. That is justice, that is law: an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth! The gospel has a different sound, but that you do not care to hear! Up and run now!

[*He strikes in the air with his rod.*]

The scene is changed to an orchard with cypresses and clipped yew trees in the form of obelisks, candelabra, vases, etc., under which are roses, hollyhocks and digitalis. In the middle, a well, over which hangs a large fuchsia ("Christ's blood-drops") in flower. At back a yellow rye field in spike with marigold and daisies; in the middle a scarecrow; in the far distance a hill planted with vines, and cliffs of light yellow slate with beech trees

and ruins of castles. The highway crosses at back; to right an arcade in Gothic style. Before it a Madonna and Child. Eric and Thyra come in leading the Playmate by the hand.

ERIC. Oh, how beautiful, oh!

THYRA. Who lives here?

THE PLAYMATE. It is the home of whoever thrives here.

THYRA. May we run and play here then?

THE PLAYMATE. Anywhere except in that alley to the right.

ERIC. And may we pick flowers too?

THE PLAYMATE. You may pick any of the flowers, but don't touch the tree by the well, little friends!

THYRA. What kind of tree is it?

ERIC. I know, it's [*Lowers his voice*] Christ's drops of blood!

THYRA. Eric, you should cross yourself when you speak God's name.

ERIC [*Crosses himself*]. Tell us, little boy, why may we not touch that tree?

THYRA. Eric, you must not be inquisitive but just obey!—But tell us, little boy, why should that ugly scarecrow be there; can't we take it away?

THE PLAYMATE. Yes, take it away for then the birds will come and sing to us!

[Eric and Thyra hasten to the back and pull down the scarecrow.]

ERIC. Away with you, ugly scarecrow! Come, little birds, and eat now. [*A golden bird comes in from right and alights in the fuchsia.*] Oh, see the golden bird, look, Thyra!

THYRA. Oh, how beautiful it is! Can it sing too? [*The golden bird cries like a cuckoo.*]

ERIC. Little boy, can you understand what the bird is singing?

THE PLAYMATE. No, child, that is the birds' little secret and they have the right to keep it to themselves.

THYRA. Of course, don't you see, Eric, otherwise the children would go and tell where their nests are and then they would go and take their eggs, and then the bird would become sad and could not have any more little ones!

ERIC. You are so knowing, Thyra!

THE PLAYMATE [*Puts a finger to his mouth*]. Sh! Some one is coming! Let us see now if he thrives with us or not.

[*The Chimney-sweep boy comes in, stops astonished and looks about.*]

THE PLAYMATE. Well, boy. Don't you want to play with us?

THE CHIMNEY - SWEEP BOY [*Pulls off his cap, surprised*]. You don't want to play with me, do you?

THE PLAYMATE. Why not?

THE CHIMNEY - SWEEP BOY. But I am so sooty, and for that matter, I can't play. I don't know how.

THYRA. Think of it, the poor boy has never played.

THE PLAYMATE. What is your name?

THE CHIMNEY - SWEEP BOY. My name? They call me Olle — but —

THE PLAYMATE. What else?

THE CHIMNEY - SWEEP BOY. What else? Nothing else.

THE PLAYMATE. But your father?

THE CHIMNEY - SWEEP BOY. I haven't any.

THE PLAYMATE. Your mother then?

THE CHIMNEY - SWEEP BOY. That I don't know.

THE PLAYMATE. He has no father or mother.

Come here, my boy, to the well, and you shall be as white as a prince.

THE CHIMNEY - SWEEP BOY. If any one else said that I should not believe it —

THE PLAYMATE. How can you believe me then?

THE CHIMNEY - SWEEP BOY. Oh, I don't know, but it seems to me that you look as if it were true.

THE PLAYMATE. Thyra, give the boy your hand! — Will you give him a kiss too?

THYRA [*Hesitates first, then*]. Yes, when you ask me!

[*Kisses the Chimney-sweep boy; the Playmate dips his hand into the well and sprinkles the boy's face, his black mask falls imperceptibly.*]

THE PLAYMATE. See, now you are white; go now behind that rosebush, and you shall have new clothes!

THE CHIMNEY - SWEEP BOY. Why am I given all this, which I have not earned?

THE PLAYMATE. Because you believe that you have not earned it.

THE CHIMNEY - SWEEP BOY [*Going behind the rosebush*]. Then I thank you although I do not understand the meaning of all this.

THYRA. Has the boy been bad that he had to become a chimney-sweep?

THE PLAYMATE. No, he has not been bad; but he had a wicked guardian, who took all his money from him and then he had to go out into the world and support himself. — See, how fine he looks now!

[*The Chimney-sweep boy approaches in a light summer costume.*]

THE PLAYMATE [*To the Chimney-sweep boy*]. Now go into that arcade and you will meet some one who is dear to you — some one who cares for you.

THE CHIMNEY - SWEEP BOY. Who can care for me?

THE PLAYMATE. Go and see!

[*The Chimney-sweep boy goes toward the arcade and is met by a lady in white, who takes him in her arms.*]

THYRA. Who lives in there?

THE PLAYMATE [*With his finger at his lips*]. Inquisitive! — But who is that coming over there?

[*The Wife is seen coming along the high-*

way with a bundle on her back and a staff in her hand.]

ERIC. It is grandmother! Oh, now we are in trouble!

THYRA. O woe! It is grandmother!

THE PLAYMATE. Quiet yourself, children! I will take the blame on myself.

THYRA. No, you must not, for then she would whip you.

THE PLAYMATE. Well, may I not take a whipping for the sake of my friends?

ERIC. No! I want to.

THYRA. And I too.

THE PLAYMATE. Silence. And come behind here, and you will escape blame!

[They hide themselves.]

THE WIFE *[Comes forward to the well]*. Oh, here is the famous well that is said to cure everything, after the angel has stirred it of course! — But it cannot be anything but a lie! Well, one can at least quench one's thirst, and water is water! *[She leans over the well.]* But what do I see! — Eric and Thyra with a strange boy! What can this mean? For they are not here. It must be a magic well. *[She takes the cup which she fills and drinks.]* Fie, it tastes of copper — think, he has been here and poisoned the water too! Everything is poisoned! Everything! Everything! — I am tired although the years have not taken hold of me otherwise — *[She looks at herself in the reflection and*

prinks.] I really look quite young — but it is hard to walk, and even harder to rise — [*She tries in vain to get to her feet.*] My God, my God, have mercy, or I shall have to lie here —

[*The Playmate motions the children to keep quiet; he goes forward and wipes the perspiration from the Wife's forehead.*]

THE PLAYMATE. Arise, and sin no more.

THE WIFE [*Rising*] Who is this? — Indeed, it's my fine fellow who tempts my children into wrong roads!

THE PLAYMATE. Go, ungrateful woman! I wipe the sweat of anguish from your brow and raise you when you have fallen, and you reward me with blame. Go, go!

[*The Wife looks at him astonished; then her eyes drop, she turns away and goes out. Eric and Thyra come forward.*]

ERIC. But grandmother is to be pitied nevertheless, although she is ugly.

THYRA. This isn't nice, and I want to go home.

THE PLAYMATE. Wait a little! Don't be impatient! — Look, there comes another acquaintance.

[*The Deemster is seen in the road.*]

THE PLAYMATE. He must not come here to make the well unclean. [*He waves his hand: the sun cat falls on the Deemster who turns and goes out.*] It is beautiful that you pity

the old people, children, but you must believe that I am doing what is right. Do you believe that?

ERIC AND THYRA. Yes, we believe, we believe!

THYRA. But I want to go home to mother.

THE PLAYMATE. You shall go. [*The Other is seen at back and disappears behind the bushes.*] For now I must go; the Angelus will soon be ringing —

ERIC. Where are you going then, boy?

THE PLAYMATE. I have other children to play with, far away where you cannot follow. But when I leave you here now, you must not forget that I told you not to touch the tree.

ERIC. We will obey! We will! But don't go away, it will be dark soon.

THE PLAYMATE. Well! He who has a clean conscience and can repeat his evening prayer has nothing, nothing to be afraid of.

THYRA. When will you come to us again, boy?

THE PLAYMATE. I will come again at Christmas, and every Christmas! — Good night, little friends!

[*He kisses their foreheads and goes toward back through the bushes; when he becomes visible again at back he carries a little cross with a banner, which resembles the banner the Christ child is usually pictured with when he stands beside the lamb. The An-*

gelus rings. He now lifts the banner, waving to the children, and he is surrounded by a strong white light, and goes out.]

[Eric and Thyra fall on their knees; they make a silent prayer while the ringing continues.]

ERIC *[Crossing himself]*. Do you know, Thyra, who that boy was?

THYRA. It was Our Saviour! *[The Other comes forward. Thyra frightened; flies into Eric's protecting arms.]* Ugh!

ERIC *[To the Other]*. What do you want of us? You horrid man!

THE OTHER. I only wished — Look at me!

ERIC. Yes.

THE OTHER. I look like this because I once touched the tree; after that it was my desire to lure others into doing the same thing. But now since I am old I have repented, and now I go about among the people and warn them, but now no one will believe me, no one, because at one time I lied.

ERIC. You need not warn us, for us you cannot allure anyway.

THE OTHER. Tut-tut-tut, not so confident, little friend! Otherwise all is well.

ERIC. Go your way then, for I don't even wish to listen to you! And besides, you are frightening my sister.

THE OTHER. I will go, for here I do not thrive, and I have work to do elsewhere. Farewell, children!

AMALIA'S VOICE [*From right*]. Eric and Thyra!

ERIC AND THYRA. Oh, it is mother! little mother!

[*Amalia comes in.*]

[*Eric and Thyra run into her arms.*]

THE OTHER [*Moved, turns away*].

CURTAIN.

ACT IV

*The cross-roads in a spruce forest. Moonlight.
[The Witch stands waiting.]*

THE WIFE. At last! There you are!

THE WITCH. You have kept me waiting; why have you called for me?

THE WIFE. Help me!

THE WITCH. How?

THE WIFE. Against my enemies.

THE WITCH. There is only one thing that can help you against your enemies: do well by them.

THE WIFE. Do you know, I believe the world has turned upside down.

THE WITCH. Yes, so it seems.

THE WIFE. Even the Other — you know — has been converted.

THE WITCH. Well then, perhaps it is about time you did likewise.

THE WIFE. About time? you mean that my years should urge me. But it is not more than three weeks since I danced at a wedding.

THE WITCH. And that is happiness to you. If that is all, you shall have your fill of it, for there is going to be a ball here to-night, but I cannot take part.

THE WIFE. Here?

THE WITCH. Right here; it begins at my bidding.

THE WIFE. It's too bad that I have not my low-necked dress with me.

THE WITCH. You can borrow one from me and dancing slippers with red heels.

THE WIFE. Perhaps there are gloves and a fan to be had too?

THE WITCH. Everything! And especially many young cavaliers who will declare you the queen of the ball.

THE WIFE. Now you are jesting with me!

THE WITCH. No, I am not jesting; and I know that at these balls they have the taste to choose the right queen — by the right one I mean the most worthy —

THE WIFE. The most beautiful, you mean —

THE WITCH. No, I do not mean that, but the worthiest. If you wish it I will give the signal and start the ball immediately?

THE WIFE. Gladly, for my part.

THE WITCH. Then step aside a little, and you will meet your lady's maid, while the ball-room is put in order.

THE WIFE [*Going out right*]. To think I am to have a lady's maid too — do you know, that was the dream of my youth, which was never fulfilled.

THE WITCH. You see, "what one wishes for in youth, comes to one with old age."

[*She blows on a pipe.*]

.

The scene is changed to the bottom of a valley basin; the back and sides are steep black rocks lacking any vegetation. To left in the foreground stands the throne of the queen of the ball. To right the platform for the musicians. In the middle of the scene stands a statue of Pan, surrounded by potted plants: henbane, burdock, thistles, red onion, etc. The musicians come in; dressed in gray, with chalk-white sorrowful faces and weary movements; they seem to be tuning their instruments, which give no sound. The conductor of the orchestra comes in followed by the guests of the ball composed of cripples, beggars, and thieves; all are pulling on black gloves. Slow movements, funereal faces.

The Other

The Master of Ceremonies

} *Same person:*

a seventy year old dandy with black wig which is too small so that his gray hair is seen underneath; waxed mustache, a monocle; and outgrown frock suit, high boots. He is gloomy and is seen to suffer from his rôle.

The Seven Deadly Sins come in and stand around the throne.

Gluttony

Covetousness

Pride

Murder

Lust

Envy

Idleness

The Prince comes in; hunchbacked, soiled velvet jacket with shiny buttons, sword, lace collar, boots with spurs.

The whole following scene is played in an unswerving gloomy earnestness, without a touch of irony, satire or humor; all the faces have a suggestion of the deathmask, the figures move noiselessly and make self-conscious gestures as if they had been taught.

THE PRINCE [*To the Master of Ceremonies*].
Why do you disturb my peace at this midnight hour?

THE MASTER OF CEREMONIES. You are always asking why, brother. Has not the light dawned for you yet?

THE PRINCE. Only half way; I see a connection between my suffering and my guilt, but I cannot understand why I must suffer eternally, when He has suffered for me.

THE MASTER OF CEREMONIES. Eternally? You died yesterday; time ceased for you and therefore a few hours seem to you eternal.

THE PRINCE. Yesterday?

THE MASTER OF CEREMONIES. Yes! — but as you were proud and did not want any help in your suffering you must drag along with it yourself now.

