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The Dead don't care. A play in 3 acts.

Mann, Klaus

1943

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K L A U S M A N N

The Dead Don't Care

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A PLAY

in Three Acts

1943

PERSONS :

Professor James Van Loyden (Age about 65)
Alice McUlster, a Medium (age about 40)
Kadornath, a Teacher of Yoga Gymnastics (age about 45; bearded and exotic)
Marceline Martock, the widow of a Czech violinist (age 23; melancholy, passionate, attractive)
Prince Igor Frolevsko, from St. Petersburg (age about 45; gifted with a velvety bass)
Princess Anna, his Wife (age about 50; gaudy, jolly, and corrupt)
Peter Brack, a Novelist, from London (age about 35; tall and lean, wears thick eye glasses)
Fifi Larue, an Aesthete, from Paris (ageless; freakish, dwarfish; speaks in a high falsetto)
Mrs. Potter, a Widow, from the Middle West (age about 45; moves in a wheeled chair)
Ted & Toy, the Twin Children of an Industrialist (age 20; frail, anaemic, precious)
Mr. Brown, from the FBI (age about 50; pink complexion; jovial and intelligent)
Two Policemen
Three Chinese Girls and one Negro Boy
Johnny

TIME : 1943

PLACE : Professor Van Loyden's home, called "Villa Pacific"--an isolated house on the beach in Southern California.

The three acts take place in a spacious living room situated on the same level with the garden. There are two visible doors--one, to the right, leading to the lobby, and a broad glass door, to the left. (Right and left from the audience.) The glass door can be covered with a dark curtain of heavy stuff. When open, one has the view of a Californian garden with the sea in the background.

The room is comfortably but not too sumptuously furnished with armchairs, several tables, a pianoforte, a phonograph, and so forth. The most conspicuous feature is a kind of altar in the middle of the background--the white marble bust of a pensive-looking, beautiful young woman on a pedestal adorned with flowers and candles. The pedestal bears the inscription JULIA in prominent gold letters.

ACT ONE

*

Night. The glass door at the left is covered.
The scene lies in an eerie twilight when the curtain rises. The only illuminated spot is the altar in the background, where several candles burn on the pedestal of the marble bust.
There is also one candle in front of Miss Alice McUlster, who is seated in the middle of the room, in a large, throne-like chair somewhat removed from the rest of the party, which forms an informal semicircle around her.
Next to Alice sits Professor Van Loyden; a little more distant, Peter Brack, Fifi Larue, Mrs. Potter (in her wheeled chair), Prince Igor Frolevsko, Ted & Toy (sitting hand in hand on a little bench), Princess Anna Frolevsko (as remote as possible from her husband), and, in the most distant corner, Marceline Martock. Kadornath, in his spectacular outfit, is the only one who stands - leaning against the wall, motionless, his arms crossed over his chest.

Alice: (very erect and well-composed in her portly chair, with closed eyes in a pale, rigid face; she chatters with a kind of forced nonchalance like a master-of-ceremonies or radio announcer, who has to keep talking at any price while the artist he introduces still delays his overdue appearance. Her voice sounds strangly mechanical and tinny as she prates:) Just take it easy, friends! Just relax!--that's all I request you to do. Relax completely. Don't watch me. Don't be impatient. Your dear ones on the other side may have cogent reasons to postpone their coming. They'll show up, all right. Eventually. Sooner or later. Don't urge them. Just relax. The blanker your minds, the better. Why don't you close

your eyes as I do. You'll find it so much easier to relax when your eyes are closed... Just take it easy...Close your eyes...That's it... thanks. Now your vibrations are less irritating...except...there is one sitter whose vibrations seem still rather fidgety...Mrs. Potter, why don't you relax like the others? Why don't you close your eyes? Please, my dear Mrs. Potter!

Mrs. Potter: (whispers, rather aghast:) How do you know that my eyes are open? Yours are closed. You can't see.

Alice: Never mind, Mrs. Potter...just relax... I wonder why our dear spirits are so strangely reluctant tonight. Very puzzling indeed. Even my little spirit guide seems to hesitate...Usually he comes through in almost no time...It's probably because we have a new sitter among us. That's what causes the delay, more than likely. Yes.

Mrs. Potter :(whispers to her neighbour:) She means me, doesn't she?