THE PRINCE. What have I really done?

THE MASTER OF CEREMONIES. Sublime question!

THE PRINCE. Well, tell me!

THE MASTER OF CEREMONIES. As it is our duty to torture each other with the truth — you know in life we were champions of truth, so

called — I will tell you part of your secret.

You were always and still are a hunchback —

THE PRINCE. What is that?

THE MASTER OF CEREMONIES. You see! You do not know what all the others knew. But all the others pitied you, and therefore you were never allowed to hear the word which is the name of your deformity —

THE PRINCE. What deformity? Perhaps you mean that I have “poor lungs,” but that is not a deformity.

THE MASTER OF CEREMONIES. “Poor lungs;” yes, that is your name for it. However: people concealed your physical defect, and they sought to lessen your misfortune through mercy and friendship but you took their kindness as a due tribute, their encouraging words as admiration for your physical superiority, and finally you went so far in your self-love that you looked upon yourself as the perfection of manly beauty; when finally woman gave you her favor out of compassion, you thought yourself an irresistible conqueror.

THE PRINCE. By what right do you stand here repeating these brutal incivilities to me?

THE MASTER OF CEREMONIES. By what right? I am fulfilling the sad duty of one wicked being punishing another; and you will soon have to fulfill the same cruel duty to an almost insanely vain woman, who resembles you as closely as possible.

THE PRINCE. I will not!

THE MASTER OF CEREMONIES. Try to do otherwise than you must, and you will experience a disquiet of mind which you will not be able to understand.

THE PRINCE. What do you mean?

THE MASTER OF CEREMONIES. I mean that you cannot change from what you are immediately; and you are what you wished to be.

[Claps his hands.]

[The Wife comes in, the same aged and ungainly figure, but with painted face and in a powdered rococo wig; dressed in an old-fashioned rose-red gown, red slippers, a fan made of peacock feathers.]

THE WIFE [*A little uncertain*]. Where am I? Have I gone the right way?

THE MASTER OF CEREMONIES. You have indeed, and you are in the waiting room, as we call it. It is called that, because [*Sighs*] we spend our time here in waiting — in waiting for something that must come sometime —

THE WIFE. Well, everything is quite neat — and there is the music — and there is a statue — who is it of?

THE MASTER OF CEREMONIES. That is a heathen god, called Pan, because he constituted the ancients' all in one; and as we are rather ancient here, or more or less old-fashioned, we have him here to look on!

THE WIFE. We are not old —

THE MASTER OF CEREMONIES. Yes, my queen;

when the new age dawned [*Sighs*] we were unable to keep up, and fell behind —

THE WIFE. The new age — What sort of talk is that — when did the new age begin? —

THE MASTER OF CEREMONIES. It is easily calculated when the year *one* began — It was one night, for that matter, that was starlit, and it must have been mild as the shepherds were out —

THE WIFE. So, so, so — Isn't there a ball here to-night?

THE MASTER OF CEREMONIES. Yes, of course there is. The Prince is only waiting to ask for the honor.

THE WIFE [*To the Master of Ceremonies*]. Is he a real prince?

THE MASTER OF CEREMONIES. A real prince, my queen, that is to say, he has complete reality in a certain way —

THE WIFE [*To the Prince who is inviting her to dance*]. You do not seem happy, my prince.

THE PRINCE. No, I am not happy.

THE WIFE. I cannot say that it is very jolly here either — and then it smells of putty, as if the glass man had just been here. What is this peculiar smell of linseed oil?

THE PRINCE [*Horried*]. What is she saying? Does she mean a coffin smell?

THE WIFE. I must have said something impolite, but it is not for the lady to pay compliments, that is the cavalier's affair —

THE PRINCE. What shall I say that you do not already know?

THE WIFE. That I do not already know? Let me think — No, then it is better that I tell you that you are beautiful, my prince —

THE PRINCE. Now you are exaggerating, my queen; beautiful I am not, but I have always been considered good looking —

THE WIFE. Just like myself — a beauty I was not — I mean I *am* not, but for my years — How foolish I am; what was it I wanted to say?

THE MASTER OF CEREMONIES. Strike up, music! [*The musicians are seen playing but no sound is heard.*] Well, aren't you going to dance?

THE PRINCE [*Sadly*]. No, I am not in the mood for dancing!

THE MASTER OF CEREMONIES. But you must; you are the only presentable cavalier.

THE PRINCE. That is quite true — [*Thoughtfully*] but is it the occupation for me?

THE MASTER OF CEREMONIES. How so?

THE PRINCE. I seem to have something else I should be thinking of, but then, then I forget it.

THE MASTER OF CEREMONIES. Don't worry — enjoy while yet you have youth, and life's joy blows roses on your cheek.. So! a straight back and nimble feet —

[*The Prince smiles broadly; offers his hand to the Wife; they dance a few minuet steps contra.*]

THE WIFE [*Breaking off the dance*]. Huh!
His hands are as cold as ice! [*Goes toward
the throne.*] Why aren't the seven ladies
over there dancing?

THE MASTER OF CEREMONIES. What did the
queen think of the music?

THE WIFE. Oh, it was superb, but they might
have played a little more forte —

THE MASTER OF CEREMONIES. Yes, they are all
soloists and formerly they would drown each
other's tones, therefore they must moderate
themselves now —

THE WIFE. But I asked why the seven sisters
do not care to dance. Cannot you favor
them, Master of Ceremonies?

THE MASTER OF CEREMONIES. No, that would
not do any good, for they are as stubborn
as sin — But will not your Highness take
the throne? We have a little play to perform
in honor of the day —

THE WIFE. Oh, how splendid! But the Prince
must be my escort —

THE PRINCE [*To the Master of Ceremonies*].
Must I do so?

THE WIFE. Oh shame, you hunchback!

THE PRINCE [*Spits in her face*]. Take care,
you old she-devil!

THE WIFE [*Slapping the Prince's face*].
There's for that!

THE PRINCE [*Flies at her and knocks her
down*]. And here's for you!

[*All present cover their faces with their
hands.*]

THE PRINCE [*Tears off the Wife's wig showing her bald head*]. Here is her false scalp; now we shall take out the teeth!

THE MASTER OF CEREMONIES. Enough! Enough!

[*He helps the Wife to her feet and puts a scarf over her head.*]

THE WIFE [*Weepingly*]. O woe! That I have allowed myself to be duped like this, this; I must confess that I deserve nothing better.

THE PRINCE. No, you deserve something much worse; but you should not have touched upon my hump for then the devil is loosed — It is deplorable to see an old woman so vain and so degraded; you are to be pitied, as we are all to be pitied.

ALL. We are all to be pitied.

THE PRINCE [*Scornfully*]. The queen!

THE WIFE [*The same*]. The Prince! — But have we not seen each other before?

THE PRINCE. Yes, perhaps; in our youth, for even I am old. You were so decked out just now, but now when we see each other undisguised — certain features begin to come out —

THE WIFE. Say no more — say no more — O, what have I come to — What is happening to me?

THE PRINCE. Now I know; you are my sister!

THE WIFE. But — my brother is dead. How

they have lied to me! Or do the dead come back?

THE PRINCE. Everything comes back.

THE WIFE. Am I dead then, or am I alive?

THE PRINCE. You may well ask that, for I know no difference. But you are quite as you were when I left you at one time: just as vain and just as thievish.

THE WIFE. Does it seem to you that you are any better?

THE PRINCE. Perhaps! I possess the seven deadly sins but you have discovered the eighth — to rob the dead.

THE WIFE. What is it now then?

THE PRINCE. I sent you money, twelve years in succession, to buy a wreath for our mother's grave; you kept the money and never bought a wreath.

THE WIFE. How do you know that?

THE PRINCE. How I know it, that is the only interest you can find in your crime!

THE WIFE. Prove it.

THE PRINCE [*Taking out paper money from his pocket*]. Here is the money!

[*The Wife falls to the ground. A church bell rings; all bow their heads on their breasts, but no one kneels.*]

THE WHITE LADY [*Comes in; goes forward to the Wife and raises her to her feet*]. Do you know me?

THE WIFE. No.

THE WHITE LADY. I am Amalia's mother,

You stole my memory from her. You have obliterated me from her life, but now you shall be stricken out and I shall regain my child's love and the prayers that I need.

THE WIFE. So, they have been tattling to that minx; then I shall put her to tend the swine —

[The Prince strikes her on the mouth.]

THE WHITE LADY. Do not strike her!

THE WIFE. You beg mercy for me?

THE WHITE LADY. Yes, so I have been taught.

THE WIFE. Hypocrite, if you only dared you would wish me as far under the earth as the earth is distant from the sun!

THE MASTER OF CEREMONIES *[Touches the Wife with his staff; she falls to the ground]*.
Down! Damned bitch!

[The scene changes with the curtain raised; the statue of Pan sinks through the ground. The musicians and the throne as well as the Seven Deadly Sins are hidden by lowered decorations and disappear. Finally the cross-roads in the wood are replaced, and the Wife is seen lying by the sign post. The Witch stands by her side.]

THE WITCH. Get up!

THE WIFE. I cannot, I am frozen stiff —

THE WITCH. The sun will soon rise, the cock has crowed, and morning prayer is just ringing in.

THE WIFE. I do not care about the sun.

THE WITCH. Then you will have to wander in the darkness.

THE WIFE. Woe! my eyes; what have you done?

THE WITCH. I only put out the light as it tortures you. Up and go now; in cold and darkness, until you drop.

THE WIFE. Where is my husband? — Amalia! Eric and Thyra! My children!

THE WITCH. Where are they? Where they are. You shall not see them again until your journey is ended. So, up and away! Or I will loose my dogs!

[*The Wife gropes her way and goes.*]

A courtroom. At back the chairman's tribune in white and gold bearing the emblems of justice. In the middle of the room in front of the tribune is the judge's table with writing materials, a Bible, a bell, and a mallet. On the wall at back hangs the executioner's broad axe; underneath handcuffs; above is a large black crucifix.

The Deemster comes in; comes forward stealthily. The bell is lifted and rings; the mallet strikes once. The chairs are pushed against the table in unison; the Bible is opened; the tallow candles light up.

The Deemster stands terrified; then he ap-

proaches the cupboard. The cupboard door opens; documents are thrown out against the Deemster, who picks them up.

THE DEEMSTER [*More tranquil*]. Well, I was lucky! Here are the bills of guardianship; there is the land lease and the inventory — Yes! [*The handcuffs on the wall rattle.*] Rattle on, you! As long as the broad axe does not move I am not afraid! [*He places the papers on the judge's table and returns to close the cupboard door. The door however continues to open with a bang.*] There is a reason for everything; ratio sufficiens. This cupboard door has a spring that I am not familiar with, and because I don't know about it I am astonished, but I have no fear. [*The broad axe moves on the wall.*] The broad axe moves; that has always foreboded a beheading, but to-day it only means that it has been displaced from its balance. No, whenever I see my ghost, then I will begin to take heed, for that cannot that charlatan conjure up.

[The Ghost comes from behind the cupboard; he is just like the Deemster but has eyes without pupils, and white as a plaster statue.]

THE DEEMSTER [*Frightened*]. Who are you?

THE GHOST. I am not, I was. I was the unrighteous judge, who has come here to receive my sentence.

THE DEEMSTER. What have you done then, poor man?

THE GHOST. All the evil that an unjust judge can do — Pray for me, you who have a clean conscience —

THE DEEMSTER. Shall I — pray for you?

THE GHOST. Yes, you who have not shed innocent blood —

THE DEEMSTER. That is true, that I have really never done, for that matter, I have always followed the letter of the law so that I can with reason accept the title of the righteous judge — Yes, indeed, without irony!

THE GHOST. This moment would be ill-chosen for jesting, when the unseen are sitting in judgment —

THE DEEMSTER. What do you mean? Who are sitting in judgment?

THE GHOST [*Pointing to the judge's table*]. You see them not; but I see them. [*The table bell rings. A chair is pushed away from the table.*] Pray for me!

THE DEEMSTER. I do not wish to, and justice must take its course. You must be a great criminal who has come into consciousness of his guilt too late.

THE GHOST. You are severe, as is the good conscience.

THE DEEMSTER. You said it! Severe but just!

THE GHOST. No charity?

THE DEEMSTER. None!

THE GHOST. No mercy?

THE DEEMSTER. No mercy!

[The mallet strikes; the chairs are pushed from the table.]

THE GHOST. Now judgment falls! Don't you hear?

THE DEEMSTER. I hear nothing!

THE GHOST *[Pointing to table]*. And see nothing? See you not the beheaded sailor, the land surveyor, the chimney-sweep boy, the white lady, the tenant —

THE DEEMSTER. No, I see absolutely nothing.

THE GHOST. Then woe unto you when once your eyes are opened as mine are! Now sentence is pronounced: guilty!

[The candles on the table go out.]

THE DEEMSTER. Guilty!

THE GHOST. You yourself pronounced it! And you are already sentenced! Now nothing remains but the great auction.

ACT V

Same room as in first scene of second act. It is arranged for the auction with benches in the middle of the room. On the auctioneer's table stands the silver service, the clock, vases, candlesticks, etc. The Deemster's and the Wife's portraits are taken down and stand against the table.

The Neighbor and Amalia.

AMALIA [*In a work dress*]. Before mother went away she ordered me to scrub the hall and stairs; but now it is winter and cold, and I cannot say that I have carried out the order with pleasure —

THE NEIGHBOR. So you haven't had pleasure out of it; do you know, my child, that you take rather heavy responsibilities on yourself. But as you have obeyed and endured the test the time of your trials is at an end, and I will tell you your life secret.

AMALIA. Speak, Neighbor, for I cannot depend on my good will any longer.

THE NEIGHBOR. Very well! This woman you call mother is your step-mother! Your father married her when you were one year old. The reason you never saw your mother is due to her death when you were born,

AMALIA. It is true then! — Think how strange to have had a mother but never to have seen her! Tell me, did you ever see her?

THE NEIGHBOR. I knew her!

AMALIA. How did she look!

THE NEIGHBOR. Yes, how did she look? — Her eyes were blue as the flower of the flax, and her hair yellow as wheat straw —

AMALIA. And tall and slender; and her hand so small and white as if it had sewed nothing but silk all its days, and her mouth looked like a heart and as if only good words had passed over its lips.

THE NEIGHBOR. How do you know all that?

AMALIA. Oh, it is she I usually dream about when I have been wicked — and then she lifts a warning hand, and her hand has a ring with a green precious stone, which throws out a gleaming light. That is she! — Tell me, Neighbor, was there never a picture of her in the house?

THE NEIGHBOR. Yes, there was one, but whether it is still here I do not know!

AMALIA. So she is my step-mother then: God is good who let me keep my mother's image undefiled, and hereafter I shall consider it quite in order when the old step-mother is ugly to me.

THE NEIGHBOR. Ugly step-mothers exist for the making of good children. And you were not a good child, Amalia, but you have become

good and therefore you shall now have a Christmas present in advance.

[He takes the Wife's portrait and removes the frame; a water color portrait of the mother is disclosed resembling the description given above.]

AMALIA *[On her knees before the portrait]*. My mother, the mother of my dreams! *[Rises.]*
But I cannot have the picture when it must go into the auction.

THE NEIGHBOR. Yes, you can have it, for the auction has already been held.

AMALIA. Where and when was that held?

NEIGHBOR. It was held elsewhere, where you must not know, to-day they are only going to take away the things.

AMALIA. How strangely everything happens! And so many secrets in this house!—But tell me: where is step-mother, whom I have not seen for a long time?

THE NEIGHBOR. Well, as it must be told; she is there, whence no one returns.

AMALIA. She is dead?

THE NEIGHBOR. She is dead! Was found frozen to death in a swamp where she had sunken in.

AMALIA. Merciful God, have pity on her!

THE NEIGHBOR. He will when the time comes, especially if you pray for her!

AMALIA. Of course I will do that!

THE NEIGHBOR. You see, child, how good you have become! Because she became so evil!

AMALIA. Don't say that, when she is dead —

THE NEIGHBOR. Quite so! May she rest in peace!

AMALIA. But where is father?

THE NEIGHBOR. That is a secret to us all! But you are kind to ask for him, before you ask about Adolph.

AMALIA. Adolph? Yes, where is he? The children cry for him, and Christmas Eve is near! O, what a Christmas is in store for us!

THE NEIGHBOR. Let each day have its own anxiety, but take your Christmas gift now and go! There must be a clearing up here after the auction and afterward you shall hear more news!

AMALIA [*Taking her mother's portrait*]. I go, but no longer alone, and I believe that something good will happen to me although I know not what. [*She goes out right.*]

THE NEIGHBOR. I know, I! But go now, for what is to happen here is not for children to see.

[*He opens door at back, and rings the auction bell. The people gather in the chamber in the following order: the Poor, a whole crowd; the Sailor; the Chimney-sweep Boy; the Widow and the Fatherless children; the Land-surveyor; the Neighbor stands in front; the Other with the auctioneer's mallet and a pile of documents.*]

THE OTHER [*At the auction table; strikes with mallet*].

THE OTHER. At the bankruptcy auction of the district judge's estate which took place in the court house, the following items called in for absent creditors may now be removed or taken into possession.

THE DEEMSTER [*Comes in; looking old and miserable*]. Hold, in the name of the law!

THE OTHER [*Pretends to throw something at the Deemster, who stops astonished and silent*]. Quiet with the law, for here the gospel prevails, although not for you who sought to buy the heavenly kingdom with stolen money! First; the Widow and the Fatherless; there you have your silver service which the Deemster took from you as remuneration for the false inventory; the silver became somewhat tarnished in his unclean hands, but I hope it will be bright again in yours! Then we have the ward who was forced to become a chimney-sweep's apprentice because he was cheated out of his inheritance. There you have the guardian fund and receipted bills. You need not thank your guardian! Now we have the land-surveyor who, being supplied with false charts, established an illegal land partition, so that he had two years in the penitentiary, and innocently. What can you do about that, Deemster? Can you undo what is done or make reparation for his lost reputation?

THE DEEMSTER. Give him a pickaxe, the scoundrel, and he will be satisfied. His reputation was not worth two farthings even beforehand.

THE OTHER [*Strikes the Deemster on the mouth. The people spit at the Deemster and mutter threateningly with their fists clenched*].

THE OTHER. Here we have the innocently beheaded Sailor's brother. Can you give him his brother's life again? No! And you cannot pay the penalty with your life, for it is not worth as much as his! At last the Neighbor's time has come, and his property has been restored to him out of which the Deemster duped him in a perfectly legal way! But as the Neighbor is inexperienced in jurisprudence he has, contrary to all established law, made the Deemster's son-in-law tenant for life, wiped out his debt, and made him his heir!

THE DEEMSTER. I appeal to the higher court!

THE OTHER. It has been before all the courts except the Most High, and that is still beyond your reach notwithstanding your sealed documents! Even if you attempted it these poor people, whom you have robbed of their maintenance, would cry: guilty! This much has been cleared up, but everything that is not accounted for which stands here falls to the poor: clocks, vases, jewelry and other things that served as bribes, corruptions, tips,

and souvenirs, all acquired in a legal way, when witnesses and proofs were lacking. Poor people! take back what is yours; your tears have washed away the guilt from the unjustly acquired goods!

[The Poor scramble for these things.]

THE OTHER. And now about the last item I have here to offer for sale. The pauper, the former Deemster, is offered to the lowest bidder to enjoy the district's support! How much is bid? *[Silence.]* No offer! *[Silence.]* The first, second and third time? — No offer! — Listen, you, no one wants you! — Well then, I will take you! and forward you to well-earned punishment!

THE DEEMSTER *[Bowed]*. Is there no atonement?

THE OTHER. Yes, punishment is atonement! Out with him, into the woods, and stone him according to the law of Moses. Any other law the Deemster does not know! Out with him!

[The people throw themselves on the Deemster and push him out.]

CURTAIN.

The "Waiting room." The same as the second scene of the fourth act: A valley basin surrounded with high black rocks. At back stands a large pair of scales, where the newcomers are weighed.

[The Deemster and his wife are sitting opposite each other at a little table.]

THE DEEMSTER *[Staring before him as in a dream]*. Hush, I dreamt something! They threw stones at me — and yet I felt no pain — then it became quite dark and empty up to now — how long it has been so I cannot say — But now I begin to hear again — and feel. Now it feels as if they were carrying me — ugh, how cold, they are bathing me, I believe — I am lying in a hexagon like a bee-cell and it smells like a carpenter's shop — they carry me and a bell is ringing — wait now, now I am riding, but not in a tram-car, although a bell is ringing continually — Now I am sinking down, down as if I were drowning — bom, bom, bom, three pounds are heard on the roof — and then the reading begins — and the minister first — and now the boys are singing — what is this? And now there is pounding on the roof again — bom, bom, bom, bom, bom, bom, bom, — Silence and the end! *[Awakens.]* Where am I? I suffocate; it is so close and cramped! Is it you? — Where are we? Whose statue is that?

THE WIFE. It is said to be the new God!

THE DEEMSTER. He looks like a goat!

THE WIFE. Perhaps it is the goat's god.

THE DEEMSTER. "The goats on the left side"
— What is it that I am trying to remember?

THE PRINCE. It is the God Pan!

THE DEEMSTER. Pan?

THE PRINCE. The same! Quite the same! And at night when the shepherds — well, not *the* shepherds — find a missing hair from his pelt, they are seized with a panic of fright —

THE DEEMSTER [*Rising*]. Woe! Here I do not wish to remain! Woe! Is there no way to get out of here? I want to get out!

[*He runs about, vainly seeking a way out.*]

THE OTHER [*Comes in dressed like the Franciscan*]. Here there are only entrances, no exits!

THE DEEMSTER. Is it Pater Colomba?

THE OTHER. No, it is the Other —

THE DEEMSTER. As a monk?

THE OTHER. Yes, don't you know that when the Other grows old he becomes a monk, and that is quite right, is it not, that he does so some time. But to speak seriously, for here there is nothing but seriousness; this is my holiday attire, which I am only allowed to wear this day of the year that I may be reminded of what was once mine, and what I have lost.

THE DEEMSTER [*Afraid*]. What day of the year is it to-day?

THE OTHER [*Sighs and bows his head*]. It is Christmas Eve!

THE DEEMSTER [*Goes toward the Wife*]. It is Christmas Eve! Do you know, I dare not

ask where we are — I dare not, but let us go home, home to the children, to our —

[*Weeps.*]

THE WIFE. Yes, let us go from here to our home and ours, and then in peace and harmony begin a new life —

THE OTHER. It is too late!

THE WIFE [*Desperately*]. Kindest, best, help us, have mercy, forgive us!

THE OTHER. Too late!

THE DEEMSTER [*Taking the Wife by the hand.*] I am in such anguish! Don't ask him where we are; I don't want to know! But about one thing I would like to be clear: will there never be an end to this?

THE OTHER. Never! — The word end we do not know here.

THE DEEMSTER [*Crushed*]. Never an end! [*Looks around.*] Does the sun never come down into this damp, cold room?

THE OTHER. Never, for they who live here have not loved the sun.

THE DEEMSTER. That is true; I have cursed the sun. May I make confession?

THE OTHER. No! You shall carry your sins within you until they swell up and suffocate you.

THE WIFE [*Falling on her knees*]. O! — To think that I cannot pray!

[*She rises and walks about restlessly, wringing her hands.*]

THE OTHER. Because no one exists to whom you can pray!

THE WIFE [*Desperately*]. My children, send some one here who may say a word of hope and forgiveness.

THE OTHER. No, that cannot come to pass. Your children have forgotten you and now sit rejoicing at your absence.

[*The rock wall is illuminated and one sees the home with Adolph, Amalia, Eric and Thyra, around a Christmas tree; at the back stands the Playmate.*]

THE DEEMSTER. They sit at the Christmas table and rejoice at our misfortune? No, you are lying! for they were better than we!

THE OTHER. That is a new strain! I used to hear that you were a righteous man —

THE DEEMSTER. I? I was a great sinner — the greatest that ever lived!

THE OTHER. H'm! h'm!

THE DEEMSTER. And if you say anything evil 'about the children then you are committing a sin! I know that they pray for us!

THE WIFE [*Kneeling*]. I hear them reading the rosary; silence, I hear them!

THE OTHER. You are entirely mistaken; for what you hear is the workmen's song as they are tearing down the mausoleum.

THE DEEMSTER. The mausoleum! Where we were to rest in peace!

THE PRINCE. Under the shadow of twelve wreaths!

THE DEEMSTER. Who is that?

THE PRINCE [*Pointing to the Wife*]. This is my sister, so you must be my brother-in-law.

THE DEEMSTER. Indeed; it is that good-for-nothing!

THE PRINCE. Now look here: in this place we are all good-for-nothings!

THE DEEMSTER. But not all hunchbacks.

THE PRINCE [*Strikes him on the mouth*]. Don't mention my hump or the devil will fly loose!

THE DEEMSTER. Think how they treat a worthy man of my high standing in the community! What a Christmas Eve!

THE PRINCE. Perhaps you expect a Christmas plum pudding —

THE DEEMSTER. Not that exactly, but one ought to have something to sustain life —

THE PRINCE. Here they observe the Christmas fast, you see —

THE DEEMSTER. How long does that last?

THE PRINCE. How long? Time is not measured here, because time has ceased to be, and one minute can be an eternity —

THE WIFE. We suffer in proportion to our deeds — complain not —

THE PRINCE. Make a complaint and see what will happen — Here there is no compromise and they pitch in without reserve —

THE DEEMSTER. Are they whipping carpets out there on such a day as this?

THE PRINCE. No, that is extra entertainment for the guests with the stick, as a reminder

for those who have forgotten the meaning of this day.

THE DEEMSTER. Do they do violence to one's person? Is it possible that well-brought-up people would lay hands on each other?

THE PRINCE. Here the ill-bred are brought up; and those who have behaved like scoundrels are treated as such!

THE DEEMSTER. But this goes beyond all limits!

THE PRINCE. Because we are beyond the limits here!—Make yourself ready; I have already been out and had mine!

THE DEEMSTER [*Shrinking*]. This humiliation! But it's like robbing one of all weight as a human being.

THE PRINCE. Ha, ha! Weight as a human being!—Ha, ha! Look at the scales over there; there human beings are weighed, and all are found to be light!

THE DEEMSTER [*Sits down at the table*]. I never believed—

THE PRINCE. No, you only believed in your righteousness and your caul of triumph. You had Moses, and the prophets, and more too, for the dead returned to you!

THE DEEMSTER. The children! The children! Can no one go to them with a message and a warning!

THE PRINCE. No, for eternity, no!

THE WITCH [*Comes in with a large basket full of peep-shows*].