Alice: Never mind, my dear Mrs. Potter. Keep your eyes closed. It won't take long anymore. Another minute, or two, and I'll see the light. The good light...Yes. More than likely. Relax. There are red lights and green lights. More than likely. Green... (With a sudden sart, as if touched by something:) Yes...Hello,Patsy dear...Yes...Hello...What do you say? I can't get you, dear...yes...the communication is unusually poor tonight...We have a new guest here, yes...Mrs. Potter from Kalamazoo... Now, don't fly off, dear! I meant to ask you a favour. You know already what I want to ask? So you met Mr. Potter? Naturally...Yes... (She produces an abrupt, silvery giggle, as if tickled. Threatening the invisible spirit with her lifted index--all banter and hilarity:) Oh Patsy! What a devil you are! How naughty! Oh, dear me! (She laughs heartily.)

Mrs. Potter : What's the matter? What are you laughing about? Did my Ferdinand make one of his dirty cracks?

Alice: No, no, he doesn't make any cracks, quite the contrary. My friend on the other side just told me that your late husband keeps hiding since the moment he received your call.

Mrs. Potter: What a foolish thing to do! Poor Ferdinand! Probably thinks I'd scold him because of the accident. Of course, it was all his fault: he is such a poor driver, you know--how often have I warned him not to go too fast! If he had followed me, our new Buik wouldn't be in pieces now, and my poor leg wouldn't be broken, and my poor Ferdinand wouldn't be dead. So, in a sense, he really ought to have a bad conscience. Please, Miss McUlster, would you mind telling him on my behalf.....

Alice: (silences her with a rather imperial gesture:) Hush, Mrs. Potter! There are other voices...new vibrations...very puzzling, very wonderful... An unknown guest...He is eager to communicate with somebody in this room... If only I could see his features more distinctly! The contours of his figure are blurred...floating...watery...Yes, he must have to do with water...There are waves around him...a wrecked ship, tossed about like a nutshell...Is there anyone in this room whose dear one has passed over by being drowned in the ocean?

Marceline: (pale and trembling, with widened eyes:) Edward...are you here?....

Alice: (remains for some seconds silent and motionless, as if listening to her inner voices; then, with a bland smile, very gently:) Yes, he is here, Marceline...It's your dear one, no doubt...He blesses you...yes... He says he is very glad to find you in a good state of health...Yes...

Marceline: (extremely agitated:) Why can you see him--not I? Ask him to

materialize, Miss McUlster! Just for a minute! Just once! Why doesn't he appear? Why doesn't he talk to me?

Alice: Come, come, Marceline!...calm down! Your dear one seems rather grieved by your impatience...He shakes his head...he pales...There you are! He is gone...

Marceline: (utters a short, half-suppressed scream; then sits down and covers her face with her hands.)

Alice: Don't cry now, Marceline! He'll come back--if only we are patient... Just patient...Nice and calm and patient...

Mrs. Potter: What about Ferdinand? Still hiding? What a coward!

Alice: (smiling, listening:) Oh yes...hello!...How nice!...Really? Well, that is a surprise...As you say it, Miss Prixler...

Ted & Toy: (starting simultaneously at the sound of the name:) Prixler! Isn't that all too gorgeous? Our Prixler comes through again...

Alice: She wants to talk directly to you, Twins...Why don't you help yourself, dear Miss Prixler? Your little trumpet is here...right here to your left, on the table...

Ted: (breathless with expectation:) A direct voice communication...

Toy: She must have a message for us--something very important...

(The little trumpet, placed on a small, round table next to Alice, has been inconspicuous up to now. At this point, however, its wide end begins to glow--emanating a pale, greenish glimmer. At the same time the instrument seems lifted and moved, as it were, by invisible hands.)

Alice: (as the shining trumpet moves slowly through the room:) That's right, dearest Prixler...just talk to them...go ahead!... (The trumpet, meanwhile, seems to have lost its sense of direction: it zigzags helplessly over the heads of the sitters.)

Professor Van Loyden: (watching the hovering trumpet with passionate interest:) This is amazing! A spirit going astray...blinded by our glaring, earthly light, I suppose...

Peter Brack: Most extraordinary! The zigzags it performs follow a certain pattern. Don't you notice it, James?

Professor: A pentagram, I think...

Fifi Larue: Pauvre petit esprit... (The trumpet descends for one moment to the level of his head and touches his ear. He screams, in his highest falsetto:) Ah! Vous me chatouillez! You're tickling me, dear spirit! (The trumpet continues its uncertain flight.)

Ted & Toy: (try to lure the trumpet with soft, silvery exclamation:) Hey! Prixler dear! Here we are! Can't you see us?...No, that's the wrong direction...

Princess Anna: (around whose head the trumpet is now revolving:) I should say it is! My Lord, I hope it won't get entangled in my hair...

Alice: I am sure our dear spirit guest would appreciate a little more silence and concentration.

A raucous Voice: (speaking through the trumpet:) That's right.

Larue: (with another yell:) Mon Dieu...

Mrs. Potter and Princess Anna : (scream simultaneously.)

The Voice in the Trumpet: Shut up, all of you. I want to talk to the Twins.

Toy: (whispers:) How harsh her voice sounds! She seems in a dreadful humour...

The Voice: Do you think I can't hear you?

Ted: Have you caught a cold in your head, dear Prixler? Your voice is terribly hoarse...

The Voice: It just sounds that way, through the trumpet. In reality, I am as sweet and gentle as I've always been.

Ted & Toy: Sweet Prixler! Gentle Prixler! What is your message, dear?

The Voice: It concerns our art. I have changed my mind as regards Surrealism. My new teacher--a master spirit from the seventh plane--disapproves very definitely of the Surrealist style. He wants you to return to plain naturalism--odd as it may sound.

Ted: Plain naturalism? That's certainly odd enough...

Toy: It seems almost incredible. After all, it's from you that we learned how to be Surrealists...

Ted: You led our hands, sweet Prixler--or didn't you?

The Voice: I did. But I misled you. Surrealism is a fallacy, says my master spirit. Realism is more mysterious. Try to be realistic! Paint real flowers! real faces! real machines!

Ted: Machines? I might as well stayed home if I wanted to design wheels and screws and propellers.

The Voice: (more distant, as if withdrawing:) You've heard me, Twins. Wheels and screws and propellers... (The trumpet, with its light gone out, falls down to the floor.)

Ted & Toy: (flabbergasted:) Gosh!...

Alice: Thank you, dear Miss Prixler.

Ted: Has she vanished?

Alice: Completely. Here is Madame Pompadour.

Larue: (jubilates:) Je suis ravi. Tell her that, Alice! Tell her how enchanted I am to have her with me again.

Alice: (smiling, listening, always with closed eyes:) She blesses you. She looks lovely....Mais oui, Madame...Certainement...entendu...She wonders if your costume arrived, Monsieur.

Larue: My rococo outfit? En effet, it arrived a few hours ago. Dites Madame de ma part, that it came too late for tonight's séance; the jacket has to

be pressed , the silk is all crumpled--je regrette vivement...

Alice: Excuse me for interrupting you, Monsieur Larue; but Madame Pompadour is gone; in place of her, there are two very cute little dogs.

Princess Anna: Cho-Cho and Chi-Chi! my darlings! Let them talk to me, Miss McUlster! I am sure they have plenty of things to say...

(Two luminous trumpets rise from the little table and produce a barking duet as they fly through the room, straight to Princess Anna. One of the trumpets barks in a high-yelping voice, while the other has a deeper, more sonorous organ.)

Princess Anna: (as the two barking trumpets gyrate around her head:) Welcome, my darlings! welcome! It's grand to hear your beautiful songs again. Do you recognize Chi-Chi's fine soprano, Igor my friend? And Cho-Cho's expressive baritone? Isn't wonderful to have them around once more?

Prince Igor: (mumbles something unintelligible.)

Princess Anna: (almost weeping with joy:) Oh, my friend...my friend...I am so happy...so happy...Do you remember how cute and cheerful they were, the day we left Petersburg? They were already in the sleigh--nice and warm in my lap. But then, at the very last moment, that beastly Bolshevist discovered them and sneered at me, 'The dogs stay here, you capitalistic swine. They'll come handy for luncheon tomorrow...' (Her voice is choked up with tears, while the barking duet dies gradually away in a soft, melodious wail.)

Mrs. Potter: (embittered:) Even the dogs come through; only Ferdinand doesn't. Curious--isn't it?

Alice: (listening to her inner voices:) Hello...Yes?...I can't hear you... Is this Potter speaking? Mr. Ferdinand Potter from Kalamazoo?...Is your husband stout and short, Mrs. Potter? I am in contact with a fat little man...no hair, chubby face, rather angry-looking...It must be your dear one...

He says he is all right where he is...Yes...he blesses you...

Mrs. Potter: Tell him that the insurance company is going to pay me $ 25.000: that will make him feel better. And tell him that I have forgiven him for his lousy driving and also for...well, he knows what I mean.

Alice: Hello...please...Where are you, Mr. Potter?...Too bad: we're disconnected.

Mrs. Potter: That's just like him! Now he won't hear the news I was on the point of breaking.

Alice: It isn't his fault, though, this time. A stronger ghost interfered. Who is it? Who is here?