THE DEEMSTER. What is that?

THE WITCH. It is Christmas presents for the righteous. They are peep-shows! [*Gives him a peep-show.*] There you are! It costs nothing!

THE DEEMSTER. See, there is one kind human being at least; and a little attention at my years and to a man of my standing honors your good taste and your kind heart —

THE WITCH. You are altogether too courteous, Deemster, but don't take it amiss if I have 'thought of the others a little too!

THE DEEMSTER [*Piqued*]. Infernal old woman, are you chaffing me?

THE WITCH [*Spitting in his face*]. Shame on you! Pettifogger!

THE DEEMSTER. Think, what company one can run into!

THE WITCH. Isn't it good enough for you, you old perjurer, bribe-taker, forger, inheritance-thief, corrupter! Look into the peep-show and you will see the great tableau: "From the cradle to the grave." There you will find the whole biography and all the victims — just look; there!

THE DEEMSTER [*Looks into the peep-show; rises with fear*].

THE WITCH. I hope the little remembrance will help toward your Christmas joy!

[*She gives the Wife a peep-show and continues to distribute them among the others.*]

THE DEEMSTER [*Has sat down at the table;*

the Wife sits opposite]. What do you see?

THE WIFE. Everything is there; everything! — And have you noticed that everything is black? The long bright life is dark and the moments that I considered innocent joy also stand forth as loathsome, fetid, criminal almost. It is as if the memories, even the most beautiful, had become rotten —

THE DEEMSTER. Yes, you are right; not one memory can light up this darkness. When I see her, my youth's first love, I see a corpse; when I bring to mind the good Amalia there appears — a harlot; the little children make faces at me like so many street urchins; my house is a pig sty, the vineyard a dump heap with thistles, and the mausoleum — ugh, no — a backhouse! When I think of the green forest it turns into snuff brown leafage and the trunks are as white as masts; the blue river flows onward as from a barnyard and the blue sky above it is like a smoky ceiling. Even the sun I remember only as a name, and that which is called the moon and shone like a night lamp over inlets and groves in the evenings of youth and love, I remember only as — No, I cannot recall them any more. Only words remain with me, although they are but sounds without meaning. . . . Love, wine, song! Flowers, children, happiness! — Do not the words sound beautiful? And that is all that is left! — Love! What was love?

THE WIFE. What was it? Two cats on the roof of a backhouse.

THE DEEMSTER [*Idiotically*]. Yes, that's so! That's so. And three dogs on a street corner. It is delightful to recall.

THE WIFE [*Pressing his hand*]. It is delightful.

THE DEEMSTER [*Looking at his watch*]. My watch has stopped. I am so hungry; but I am thirsty too and I long for tobacco. But I am tired too and would like to sleep. All the habits are awake; they scratch me and urge me, but I cannot gratify one of them. Unfortunate are we! Unfortunate!

THE WIFE. And I long for a cup of tea, so much that I cannot describe it!

THE DEEMSTER. Hot green tea. That is just what I would like now; and with a little, just a little rum.

THE WIFE. No, not rum! I should prefer cake —

THE PRINCE [*Who has come forward and heard the conversation*]. With frosting on top? Yes, if you will sing for it!

THE WIFE. This rude talk tortures me more than anything else.

THE PRINCE. That's because you don't know how what is coming will torture you.

THE DEEMSTER. What is that?

THE WIFE. No, silence, we don't want to know what it is! Silence!

THE PRINCE. Yes, I want you to know! It begins with —

THE WIFE [*Holding her hands over her ears and shouts*]. Have pity! Keep quiet, keep quiet, keep quiet!

THE PRINCE. No, indeed, I'll not keep quiet, and brother-in-law is curious, and therefore he shall be told. The second letter is H!

THE DEEMSTER. This uncertainty tortures me more than anything — Speak out, devil, or kill me!

THE PRINCE. Kill, ha, ha! Here we are all deathless, soul and body, what little is left. However: the third letter is — Now you will know more!

THE GRAY-CLAD ONE [*A small emaciated man with gray clothes, gray face, black lips, gray beard and hands. He speaks in an undertone*]. May I have a little talk with you, lady!

THE WIFE [*Rises, frightened*]. What about?

THE GRAY-CLAD ONE [*Smiles maliciously*]. I will tell you — out there.

THE WIFE [*Weeping*]. No, no, I don't want to!

THE GRAY-CLAD ONE [*Laughs*]. It is not dangerous. Just come along! I only want to talk to you a little. Come!

[*They go toward back.*]

THE PRINCE. A little whipping for a Christmas present does one good.

THE DEEMSTER. Do you mean to maltreat a woman?

THE PRINCE. Here every injustice is effaced and woman is placed on a level with man.

THE DEEMSTER. Devil!

THE PRINCE. You may call me that, but not hunchback, for that is my lost ambition!

THE OTHER [*Comes forward to the table*].

Well, how about animal magnetism? It can work wonders with brutes!

THE DEEMSTER. I understand nothing of all this!

THE OTHER. That is just what is intended, and it is a beautiful confession from you that there are things you do not understand!

THE DEEMSTER. Assume then that I am in hades —

THE OTHER. Say hell, for that's what it's called!

THE DEEMSTER [*Stammering*]. Then, then I would point out that He who came down here once to redeem the damned —

THE PRINCE [*At a wink from the Other strikes the Deemster on the mouth*]. Don't reason!

THE DEEMSTER. They will not hear me! This is utter despair. Without mercy, without hope, without end!

THE OTHER. True! Only justice and retribution exist here, justice above everything: an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth! Just as you wished to have it.

THE DEEMSTER. But among humankind there is pardon that does not exist here.

THE OTHER. It is only the rulers who can pardon. And as a jurist you ought to know that a petition for pardon must be filed in order to receive consideration.

THE DEEMSTER. For me there is no mercy!

THE OTHER [*Makes a sign to the Prince, who goes to one side*]. You consider your guilt too great then?

THE DEEMSTER. Yes.

THE OTHER. Then I will speak to you with kindness! You see, there is always an end if only there is a beginning. And you have made a beginning. But the continuation is long and difficult.

THE DEEMSTER. Oh! God is good.

THE OTHER. You said it.

THE DEEMSTER. But — there is one thing that cannot be undone — there is one!

THE OTHER. You mean the monstrance that should have been of gold but became silver! Very well; don't you believe that He who changed water into wine can transform silver into gold!

THE DEEMSTER [*On his knees*]. But my misdeed is greater, greater than can ever be forgiven.

THE OTHER. Now you are over-rating yourself again! But rise now, for we are to celebrate Christmas in our way. — The sun never reaches down here, as you know, nor the moon either, but to-night, to-night only a star rises so high over the mountains that it is seen from here below. It is that star that lights the shepherd's way in the desert, and it is the morning star.

[*He claps his hands; Pan sinks through*

the ground. The Wife comes in, she seems quiet and peacefully happy; she goes toward the Deemster and gives him her hand comfortingly. The scene is filled with shadows that all gaze up toward the mountain at back. Voices are heard singing behind the scene, sopranos and contraltos accompanied only by violins and harps.]

Puer votis est nobis;

Et filius datus est nobis;

Cujus imperium super humerum ejus;

Et vocabitur nomen ejus,

Magni consilii Angelus.

[Chorus of sopranos, contraltos, tenors and bass.]

Cantate Domino canticum novum,

Quia mirabilia fecit.

[Now the star appears over the mountain at back. All fall on their knees. Part of the rock is pushed to one side.]

Tableau: the manger with the Child and the Mother; the shepherds are praying at left, the three kings at right.

[Chorus of sopranos and contraltos.]

Gloria in excelsis Deo

Et in terra pax

Hominibus bonæ voluntatis!

CURTAIN.

THE STORM

SCENES

Act I. The house façade

Act II. The interior

Act III. The house façade

CHARACTERS

THE GENTLEMAN, a retired business man

THE BROTHER, a consul

STARCK, a confectioner

AGNES, his daughter

LOUISE, the Gentleman's relative

GERDA, the Gentleman's divorced wife

FISCHER, Gerda's second husband (non-speaking)

THE ICE - MAN

THE POSTMAN

THE LAMP - LIGHTER

THE STORM

ACT I

The façade of a modern house with basement of granite, the upper part of brick with yellow plaster; the window casements and ornaments are of sandstone; in the middle of the basement is a low portal leading to the courtyard, also into the confectioner's shop; the façade ends with a corner to right, where a square of rose bushes and other flowers are seen. At the corner is a letter-box. Over the basement is the first floor with large windows that stand open; four of these belong to a dining-room, elegantly furnished; over the lower floor there is a stairway leading to the second floor with four windows with drawn red shades.

In front of the house is the sidewalk and trees, in the foreground a green bench and a gas street lamp.

The confectioner comes out with a stool and sits on the sidewalk.

The Gentleman is seen at table in the dining-room; behind him is a green porcelain stove with mantel shelf on which stands a large

photograph between two candelabra and flower vases; a young girl in light dress is serving him the last course.

The Brother [outside] comes in from left, he taps on the window ledge with his walking stick.

THE BROTHER. Are you nearly through?

THE GENTLEMAN. I'll be with you soon.

THE BROTHER [*To the confectioner*]. Good evening, Mr. Starck, it continues to be warm.

[*Sits on bench.*]

THE CONFECTIONER. Good evening, sir. Yes, it's dog-day heat, and we have been preserving all day long.

THE BROTHER. Is that so — is it a good fruit year?

THE CONFECTIONER. Fairly good; we had a cold spring but the summer has been intolerably hot; we who've been living in the city have been made to feel it —

THE BROTHER. I came from the country yesterday; when the evenings get dark one longs to get in —

THE CONFECTIONER. Neither I nor my wife has been outside the city limits. The business is at a standstill, to be sure, but one must stay at his post and get ready for the winter; first there are the strawberries, and then the cherries, and then we have the raspberries and the gooseberries, the melons, and the whole fall harvest —

THE BROTHER. Tell me something, Mr. Starck, are they going to sell this house?

THE CONFECTIONER. No, not that I have heard!

THE BROTHER. There are a lot of people living here?

THE CONFECTIONER. I think there are ten families counting those that live on the court side but none of them know each other; there is very little gossip in this house; it seems rather as if they want to hide themselves. I have lived here for ten years, and the first two years I had for neighbors in the court, some unknown people who kept quiet all day long, but got to moving about at night, when wagons used to drive up and carry off something. It was only toward the end of the second year that I found out that it had been used as an infirmary, and that what they carried off was corpses.

THE BROTHER. How dreadful!

THE CONFECTIONER. And it's called the silent house!

THE BROTHER. Yes, they don't do much talking here.

THE CONFECTIONER. Nevertheless, many a drama has been enacted here.

THE BROTHER. Tell me, Mr. Starck, who lives here, one flight up, over my brother?

THE CONFECTIONER. Up there where the red shades shine, yes, that's where the tenant died last summer, when it stood empty for a

month, and about a week ago a couple moved in but I haven't seen them; I don't think they go out even. What makes you ask, consul?

THE BROTHER. Oh — I don't know! The four red shades look as if bloody dramas were rehearsed behind them — letting my imagination work; there stands a phoenix-palm like an iron whip throwing its shadow on the shade — if one could only see some figures —

THE CONFECTIONER. I have seen plenty of them, but only late at night!

THE BROTHER. Were they women — or men?

THE CONFECTIONER. There were both kinds — but now I must go down to my pots —

[He goes through the gate. The Gentleman, in the dining-room, has risen and lighted a cigar; standing by the window, he now talks to the Brother.]

THE GENTLEMAN. I'll be ready soon. Louise is just sewing a button on my glove.

THE BROTHER. Do you intend to go down town then?

THE GENTLEMAN. We might walk down a bit. Whom were you talking with?

THE BROTHER. It was only the confectioner.

THE GENTLEMAN. Oh, yes, he's a pleasant man, my only companion here the whole summer, for that matter.

THE BROTHER. Have you really sat here at home every evening, never been out?

THE GENTLEMAN. Never! These light eve-

nings make me shy; it's beautiful in the country, of course, but in the city it has the effect of being unnatural, almost terrible; when they light the first street lamp, I feel tranquil once more and able to go for my evening walk. Then I get tired and sleep better — [*Louise gives him the glove.*] Thanks, my child — The windows may as well remain open, for there are no mosquitoes here — I'm coming now.

[*In a moment the Gentleman is seen coming from the square and puts a letter in the letter-box; comes forward and sits on the bench beside the Brother.*]

THE BROTHER. But tell me, why do you stay here in the city when you *could* be in the country?

THE GENTLEMAN. I don't know! I have become fixed, I am bound to these rooms by memories — I feel peace and protection only in there. In there! It's interesting to see one's home from the outside; I fancy that I see some one else wandering about in there — think of it — I have wandered in there for ten years.

THE BROTHER. Is it ten now?

THE GENTLEMAN. Yes, time flies, when it's really past, but while it's passing it seems long. The house was new at that time; and I saw them lay the parquet floor in the drawing-room; saw them paint the panels and doors, and *she* chose the wall-papers that are

still on. Yes, that's the way it is! The confectioner and I are the oldest tenants in the house and he too has had his vicissitudes — he is the sort of human being who never knows fortune's favor; always in some tangle; it's as if I have lived his life and carried his burden along with my own.

THE BROTHER. Does he drink then?

THE GENTLEMAN. No! Nor is he ever negligent, but he has no push. Yes, he and I know the chronicles of the house: they have driven in here with wedding chariots and out with hearses, and that letter-box on the corner has received the secrets —

THE BROTHER. Didn't you have a death here about the middle of the summer?

THE GENTLEMAN. Yes, we had a typhoid case, it was a bank clerk; and then the rooms were empty for a month; the coffin came out first, then the widow, and the children and the furniture last.

THE BROTHER. Was that one flight up?

THE GENTLEMAN. Yes, up there, where there is a light, the new tenants, whom I don't know yet.

THE BROTHER. Haven't you even seen them?

THE GENTLEMAN. I never ask about the tenants; whatever offers itself voluntarily I accept, without abuse and without involving myself, for I am careful about the peace of old age.

THE BROTHER. Yes, old age! I think it's beau-

tiful to be old, for then one hasn't very much of the record left to make.

THE GENTLEMAN. Yes, of course it's beautiful; I am balancing my book with life and fellow beings, and have already begun to pack for the journey; solitude is not what it might be, but when no one has any claim on one, then freedom is won. The freedom to come and go, to think and act, to eat and sleep according to one's choice.

[At this moment a curtain is raised in the apartment one flight up, but just enough to show a woman's dress, it is pulled down again immediately.]

THE BROTHER. They are stirring up there! Did you notice?

THE GENTLEMAN. Yes, it's so mysterious, but it's worse at night; sometimes they have music, but very bad; sometimes I imagine that they play cards, and late, after midnight, carriages come to carry off — I never complain about the tenants, for then they revenge themselves, and it doesn't do any good. It's best not to know anything!

[A gentleman, bareheaded, in smoking jacket, comes in from the square and puts a lot of letters in the letter-box; after which he disappears.]

THE BROTHER. What a tremendous post that fellow had!

THE GENTLEMAN. It seemed to be a lot of circulars!

THE BROTHER. But who was he?

THE GENTLEMAN. It couldn't be any one but the tenant one flight up.

THE BROTHER. Was it he? What did he look like to you?

THE GENTLEMAN. I don't know! Musician, manager, a bit operatic, bordering on vaudeville, gambler, Adonis, a little of each —

THE BROTHER. With that white skin he ought to have black hair, but it was brown, that is to say, it was dyed or else a wig; a smoking jacket at home suggests lack of wardrobe, and the movements of his hands as he dropped the letters suggested shuffling, cut and deal — [*One hears a waltz being played softly, one flight up.*] Always waltzes, perhaps they have a dancing school, but almost always it's the same waltz; what is it called?

THE GENTLEMAN. Upon my word, if it isn't — Pluie d'Or — I know that by heart.

THE BROTHER. Have you ever played it here?

THE GENTLEMAN. Yes, that one and Alcazar.

[*Louise is seen in the dining-room arranging glasses on the sideboard.*]

THE BROTHER. Do you continue to be satisfied with Louise?

THE GENTLEMAN. Very much so.

THE BROTHER. Isn't she going to marry?

THE GENTLEMAN. Not to my knowledge.

THE BROTHER. No sweetheart around?

THE GENTLEMAN. Why do you ask that?

THE BROTHER. Perhaps you are considering —

THE GENTLEMAN. I? No thanks! I was not too old the last time I married, considering that we had a child immediately; but I am now, and I wish to grow old in peace — Do you think I would want a master in *my* house, to make away with my life, my honor, and my goods?

THE BROTHER. Your life and goods remained to you.

THE GENTLEMAN. Was there any doubt about the honor?

THE BROTHER. Don't you know that there was?

THE GENTLEMAN. What do you wish to say?

THE BROTHER. She murdered your honor when she left —

THE GENTLEMAN. Then I have gone about murdered for four years and didn't know it?

THE BROTHER. Haven't you known it?

THE GENTLEMAN. No, but now you shall know the real circumstances, in a word. When, at the age of fifty, I married a comparatively young girl, whose affection I had won, and who without fear or persuasion gave me her hand, I promised her that when my age became heavy for her youth, I should go my way, restoring her freedom. When in good time the child came and neither cared for anything more of that sort, and after our daughter began to grow away from me, and

I felt that I was unnecessary, I left, that is to say: I took a boat, as we were staying on an island at the time; and that was the end of that story. I had kept my promise, and saved my honor, hadn't I?

THE BROTHER. Yes, but she considered her honor attacked, because she wanted to be the one to leave, and that's why she murdered you, with silent accusations, that you never knew about.

THE GENTLEMAN. Did she accuse herself?

THE BROTHER. No, she had no reason to do so.

THE GENTLEMAN. Well, then there is no danger.

THE BROTHER. Do you know anything about her fate and the child's afterward?

THE GENTLEMAN. I don't wish to know anything! After I had gone through all the agonies of the loss, I considered the matter ended, and as only the beautiful memories remained in our apartment, I remained. However, I thank you for your precious information.

THE BROTHER. What information?

THE GENTLEMAN. That she had nothing to accuse herself about, that the accusation was against me.

THE BROTHER. I believe you are living in a great delusion.

THE GENTLEMAN. Let me live in it then, brother; a clean conscience, comparatively

clean, has always been like a diving-suit to me, with which I have gone down into the depths without suffocating. [*Rises.*] Think, that I got out of all that with my life! And now it's all over! Shall we take a turn on the Avenue?

THE BROTHER. Let's do so, and we'll see them lighting the first street lamp.

THE GENTLEMAN. But doubtless we'll have moonlight to-night, the August moon?

THE BROTHER. I believe it's really full moon — [*The Gentleman goes to the window and calls.*]

THE GENTLEMAN. Louise, be so good as to give me my stick! The light summer stick, just to hold in my hand.

LOUISE [*Handing out a bamboo stick*]. Here, master!

THE GENTLEMAN. Thanks, my child! Put out the light in the dining-room, if you are through there. We'll be gone for a while, can't say how long.

[*The Gentleman and the Brother go out left. Louise is at window; the confectioner comes out from the gate.*]

THE CONFECTIONER. Good evening, Miss; it's rather warm — have your gentlemen gone?

LOUISE. Yes, they've gone down the Avenue — the first evening that the master has been out this summer.

THE CONFECTIONER. We old ones love the gloaming, it hides so many faults in our-

selves and in others too, — do you know, Miss, that my old woman is getting blind, but she doesn't want any operation! There is nothing worth looking at, she says, and sometimes she wishes she were deaf too.

LOUISE. One feels like that — sometimes.

THE CONFECTIONER. You lead a quiet and beautiful life in there in prosperity and without worry; I never hear a loud voice nor the slamming of a door, perhaps a little too quiet for a young lady like you?

LOUISE. No, indeed, I love the quiet and simplicity, the charm and moderation, where one does not give voice to everything, and where it's considered a duty to overlook the daily happenings that are not so agreeable.

THE CONFECTIONER. You never have callers either?

LOUISE. No, only the consul comes and I have never seen such brotherly love.

THE CONFECTIONER. Which is really the older of the two?

LOUISE. I can't say whether there is a year or two between them or whether they are twins; I don't know, for they treat each other with mutual respect, as if each were the elder brother.

[*Agnes comes out, tries to slip by the confectioner.*]

THE CONFECTIONER. Where are you going, my girl?

AGNES. I am only going for a little walk!

THE CONFECTIONER. That's right, but come back soon.

[*Agnes goes.*]

THE CONFECTIONER. Do you think that your master mourns his dear ones still?

LOUISE. He doesn't mourn, nor does he miss them, as he doesn't long for their return, but he lives with them in memory, but only in the beautiful memories —

THE CONFECTIONER. But the daughter's fate must worry him sometimes —

LOUISE. Yes, he must fear the mother's marrying again, for then it would depend on who the step-father would be —

THE CONFECTIONER. I've been told that the wife refused all support at first, but after five years had passed she sent a lawyer with a long bill amounting to thousands —

LOUISE [*Dismissingly*]. I don't know anything about that.

THE CONFECTIONER. However, I believe, that she is more beautiful in his memory than —

[*The wine-carrier comes in with a basket of wine bottles.*]

THE WINE-CARRIER. Excuse me. Does Mr. Fischer live here?

LOUISE. Mr. Fischer? Not that I know of.

THE CONFECTIONER. Perhaps it's Fischer who lives one flight up. Ring one flight up, around the corner.

THE WINE-CARRIER [*Goes*]. One flight up. Thanks.

LOUISE. Now it will be a sleepless night again — when they carry up bottles.

THE CONFECTIONER. What sort of people are they? Why are they never seen?

LOUISE. They must go out the back way, I have never seen them. But I have heard them!

THE CONFECTIONER. I've heard them too, corks popping, doors slamming — and other slamming perhaps —

LOUISE. And they never open the windows, and in this heat! They must be southerners. Look, the lightning! One, two, three — It's just heat lightning. There is no thunder.

VOICE [*From basement*]. Starck dear, come 'down and help me with the melted sugar.

THE CONFECTIONER. I am coming, my old dear. You see, we are making jam — I'm coming — I'm coming.

[*He goes down. Louise remains standing at the window. The Brother comes in, slowly from right.*]

THE BROTHER. Hasn't brother returned?

LOUISE. No, sir.

THE BROTHER. He went in to telephone, so I came along. Well, he'll be here soon of course — What is this? [*He bends down and picks up a postal card.*] What does it say? "Boston Club after midnight — at Fischers'" — Who are the Fischers, do you know, Louise?

LOUISE. A man was just here with wine, looking for some one called Fischer, one flight up.

THE BROTHER. One flight up, Fischers! Red shades that look like a cigar sign at night; I believe you've got bad company in the house.

LOUISE. What is a Boston Club?

THE BROTHER. It might be something quite innocent, but in this case I'm not so sure — But how did the post card —? It was *he* who dropped it a while ago; so I'll put it in the box. — Fischer? I have heard that name before in connection with something — I have forgotten. — Miss Louise, let me ask you something, doesn't my brother ever speak of — the past?

LOUISE. Never to me.

THE BROTHER. Miss Louise, — let me ask you —

LOUISE. Excuse me, the evening milk is here and I must take care of it.

[She leaves the window, the milk-maid is seen at right going in house from the square. The confectioner comes out again, takes off his white cap and puffs.]

THE CONFECTIONER. In and out like a ground-hog from his hole — it's really terrible down there by the ranges — and not even an evening breeze.

THE BROTHER. We'll have some rain, if the lightning means anything. It isn't exactly pleasant in the city, but up here it's quiet; never any noise of wagons, still less of street cars, it's like the country!

THE CONFECTIONER. It's quiet enough — but for business it's too quiet; I know my trade but I am a bad seller, have always been, and I can never learn, or it's something else — perhaps I haven't the knack; for if a customer treats me as if I were a swindler I am the first to become faint-hearted and then I get as angry as I can ever be but I am not able to get real angry any more; it's worn out, everything wears out.

THE BROTHER. Why don't you get a position then?

THE CONFECTIONER. Nobody wants me.

THE BROTHER. Have you tried?

THE CONFECTIONER. What good would that do?

THE BROTHER. Yes?

[*At this moment a long drawn out "Oh" is heard from the apartment one flight up.*]

THE CONFECTIONER. What in heaven's name are they doing up there? Killing each other?

THE BROTHER. I don't like having these new strangers in the house. It hangs over one like a red thunder cloud; what sort of people are they? Where do they come from and what do they want here?

THE CONFECTIONER. It's dangerous to inquire into other people's affairs for one only gets drawn into them —

THE BROTHER. Do you know anything about them?

THE CONFECTIONER. No, I know nothing.

THE BROTHER. There's another scream, in the stairway —

THE CONFECTIONER [*Going out slowly*]. I don't want to be dragged into this —

[*Gerda, the Gentleman's divorced wife, comes out from the square, bareheaded and her hair down, she is nervous and agitated. The Brother goes to her, they recognize each other, she starts.*]

THE BROTHER. Is it really you, my sister-in-law of other days?

GERDA. It is I!

THE BROTHER. How did you get here in this house, and why did you begrudge my brother his peace?

GERDA [*Wildly*]. They gave a wrong name to the tenant and I believed that he had moved, it's not my fault —

THE BROTHER. Don't be afraid of me, you mustn't be afraid of me, Gerda — can I help you, what's going on up there?

GERDA. He struck me!

THE BROTHER. Is your little girl with you?

GERDA. Yes.

THE BROTHER. She has a step-father then?

GERDA. Yes.

THE BROTHER. Put up your hair and quiet yourself, and I will try to straighten this out, but spare my brother —

GERDA. He hates me, of course.

THE BROTHER. No, don't you see how he takes care of your flowers, in the little beds; he

brought the earth here himself, in a basket, you remember; don't you recognize your gentians and mignonette, your roses, Malmaison and Merveille de Lyon, that he has nurtured to bud; do you realize how he has cherished the memory of you and your daughter?

GERDA. Where is he now?

THE BROTHER. Out walking on the avenue, he'll soon be here with his evening paper, and when he comes from the left, he always goes in through the court-yard, and sits down in the dining-room to read; keep still, and he won't notice you! — But you must go back up to your —

GERDA. I can't, I can't go back to that man —

THE BROTHER. Who is he, and what is he?

GERDA. He has been — a singer.

THE BROTHER. Has been, and is now —? An adventurer!

GERDA. Yes!

THE BROTHER. Keeps gambling rooms.

GERDA. Yes.

THE BROTHER. And the child? A decoy!

GERDA. Don't say that!

THE BROTHER. It's horrible!

GERDA. You are too harsh!