Professor: It's Julia--don't you recognize her vibrations? I knew she would come through tonight.

Alice: Why, of course...naturally...yes...this is Mrs. Van Loyden...How stupid of me, not to have identified her at first!....Or does she really look somehow strange?....What is wrong with you, Mrs. Van Loyden?

Professor: (with great anxiety:) Is she sick? Anything unpleasant happened?

Alice: Nothing of the kind, she says...Yes...I see...You don't need worry, Professor. Mrs. Van Loyden feels fine...better than ever...yes...

Professor: Why didn't she come, the day before yesterday? I was waiting for her the whole morning. She had promised some additional information for the seventeenth chapter. It should be ready by now; but how can I go on without her? Tell her how utterly helpless I am as soon as I lose her support.

Alice:(dryly:) She knows that.

Professor: Does she know how infinitely I love her?

Alice: (after a moment of listening:) Yes, Mrs. Van Loyden says she's aware of that too.

Professor: Ask her whether she still is fond of me.

Alice: (listens; then:) Yes...I see...Of course...

Professor: (avidly:) What is she saying?

Alice: Mrs. Van Loyden says that she loves you...yes...and that she will always love you...She wants me to underline the word "always"...She will always love you...yes...no matter what may happen to her.

Professor: (deeply moved:) Thank you, Julia, thank you. But what is it that might happen to you, dearest? What are you hinting at? Are you going to be transferred to a higher plane? Are any cosmic changes in the making? Tell me, Julia! I have a right to know!

Alice: (listening very intently:) Yes...yes, indeed, Mrs. Van Loyden... Is that so?...Well,well.... (To the Professor:) Mrs. Van Loyden says that she might be compelled to....

Kadornath: (interrupts the speaker by clearing his throat--discreetly but with a certain emphasis. He remains motionless while doing so, with his eyes fixed on Alice.)

Alice: ....What do you try to say, dear spirit? You might be compelled to...what?...How odd! Mrs. Van Loyden suddenly changes the subject of conversation....Now she talks about your book, Professor..... (To the spirit:) But that is perfectly all right, Mrs. Van Loyden.... I'm sure he'll understand... (To the Professor:) Your wife apologizes for her failure to come through, the day before yesterday. She was just en route to India, at the time, to gather material for the eighteenth chapter... Yes, I see, Madam....naturally...with the greatest pleasure...That sounds like a fine idea...

Professor: (gasping with suspence:) What is it, McUlster? What is she telling you?

Alice: The eighteenth chapter should deal exclusively with current politics, Mrs. Van Loyden suggests. She wants me to sit for dictation, tomorrow at

three PM...

Professor: Now, listen, Julia! Wait a moment! Do you really want me to upset the scheme we agreed upon? The 18th chapter, as you will remember, was to be devoted to the questions of Time and Space.

Alice: There are more urgent things to discuss, at this point--Mrs. Van Loyden says...Yes...she is greatly disturbed by the present world situation... India suffers, she says...the land of primeval wisdom, withering under the yoke of British Imperialism...yes...indeed...The war against the Axis is a ghastly mistake...yes...I can hear you...The principle of non-violence as taught by Mahatma Gandhi, the Great-Souled One, God bless him...If Hitler is a scourge of God--Mrs. Van Loyden says--we have to take the lashing... yes...How true!....We ought to be much more humble....yes...We are not humble enough....

Peter Brack: (whispers:) Most extraordinary, isn't it?

Alice: (listening:) ...It behooves all of us in this community to cry out our protest against the present slaughter--this futile, barbaric war... Yes...Our governments should be prodded to negotiate peace, better today than tomorrow--whatever the conditions...

Mrs. Potter: As I used to say to Ferdinand...

Professor: But all this is the theme of the Introduction and of the concluding chapter.

Alice: Mrs. Van Loyden feels the political angle should be more emphasized, throughout the whole composition. It is now--she says--that the Cosmos of Tomorrow is being molded, so far as our little realm--the realm of man--is concerned...Yes...This is indeed a striking formula...The eighteenth chapter will be called, "Against War: For the Inner Man!"

Ted & Toy: How lovely!

Prince Igor: (in his deep, velvety bass:) How profound!

Alice: Our dear teacher regrets that she has to retire now...Yes...Madam, I am looking forward to tomorrow's dictation...She blesses all of you... especially Kadomath...She kept thinking of you, Master, when she tourred your homeland, pain-stricken India...

Kadomath: (bows solemnly.)

Alice: She wishes you the best of luck, Prince Igor, for the progress of your expedition.