THE BROTHER. Yes, one must handle unclean things delicately — so delicately! But a righteous matter one may soil. Why did you defile his honor, and why did you deceive me into being your accomplice? I was childish

enough to believe what you told me, and I defended your unjust cause against him.

GERDA. You forget that he was too old.

THE BROTHER. No, he was not then, considering that you had a child in due time; and when he courted you, he asked you if you would like to have a child by him; moreover he promised to restore your freedom to you, and when age began to weigh heavily he fulfilled his promise.

GERDA. He deserted me, and that was an insult.

THE BROTHER. Not for you! Your youth protected you from any humiliation.

GERDA. He should have allowed *me* to leave *him*.

THE BROTHER. Why? Why did you want him to have the dishonor?

GERDA. One of us had to have it!

THE BROTHER. How queerly your thoughts travel! You have nevertheless murdered him and fooled me into doing likewise; how shall we now be able to re-habilitate him?

GERDA. If that is done it will be at my expense!

THE BROTHER. I cannot follow your thoughts, which only turn toward hate; but if we let the matter of restoring his honor go and think about saving his daughter! What shall we do then?

GERDA. She is my child. The law gave her to me, and my husband is her father.

THE BROTHER. You are too hard on that point; and you have become coarse and wild — quiet, he is coming.

[The Gentleman comes from left with a newspaper in his hand; in a thoughtful manner he goes through the court-yard, while the Brother and Gerda stand motionless, hidden by the corner of the square. The Brother and Gerda come forward. Soon after the Gentleman is seen sitting down in the dining-room to read his paper.]

GERDA. That was he!

THE BROTHER. Come here and see your home!

How he has kept everything just as you arranged it. Don't be afraid, he can't see us here in the dark — The light blinds him, you see.

GERDA. Just think how he has lied to me.

THE BROTHER. In what respect?

GERDA. He hasn't aged any! He grew tired of me, that was the reason. See the collar he wears, and his scarf is the very latest! I am sure he has a sweetheart!

THE BROTHER. You can see her portrait on the mantel, between the candelabra.

GERDA. That's I and the child! Does he still love me?

THE BROTHER. The memory of you.

GERDA. How strange!

[The Gentleman stops reading and stares out of the window.]

GERDA. He is looking at us.

THE BROTHER. Stand still!

GERDA. He is looking right in my eyes.

THE BROTHER. Stand still! He doesn't see you!

GERDA. He looks like a dead man —

THE BROTHER. Wasn't he murdered?

GERDA. Don't say that!

[At that moment the faces of Gerda and the Brother are lighted up by a flash of vivid heat lightning. The Gentleman in the dining-room starts and rises; Gerda runs behind the corner of the square.]

THE GENTLEMAN. Karl Fredrik! *[At the window.]* Are you alone? — I thought — Are you really alone?

THE BROTHER. Don't you see!

THE GENTLEMAN. It's so close, and the flowers give me headache. — Now I'll just finish my paper.

[Goes back and takes his place.]

THE BROTHER *[By Gerda's side]*. Now, about you — Do you want me to go up with you?

GERDA. Perhaps. But there will be such wrangling.

THE BROTHER. But the child must be saved. And I am a lawyer.

GERDA. Very well, for the child's sake. Follow me.

[They go.]

THE GENTLEMAN *[From within]*. Karl Fredrik! Come and play chess! — Karl Fredrik!

CURTAIN.

ACT II

In the dining-room. At back, the tiled porcelain stove; to left of stove a door opening into the serving room; to right a door leading into the hall. To left a sideboard and telephone; to right a piano and clock. There are doors in the left and right walls.

LOUISE [*Comes in*].

THE GENTLEMAN. Where did my brother go?

LOUISE [*Troubled*]. He was outside just now, he can't be far away.

THE GENTLEMAN. What a dreadful racket they are making above; it's as if they were tramping on my head; now they are pulling out bureau drawers as if they intended to move, run away perhaps — If you could only play chess, Louise!

LOUISE. I can — a little —

THE GENTLEMAN. Well, if one only knows how to move the pieces it's something — Sit down, my child! [*He arranges chess-board.*] They are making such a clatter up there that the chandelier shakes, and below the confectioner is fixing the fire — I think I shall move soon.

LOUISE. I have thought for a long time that you ought to do that, master, anyway.

THE GENTLEMAN. Anyway?

LOUISE. It isn't good for one to sit too long among old memories.

THE GENTLEMAN. Why not? When it's all over, all memories are beautiful.

LOUISE. But you might live twenty years yet, master, and that will be too long to live in memories, that fade nevertheless and some day perhaps may change color.

THE GENTLEMAN. How wise you are, little child!—Begin now and move a pawn! But not the queen's, for then you will weaken yourself in two moves.

LOUISE. Then I'll begin with the knight—

THE GENTLEMAN. Just as dangerous, my dear.

LOUISE. But I think I'll begin with the knight anyway!

THE GENTLEMAN. Good! Then I'll move my jumping-pawn.

[The confectioner is seen in the hall with a tray.]

LOUISE. It's Mr. Starck with the tea biscuit. He walks as quietly as a little mouse.

'[She rises and goes into the hall, takes the tray and goes into the serving room.]

THE GENTLEMAN. Well, Mr. Starck, how is your old woman getting on?

THE CONFECTIONER. Oh, thanks, it's her eyes as usual—

THE GENTLEMAN. Have you seen my brother?

THE CONFECTIONER. I believe he is walking up and down outside.

THE GENTLEMAN. Has he company?

THE CONFECTIONER. No-o! I don't think so.

THE GENTLEMAN. It wasn't yesterday you first saw this apartment.

THE CONFECTIONER. No indeed, it's just ten years ago —

THE GENTLEMAN. When you came with the wedding cake — Does it look the same?

THE CONFECTIONER. Just the same — the palms have grown of course; yes, it's quite the same.

THE GENTLEMAN. And will continue to be until you come with the funeral cake. After a certain age nothing changes, everything comes to a standstill but life slides along like a sled down a grade.

THE CONFECTIONER. Yes, that's the way it is!

THE GENTLEMAN. And in that way it's quiet — No love, no friends, just a bit of company in the solitude; and then human beings become just people without the proprietary rights to one's feelings and sympathies; and then one loosens like an old tooth and falls out, without pain and without being missed. There's Louise, for example, a young and beautiful girl, through whose presence I experience satisfaction like that of a work of art one does not ask to own; nothing disturbs our relation! My brother and I associate with each other like two elderly gentle-

men, who never become too familiar or force each other's confidences. Through keeping a neutrality with people, one gets a certain distance, and at a distance we always make a better impression. In a word, I am satisfied with old age and its quiet peace — [*Calls.*] Louise!

[*Louise appears at the left door, amiable as ever.*]

LOUISE. The washing has just come home and I must count it.

THE GENTLEMAN. Well, Mr. Starck, won't you sit down and talk, or perhaps you can play chess?

THE CONFECTIONER. I can't stay away from my pots, and at eleven I must fire the bake-oven. Thanks, however, for your friendliness.

THE GENTLEMAN. If you should see my brother, just ask him to come in and keep me company.

THE CONFECTIONER. I'll be sure to do that. I'll be sure to —

[*He goes. The Gentleman, alone, moves the chess men for a few seconds, then he rises and walks about.*]

THE GENTLEMAN. The quiet peace of old age; yes! [*He sits at piano and strikes a few chords; rises and walks about again.*]

Louise! Can't you postpone whatever you are doing about the washing?

LOUISE [*In left door*]. That's impossible, the

washwoman is in a hurry and she has a husband and children waiting for her.

THE GENTLEMAN. Ye-es. —

[Sits down at the table and drums with his fingers; tries to read the paper, but gets tired; strikes matches and blows them out; looks at the clock. There is a noise in the hall.]

THE GENTLEMAN. Is that you, Karl Fredrik?

THE POSTMAN *[Appearing]*. It's the postman. Excuse my coming in but the doors are open.

THE GENTLEMAN. Is there a letter for me?

THE POSTMAN. Only a post-card.

[Leaves card and goes.]

THE GENTLEMAN *[Reading post-card]*. Mr. Fischer again; Boston Club. That's he up above! He with the white hands and the smoking jacket! And to me! It's discourteous! I must move! — Fischer!

[He tears the card. There is a noise in the hall.]

THE GENTLEMAN. Is that you, Karl Fredrik?

THE ICE-MAN *[Appearing]*. It's the ice-man!

THE GENTLEMAN. It's fine to be able to get ice in this heat! But be careful of the bottles in the ice-box. And put the piece on edge, so I can hear the water drops fall as it melts — it's my water clock, that measures out the time, the long time. — Look here, where do

you get that ice? — Has he gone? — They all go home, to be able to hear their own voices and have company — [*Pause.*] Is that you, Karl Fredrik?

[*Now one hears Chopin's Fantaisie Impromptu, opus 66, but only the first part, played on a piano up above.*]

THE GENTLEMAN [*Listens and looks up*]. Who is playing? My impromptu? [*He holds his hand over his eyes and listens. The Brother comes in from the hall.*] Is it you, Karl Fredrik? [*The music stops.*]

THE BROTHER. It's I!

THE GENTLEMAN. Where have you been so long?

THE BROTHER. I had a bit of business to straighten out; have you been alone?

THE GENTLEMAN. Of course! Come and play chess with me now.

THE BROTHER. I would rather talk! And you too may need to hear your voice.

THE GENTLEMAN. Quite true, but it's so easy for us to get into the past. —

THE BROTHER. Then one forgets the present —

THE GENTLEMAN. The present does not exist; what is now passing is empty nothingness; the future or the past — The future preferably, for hope exists there.

THE BROTHER [*At table*]. Hope, for what?

THE GENTLEMAN. A change!

THE BROTHER. Good! You mean to say that

you have had enough of the peace of old age?

THE GENTLEMAN. Perhaps!

THE BROTHER. Quite so! And if you were able to choose between solitude and the past —

THE GENTLEMAN. No ghosts however!

THE BROTHER. What about your memories then?

THE GENTLEMAN. They do not disturb; they are my poems about certain realities; but if the dead should appear again, that would be ghosts.

THE BROTHER. However — in your memory, which of the two gives the most beautiful mirage, the woman or the child?

THE GENTLEMAN. Both! I cannot separate them, and that's why I never sought to keep the child.

THE BROTHER. But was that right? Didn't you think of the possibility of a step-father?

THE GENTLEMAN. I didn't think so far ahead then, but since I have — reflected — about — that — matter.

THE BROTHER. A step-father, who misused — perhaps degraded your child!

THE GENTLEMAN. Hush!

THE BROTHER. What did you hear?

THE GENTLEMAN. I thought I heard "the little feet," the little tripping feet in the hall, when she came to find me. — It was the child that was the best. To see this dauntless little being, who feared nothing, who divined noth-

ing of life's treachery, who had no secrets. I remember her first realization of human evil. She noticed a beautiful child in the park and she ran with open arms to kiss the stranger; the beautiful child returned the friendliness by biting her chin and then sticking out her tongue. You should have seen my little Anne-Charlotte then. She stood petrified, not by the pain, but with terror to see this abyss which is called the human heart open itself. I have seen it once, when behind the most beautiful eyes, suddenly a strange look, like that of an infuriated animal, showed itself; I became literally so afraid, that I looked to see if there was some one else behind her face, which looked like a mask. But why do we sit here talking about this? Is it on account of the heat, or the thunder, or what?

THE BROTHER. Loneliness brings heavy thoughts, and you ought to have company; this summer in the city seems to have broken you.

THE GENTLEMAN. It's only these last few weeks; the illness that they had up there and the corpse affected me as if I myself were going through it all; the confectioner's troubles and anxieties have also become mine. So much so that I worry about his business, his wife's eye trouble, his future — and lately I dream every night about my little Anne-Charlotte — I see her in dangers, strange, unthinkable, nameless; and before I sleep,

when the ear is most sensitive, I hear her little feet, and one time I heard her voice —

THE BROTHER. Where is she then?

THE GENTLEMAN. Yes, where!

THE BROTHER. Suppose you should meet her in the street —

THE GENTLEMAN. I imagine that I should lose my reason or fall to the ground. I spent a great deal of my time abroad while our little sister was growing up — when I returned after many years I found a young girl at the ship's dock who took me in her arms. I saw with dread two eyes force themselves into mine, but with strange glances, that expressed the ghastliest alarm at not being recognized. "It is I," she repeated many times, before I recognized my own sister! I imagine that is about what a meeting with my daughter would be. Five years at that age make one unrecognizable! Just imagine not being able to recognize one's own child! The same, but a stranger! I would not be able to survive it! No, I would rather keep my little four-year-old girl on the home altar; I don't want any other. [*Pause.*] Is it you, Louise, arranging things in the linen-closet? It smells so clean, and it reminds me of — Yes, the mother of the house at the linen-closet, the good fairy, who takes care of things and renews them; the housekeeper with the flat-iron who smooths the rough places and takes out the wrinkles — Yes, the

wrinkles — [*Pause.*] Now — I'll — go — in, and write a letter; if you care to stay I'll soon be back.

[*Goes out left. The Brother coughs.*]

GERDA [*Is seen in the hall door.*] Are you — [*The clock strikes.*] Oh God! That sound — that I have carried in my ears for ten years! That clock, that never kept time, but measured out the hours, nights and days for five long years. [*She looks around.*] My piano — my palms — the dining-table; he has held it all in honor, and bright as a shield! My sideboard! With the knight and Eva, Eva with the basket of apples — In the right drawer, way back, there was a thermometer — [*Pause.*] I wonder if it's still there — [*Goes to the sideboard and pulls out a drawer.*] Yes, there it is!

THE BROTHER. What does that signify?

GERDA. Oh, it became a symbol in the end! Of inconstancy. When we put our house in order, the thermometer was overlooked, it should have been put outside the window — I promised to put it out — and forgot; he promised to do it, and forgot. Then we nagged each other, and finally, to get away from it, I hid it in this drawer — I began to hate it and him as well. Do you know what it signified? — Well, no one believed in the permanency of our relation, when we threw off our masks so soon and showed our antipathies. In the first days we lived as if on

springs — ready to jump at any time — like the thermometer — and here it is still! Up and down, always changing, like the weather. [*She puts the thermometer away and goes over to the chess-board.*] My chess-board! He bought that to pass away the long days of waiting before the little one came! Whom does he play with now?

THE BROTHER. With me.

GERDA. Where is he?

THE BROTHER. He is in his room writing a letter!

GERDA. Where?

THE BROTHER [*Pointing left*]. There!

GERDA [*Collapsing*]. And he has gone about here for five years?

THE BROTHER. Ten years, five years alone!

GERDA. But he loves solitude, doesn't he?

THE BROTHER. I believe he has had enough of it.

GERDA. Will he show me the door?

THE BROTHER. Try! You risk nothing, for he is always courteous.

GERDA. I haven't done anything to that — deserter!

THE BROTHER. That is to say, you will risk his asking about the child.

GERDA. But it's he who must help me find the child.

THE BROTHER. Where do you suppose Fischer has gone, and what is the intention in this flight?

GERDA. First to get out of this disagreeable neighborhood; then to get me to run after him; he has taken the girl as hostage.

THE BROTHER. The ballet. The *father* mustn't know that, for he hates the stage!

[*Gerda sits and arranges the chess men, thoughtlessly.*]

GERDA. The stage! I, too, have been on the stage!

THE BROTHER. You?

GERDA. As accompanist.

THE BROTHER. Poor Gerda.

GERDA. Why so? I loved the life; and when I was imprisoned here, it was not the prison-keeper's fault that I did not thrive but the prison's!

THE BROTHER. But now you have had enough of it?

GERDA. Now I love quiet and solitude — my child above everything.

THE BROTHER. Hush, he is coming!

[*Gerda rises and starts to go away but falls back into the chair.*]

THE BROTHER. Now I'll leave you! — Don't think of what you should say; it will come of itself, like the "next move" in chess!

GERDA. I fear his first glances most, for in them I shall read whether I have changed to advantage or disadvantage — whether I have become old and ugly —

THE BROTHER [*Going out right*]. If he finds you aged, he will dare to approach you; if

he finds you just as young, he will have no hope, and he is more diffident than you think. Now!

[The Gentleman is seen passing the open door left to the serving room; he walks slowly and carries a letter in his hand; he disappears, but re-appears soon in the hall, as he goes out.]

THE BROTHER *[In the door right]*. He went out to the letter-box.

GERDA. I can never go through this! How shall I be able to ask him to help me about getting this divorce? I'm going! It's too brazen!

THE BROTHER. Stay! You know his kindness is unlimited. He will help you, for the child's sake.

GERDA. No, no!

THE BROTHER. And he is the only one who can help.

[The Gentleman comes in quickly from the hall, he nods to Gerda, whom through his nearsightedness he mistakes for Louise; he goes to the telephone on the sideboard and rings; but in passing:]

THE GENTLEMAN *[To Gerda]*. All through? Arrange the chess men, Louise, and we'll start all over.

[Gerda transfixed and not understanding.]

THE GENTLEMAN *[His back to Gerda, speaks in phone]*. Hello!— Good evening, is it you, mother— Yes, thanks— fine. Louise is already sitting at the chess-board, but is tired

from a lot of things she has had to do. — Yes, it's all done now, and everything is finished. Just little things. If it is warm? The thunder storm passed over our heads, right over us, but it didn't strike! A false alarm! What did you say? Fischer's! Yes, but I think they are about to move! — Why so? I know of nothing special! — Is that so? So? — Yes, it goes at 6.15; the outer route through the archipelago; and arrives at — let me see — 8.25! Did you have a nice time? [*Laughing quietly.*] Yes, he is too ridiculous when he gets started; what did Maria say about it? — How has it been this summer? Oh, I can't complain, Louise and I have kept each other company; she has such a good even temper — O, — she is very nice. No thanks, not that! [*Gerda begins to understand and rises with horror.*] My eyes? Yes, I am getting near-sighted, but I say like the confectioner's old wife: there is nothing to look at! Wish I were a little deaf too! Deaf and blind! The neighbors up above make a horrible lot of noise at night — it's some kind of gambling club — There, now they have broken in to listen!

[*Rings again. Louise is seen in the hall door, unseen by the Gentleman. Gerda regards her with curiosity and hatred; Louise withdraws through the door right.*]

THE GENTLEMAN [*At telephone*]. Are you there? Think of it, breaking into our con-

versation by listening. To-morrow then, at 6.15 o'clock. — Thanks so much — same to you! I'll be sure to — Good-by, mother!

[Rings off. Louise has gone out; Gerda stands in the middle of the room. The Gentleman turns; sees Gerda and slowly recognizes her; he puts his hand to his heart.]

THE GENTLEMAN. Oh, good God, was it you? Wasn't it Louise, just now? *[Gerda is silent. The Gentleman weakly.]* How — did you — come here?

GERDA. Forgive me, I was passing through, walked by, and I felt a longing to see my old home again — The windows were open —

[Pause.]

THE GENTLEMAN. Do you find it the same?

GERDA. It's the same, but something else — there is something else —

THE GENTLEMAN *[Bored]*. Are you satisfied — with your life?

GERDA. Ye-es! It is as I wished it.

THE GENTLEMAN. And the child?

GERDA. Oh, she grows, and thrives, everything is well with her.

THE GENTLEMAN. Then I shall not ask any more. — *[Pause.]* Do you wish anything of me, can I be of service to you in any way?

GERDA. I thank you, but — I need nothing, after seeing that things are well with you too!

[Pause.] Would you like to see Anne-Charlotte?

THE GENTLEMAN [*Pause*]. I don't think so, now when I hear that all is well with her — It is so hard to begin again; it's like back lessons, that one really knows, although the teacher does not think so. — I am so far away from all this — I was away in wholly other parts — and I cannot connect with the past — it's hard for me to be discourteous but I cannot ask you to sit down — you are another man's wife — and you are not the same being I parted from.

GERDA. Am I so — changed?

THE GENTLEMAN. Like a stranger! Voice, look, manner —

GERDA. Have I aged?

THE GENTLEMAN. I don't know! — They say that in three years not an original atom is left of a human body — in five years *everything* is renewed, and therefore, you who stand there are another than the one who sat and suffered here — And I suppose that it would be the same with my daughter!

GERDA. Don't talk like that, I would rather see you angry.

THE GENTLEMAN. Why should I be angry?

GERDA. On account of all the wicked things I have done to you.

THE GENTLEMAN. Have you; I don't feel that you have.

GERDA. Didn't you read the complaint?

THE GENTLEMAN. No indeed, I left that to my lawyer. [*Sits down.*]

GERDA. And the decision?

THE GENTLEMAN. I haven't read that either.

As I didn't intend to marry again, I wasn't interested in such papers. [*Pause. Gerda sits.*] What did the papers say? That I was too old? [*Gerda, silently assenting.*] That was only the truth, so that need not embarrass you. I wrote precisely the same thing in my answer and requested that the judge give you your freedom.

GERDA. Did you write that —

THE GENTLEMAN. I wrote that I *was not*, but was becoming too old *for you!*

GERDA [*Piqued*]. For me?

THE GENTLEMAN. Yes! — I could not say that I was too old when we were married, for then the child's arrival might have had a disagreeable interpretation, and it was *our* child, wasn't it?

GERDA. You know that! — But —

THE GENTLEMAN. Do you mean that I should be ashamed of my age? Yes, if I took to dancing the Boston and playing cards all night, I should soon get into a rolling chair or an operation table, and that would be something to be ashamed of.

GERDA. You don't look as if there were danger of anything like that.

THE GENTLEMAN. Did you think the separation would be the death of me?

[*Gerda's silence is ambiguous.*]

THE GENTLEMAN. There are those who believe

that you murdered me. Do I look as if I were murdered? [*Gerda is embarrassed.*] I understand that your friends have caricatured me in little suburban papers but I never saw any of it. You needn't let your conscience torture you on my account.

GERDA. Why did you marry me?

THE GENTLEMAN. You know well enough why a man marries; and that I did not have to beg for your love, you know too. And you must remember how we smiled together at all the wise counsellors who warned you. — But why you ever tempted me I could never understand — for after the wedding ceremony you didn't see me, but behaved as if you were at some one else's wedding celebration; I thought that you must have made a wager that you would be the death of me. All of my business subordinates hated me for being their chief. But they soon became your friends. As soon as I acquired an enemy, he became *your* friend! Which gave me cause to say: you should not hate your enemies, true, but you should not love *my* enemies! — However, when I realized how things were, I began to pack up, but first I wanted a living witness to your having spread a falsehood, and that is why I waited until the little one arrived.

GERDA. To think that you could be so deceitful.

THE GENTLEMAN. I became reserved but I never lied. — You gradually transformed my

friends into detectives, and you seduced my own brother to faithlessness toward me. But, worst of all, you awakened doubt about your child's legitimacy with your thoughtless chatter.

GERDA. I have taken that back!

THE GENTLEMAN. An escaped word cannot be caught on the wing again. And the very worst of all is that the false report has reached the child, who considers her mother a —

GERDA. Oh, no!

THE GENTLEMAN. Yes, that's the way it is! — You built a high tower on the foundation of a lie, and now the tower is crashing down on you.

GERDA. It isn't true!

THE GENTLEMAN. Yes, I just met Anne-Charlotte —

GERDA. Did you meet —?

THE GENTLEMAN. We met on the stairs, and she said that I was her uncle; do you know what an uncle is? He is an old friend of the family and the mother. And I know that I pass for the uncle at her school too! — This is horrible for the child!

GERDA. Did you meet —?

THE GENTLEMAN. Yes! But I wasn't obliged to tell it to any one. Haven't I the right to keep silent? For that matter, the meeting was so distressing that I blotted it out of my mind, as if it had never existed.

GERDA. What can I do to make you reparation?

THE GENTLEMAN. You? You cannot make any reparation. I can only do that for myself.

[*They look at each other searchingly.*] That is to say, reparation has already been made.

[*Pause.*]

GERDA. Can't I make amends, can't I ask you to forgive, forget —

THE GENTLEMAN. What do you mean?

GERDA. To restore — make reparation —

THE GENTLEMAN. Do you mean to re-unite — begin again, make you my master again?

No thanks! I don't want you!

GERDA. That I should hear this!

THE GENTLEMAN. Feel it yourself! [*Pause.*]

GERDA. She is a beautiful waitress, that —

THE GENTLEMAN. Yes, she is beautiful!

GERDA. Where did you get her? [*Pause.*]

[*Louise is seen in the door of the serving room, with a bill in her hand.*]

THE GENTLEMAN [*Turning to her*]. Is it a bill?

[*Gerda rises, pulls on her gloves with a jerk so that the buttons fly.*]

THE GENTLEMAN [*Taking out money for bill*]. Eighteen-seventy-two! Just the right change!

LOUISE. May I have a word with you, master?

THE GENTLEMAN [*Rises, goes to the door, Louise whispers something in his ear*]. Oh,

Lord — [*Louise goes out.*] Poor Gerda!

GERDA. What do you mean? That I should be jealous of your servant?

THE GENTLEMAN. That's not what I meant!

GERDA. Yes, and you meant that you were too old for me, but not for her. I understand the insult — She is beautiful, I don't deny that — considered as a servant —

THE GENTLEMAN. Poor Gerda!

GERDA. Why do you say that?

THE GENTLEMAN. Because I pity you. Jealous of my servant, that is reparation —

GERDA. I, jealous —

THE GENTLEMAN. Why do you rage against my gentle, peaceful friend.

GERDA. "More than friend" —

THE GENTLEMAN. No, my child, I resigned long ago — and I am so satisfied with my solitude — [*The telephone rings; he answers.*] Mr. Fischer? That's not here! — Oh yes, it's I. — He has eloped? — With whom has he eloped? The confectioner Starck's daughter! Oh, good God! How old was she? Eighteen years! Just a child.

GERDA. That he had run away I knew — but with a woman! — Now you are happy?

THE GENTLEMAN. No, I am not happy. Although it comforts me to see that there is justice in the world. Life runs fast, and now you are in the boat that I was in.

GERDA. Her eighteen years against my twenty-nine — I am old — too old for him!

THE GENTLEMAN. Everything is relative, even age! — But now to another matter! Where is your child?

GERDA. My child! I had forgotten. My child! Good Lord! Help me! He has taken my child with him; he loved Anne-Charlotte as his own daughter — go with me to the police — go with me!

THE GENTLEMAN. I? Now you ask too much!

GERDA. Help me!

THE GENTLEMAN [*Goes to door right*]. Karl Fredrik, come and get a carriage; go with Gerda to the police. — Won't you do it?

THE BROTHER [*Comes in*]. Of course I will! In the name of heaven, aren't we human beings?

THE GENTLEMAN. Quick! But don't say anything to Mr. Starck; everything may be averted yet — Poor Starck and poor Gerda! Hurry now!

GERDA [*Looks out of window*]. It's beginning to rain — lend me an umbrella — eighteen years old — only eighteen — quick!

[*Goes out with the Brother.*]

THE GENTLEMAN [*Alone*]. The peace of old age! — and my child, in the hands of an adventurer! — Louise! [*Louise enters.*] Come and play chess with me!

LOUISE. Has the consul —?

THE GENTLEMAN. He has gone out on an errand — is it still raining?

LOUISE. No, not now!

THE GENTLEMAN. Then I'll go out and cool off a little. [*Pause.*] You are a good sensible girl; you know the confectioner's daughter?

LOUISE. Yes, very little!

THE GENTLEMAN. Was she beautiful?

LOUISE. Ye-es.

THE GENTLEMAN. Did you know the people upstairs?

LOUISE. I have never seen them!

THE GENTLEMAN. Tactful as ever!

LOUISE. I have learned neither to see nor hear in this house.

THE GENTLEMAN. I must admit that acquired deafness can go too far and become mortally dangerous. Keep tea in readiness, and I'll go out and cool off. And one thing, my child, of course you see what is going on here, but don't ask me anything.

LOUISE. I? No, master, I am not inquisitive.

THE GENTLEMAN. Thank heaven for that!

CURTAIN.

ACT III

Scene as in Act I. A light in the confectioner's shop. The apartment above is also lighted. The windows are open and the shades are up. The confectioner is outside his door.

THE GENTLEMAN [*On the green bench*]. That was a good little shower we had.

THE CONFECTIONER. Quite a blessing; and now we'll soon get some raspberries —

THE GENTLEMAN. Then you must let me order a few quarts; we have grown tired of doing our own preserving — it just stands and ferments and gets mouldy —

THE CONFECTIONER. Yes, I know all about that; one's got to go around and keep an eye on the jars as if they were mischievous children; there are those who put in salicylic acid — but that is only a tricky scheme that I won't have anything to do with —

THE GENTLEMAN. Salicyl, that's said to be anti-septic — and that might be good —

THE CONFECTIONER. Yes, but it tastes of it — and that's a swindle —

THE GENTLEMAN. Have you a telephone, Mr. Starck?

THE CONFECTIONER. No, I have no telephone —

THE GENTLEMAN. Oh!

THE CONFECTIONER. Why do you ask that?

THE GENTLEMAN. Oh, I was just thinking — one needs a telephone sometimes — orders — important communications —

THE CONFECTIONER. That may be, but sometimes it is well to escape — communications.

THE GENTLEMAN. Quite so — quite so! — Yes, my heart always thumps when the phone rings — one never knows what one may hear — and I want peace, peace, above all things.

THE CONFECTIONER. I, too!

THE GENTLEMAN [*Looking at his watch*]. It's time they lighted the street lamp!

THE CONFECTIONER. He's probably forgotten us, for it's lighted down the avenue.

THE GENTLEMAN. Then he'll soon be here. It will be good to see our lamp lighted again — [*The telephone rings in the dining-room; Louise is seen going to telephone. The Gentleman rises, puts his hand to his heart, and tries to hear, but the conversation cannot be heard. Pause. Louise comes out.*]

THE GENTLEMAN [*Worried*]. Anything new?

LOUISE. Nothing.

THE GENTLEMAN. Was it my brother?

LOUISE. No, it was the lady.

THE GENTLEMAN. What did she want?

LOUISE. To talk to you, master!

THE GENTLEMAN. But I don't want to. Shall

I comfort my executioner? I used to do that, but now I am tired of it. Look up there. They have gone away leaving the lights burning — empty rooms lighted up, are more terrible than when they are in darkness — for one sees phantoms. — [*Half aloud.*] And the confectioner's Agnes, do you think he knows anything about it?

LOUISE. It's hard to say, as he never speaks of his sorrows, nor does any one else — in this silent house.

THE GENTLEMAN. Should he be told?

LOUISE. No, for heaven's sake.

THE GENTLEMAN. But it's probably not the first time she has given him worry.

LOUISE. He never speaks of her.

THE GENTLEMAN. It is horrible! Are we to see the end of it soon! [*The telephone rings in the dining-room.*] There is the phone again! Don't go, I don't want to know anything! — My child! In that company! An adventurer and a hussy! It's terrible. Poor Gerda!

LOUISE. It will be better to know — I am going in — you must do something, master.

THE GENTLEMAN. I can't make myself act — I can defend myself — but strike back, no!

LOUISE. But if one avoids a danger, it will force itself on one, and if one does not resist, one is crushed.

THE GENTLEMAN. But if one does not allow oneself to take part, one is unassailable.

LOUISE. Unassailable?

THE GENTLEMAN. Everything takes care of itself, if one doesn't muddle it by interference. How can they expect me to guide, where so many passions rage! I can neither subdue their passions nor change their course.

LOUISE. But the child?

THE GENTLEMAN. Haven't I relinquished my rights — and for that matter — to be honest, I am not eager — not now, since *she* came in and destroyed my memories; she obliterated everything beautiful that I had hidden away, and there is nothing left.

LOUISE. That is your deliverance!

THE GENTLEMAN. Look, how empty it seems, in there! As if we had moved — and up there, as though after a fire!

LOUISE. Who is this coming?

[Agnes comes in, agitated and afraid, she pulls herself together and goes toward the gate, where the confectioner is sitting.]

LOUISE *[To Gentleman]*. It's Agnes! What does this mean?

THE GENTLEMAN. Agnes! — Then it's beginning to clear up!

THE CONFECTIONER *[Quite calmly]*. Good evening, my child, where have you been?

AGNES. I have been out for a walk.

THE CONFECTIONER. Mama has asked for you several times.

AGNES. Has she? Well, I am here now.

THE CONFECTIONER. Go down and help her fire the little oven, like a good girl.

AGNES. Is she angry with me?

THE CONFECTIONER. She couldn't be angry with you.

AGNES. Yes, indeed, she can, but she never says anything.

THE CONFECTIONER. Isn't that good, my child, to escape scolding!

[*Agnes goes in.*]

THE GENTLEMAN [*To Louise*]. Does he know, or doesn't he?

LOUISE. May he live in his ignorance —

THE GENTLEMAN. But what has happened? A rupture? [*To the confectioner.*] Mr. Starck!

THE CONFECTIONER. Is there something —?

THE GENTLEMAN. I thought — Did you see any one go out of here a while ago?

THE CONFECTIONER. I saw the ice-man, and the postman, I believe.

THE GENTLEMAN. Oh! — [*To Louise.*] Perhaps it was a mistake — a misunderstanding — I can't explain this. Perhaps he is deceiving us. What did the lady say over the phone?

LOUISE. She wanted to talk to you, master.

THE GENTLEMAN. How did it sound? Was she excited?

LOUISE. Yes!

THE GENTLEMAN. It seems rather brazen to appeal to me in a situation of this kind.

LOUISE. But the child!

THE GENTLEMAN. Think of it, I met my daughter on the stairs, and when I asked if she recognized me, she called me uncle and then informed me that her father was upstairs. But, to be sure, he is her stepfather — and he has all the rights — they have eradicated and slandered me.

LOUISE. A carriage is stopping at the corner.

[*The confectioner withdraws.*]

THE GENTLEMAN. I do hope that they are not coming back — so that I'll have them hanging over me. — Think, to hear my child sing her father's praises, the other — and then to have the old story begin again: "Why did you marry me?" — "You know well enough but why did you want me?" — "You know well enough," and so on until the end of time.

LOUISE. It's the consul coming.

THE GENTLEMAN. How does he look?

LOUISE. He doesn't seem to be in a hurry.

THE GENTLEMAN. Rehearsing what he is going to say, does he look satisfied?

LOUISE. More thoughtful than —

THE GENTLEMAN. Oh, yes — It was always like that; if he came anywhere near that woman, he became a traitor to me — She could charm everybody, but me. To me she was coarse, simple, ugly, stupid, and to the others she was refined, elegant, beautiful, intelligent! All the hatred that my independence aroused, gathered about her in endless sympathy —

she, the one who treated me unjustly! Through her they sought to influence and control me, wound me, and in the end kill me.

LOUISE. Now I'll go in and stay by the phone — this storm must pass over, too!

THE GENTLEMAN. People can't endure independence; they want one to obey them; all of my business subordinates down to the watchman wanted me to obey them; and as I didn't care to obey them, they called me a despot. The servants in the house wanted me to eat warmed-over food, but when I didn't care to do so, they set their mistress against me, and finally she wanted me to obey the child, but then I left, and then they set up a conspiracy against the tyrant — that was I! Hurry in now, Louise, and we'll spring the mine out here.

[The Brother comes in from left.]

THE GENTLEMAN. The result! — No details!

THE BROTHER. Can't we sit down, I am a bit tired —

THE GENTLEMAN. I'm afraid it's wet from the rain.

THE BROTHER. But if you have been sitting there, it can't be dangerous for me!

THE GENTLEMAN. As you wish! — Where is my child?

THE BROTHER. May I start at the beginning?

THE GENTLEMAN. Begin!

THE BROTHER [*Slowly*]. I reached the station

with Gerda — I discovered him and Agnes at the ticket window —

THE GENTLEMAN. Agnes was there then?

THE BROTHER. Yes, and your child! — Gerda stayed outside and I went up to them. At that moment he gave Agnes the tickets, but when she saw that the tickets were third class, she threw them in his face and rushed out for a carriage.

THE GENTLEMAN. Oh!

THE BROTHER. As soon as I started to get an explanation from the gentleman, Gerda hurried forward and took the child, and disappeared in the crowd.

THE GENTLEMAN. What did the gentleman say?

THE BROTHER. Well, do you know, when one comes to hear the other side, et cetera —

THE GENTLEMAN. I want to hear! — He was of course not as bad as we had thought, he too has his good points —

THE BROTHER. Just so.

THE GENTLEMAN. Might have known! But you will hardly expect me to sit here and listen to a eulogy of my enemy?

THE BROTHER. No, not a eulogy, but mitigating circumstances —

THE GENTLEMAN. Would you ever listen to me, when I informed you of the true conditions? Yes, you listened and answered in disapproving silence, as if I were sitting there lying. You always stood up for the wrong side, and you believed lies, and all because — because

you were infatuated with Gerda. But there was also another motive.

THE BROTHER. Don't say any more, brother. —

You see things only from your point of view.

THE GENTLEMAN. Do you want me to see my position from my enemy's point of view? I can hardly lift my hand against myself, can I?

THE BROTHER. I am not your enemy.

THE GENTLEMAN. Yes, when you are friendly with the one who has been unjust to me. — Where is my child?

THE BROTHER. I don't know.

THE GENTLEMAN. What was the outcome at the station?

THE BROTHER. The gentleman took a train . south.

THE GENTLEMAN. And the others?

THE BROTHER. Disappeared.

THE GENTLEMAN. Then I may have them hanging over me again. [*Pause.*] Did you notice whether the others went with him?

THE BROTHER. No, he went alone.

THE GENTLEMAN. Then we are rid of him at least! Number two! — Remaining: the mother and child!

THE BROTHER. Why is the upper apartment lighted?

THE GENTLEMAN. Because they have forgotten to put out the lights.

THE BROTHER. I'll go up and —

THE GENTLEMAN. No, don't go! — I can only

hope that they won't return! To go over, and over the whole thing.

THE BROTHER. But part of it is cleared up —

THE GENTLEMAN. And the worst remains —

Do you think they'll come back?

THE BROTHER. She won't, as she would have to make restoration in the presence of Louise.

THE GENTLEMAN. I had forgotten that! She really honored me by being jealous! I believe that there is justice in the world after all.

THE BROTHER. And then she found out that Agnes was younger.

THE GENTLEMAN. Poor Gerda! But in such a case as this one must not tell human beings that justice exists, an avenging justice — for it is not true that they love justice! And one must handle their dirt delicately, and Nemesis — that is only for others! — There is the telephone. It sounds like a rattlesnake, the telephone. —

[*Pause. Louise comes down to window.*]

THE GENTLEMAN [*To Louise*]. Did the snake sting?

LOUISE [*At window*]. May I speak with you, master?

THE GENTLEMAN [*At window*]. Speak.

LOUISE. The lady is going to her mother in Dalecarlia to settle down there with the child.

THE GENTLEMAN [*To the Brother*]. The mother and child in the country, and in a good home! Now it has cleared up! Oh!

LOUISE. And the lady asked me to go up and put out the lights in the apartment.

THE GENTLEMAN. Do so immediately, Louise, and pull down the shades so we'll be spared looking in. [*Louise goes.*]

THE CONFECTIONER [*Coming out again, looking up*]. I think the storm has passed over.

THE GENTLEMAN. It really seems to have cleared; then the moon will be out.

THE BROTHER. It was a glorious rain!

THE CONFECTIONER. Splendid!

THE GENTLEMAN. Look, there is the lamp-lighter at last.

THE LAMPLIGHTER [*Comes in, and lights the lamp*].

THE GENTLEMAN. The first light! Now it is fall! That is our time of year, gentlemen! Twilight is beginning, but with it comes understanding that lights the way like a dark lantern, and keeps one from going astray.

[*Louise is seen through windows above; soon after it becomes dark up there.*]

THE GENTLEMAN [*To Louise*]. Close the windows, and pull down the shades, then the memories can go to sleep, in peace! The peace of old age! And this fall I will move from the silent house.

CURTAIN.

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