Prince Igor: Does she deem this night propitious for a telepathic trip to Greenland?

Alice: Most propitious indeed...She wants me to kiss Professor Van Loyden, on her behalf,...yes...

Professor: How much like her that is! How thoughtful and poetic!

Alice: Any other questions? Any messages for dear ones over there?

Marceline: (getting up from her chair, like a pupil talking to his teacher. In a dry little voice, but with obstinate determination:) I want to see my husband. I want Edward to materialize.

Alice: Well, my dear child, I am afraid...

Marceline: If Mrs. Van Loyden's ghost is as friendly and powerful as you say, why shouldn't she help my husband to become visible?

Professor: (whispers something to Alice.)

Alice : (after having listened, first to the Professor, then to her inner voice:) ...yes...all right...if you think so, Madam...I may go into trance... Music might be helpful? The Bohemian Melody, played by Edward Martock... Yes, we have the record...

Marceline: (with an outcry:) Not the Bohemian Melody! Please!

Alice: Sorry; Mrs. Van Loyden insists on this particular tune. It may attract your husband: that's what she says...Yes...and she wants complete darkness.

Professor: (tiptoes through the room and extinguishes all the lights, except for one candle in front of the marble bust. Then he turns on the phonograph. A Slavic melody can be heard--gentle and melancholy, executed by a violin with piano accompaniment.)

(The darkness is now almost complete. One can just discern the silhouette of Alice McUlster--writhing in her chair as in throes. Her respiration becomes more and more spasmodic; she gasps and groans; the upper part of her body sways to and fro, according to the rhythm of the recorded music. This macabre performance is suddenly interrupted by a penetrating scream--coming from:)

Marceline: (jumping up from her chair; covering her ears with her hands:) Stop it!! Stop the music! I can't stand it...it's driving me mad...Stop it, please...please... (Her voice dies away in a whimper as she makes a few steps.)

(Several members of the party get up; there is an uproar of confused exclamations and suggestions: "Poor child!" - "Stop the music!" - "One ought to turn on the light..." - "A glass of water..." etc.

Professor: (has meanwhile stopped the phonograph. Now he turns on the electric light, which fills the room with a sudden, merciless brightness.)

Marceline: (is stumbling towards the right door. Before she has reached it, she totters, on the point of fainting.)

Princess Anna: (rushes to her support. She props Marceline; almost carries her to the door, while trying to calm her:)Now, now...pauvre enfant...

come come!... Don't cry now, take it easy...C'est ça... that's better... that's my good girl... Now I take you upstairs and make you swallow "une fine": that's a brandy, you know— a nice, old one, "Napoléon, 1860."

Marceline: (convulsed with weeping, shaking and whimpering, she makes a tremendous effort to pull herself together:) Thank you, Madame...thank you ever so much...I'm all right now...Thanks.

Princess Anna: Nonsense, child. I'll take you up to your little room and see to it that you have all you need. (Whispers to her, with a cunning grin:) In fact, I feel like a little brandy myself... (She succeeds at last in transporting Marceline through the door. Both exit.)

Peter Brack: Dear Princess Anna. Always so motherly.

Mrs. Potter: Motherly, indeed. "Napoléon, 1860." (She utters a short, malicious laughter.)

Prince Igor: (in his deepest, most sonorous voice:) An excellent brand, Madame.

Mrs. Potter: I don't doubt it, your Highness.

Professor: (has meanwhile been occupied with awakening Alice from her trance; but in vain.)

Alice : (remains in a state of cataleptic sleep—a condition of peculiar muscular rigidity in which the body and limbs keep any position in which they are placed. She breathes stertorously: it sounds almost like a snoring, as in apoplexy.)

Professor: (rather helplessly:) Wake up, McUlster! The séance is over... My Lord, this is one of the deepest trances I've ever seen... (He pats her face, tickles her, slaps her slighty.) No reaction at all—isn't it amazing? Her whole organism has become anaesthetic. Can't you help her, Kadomath?

Kadornath: (strides majestically toward Alice's chair; touches her forehead, lips and eyelids with his finger tips, then lifts one of her arms and moves it in a swinging motion.)

Mrs. Potter: (whispers:) That will do the trick...

Alice: (opens her eyes; her body relaxes, the cramp is over.)

Larue: La voilà!...Mais c'est un miracle!

Kadornath: (shakes his head--rejecting the compliment. Dignified and erect, he returns to his place at the wall.)

Mrs. Potter: (overwhelmed:) What a wonderful man! Modest and efficient.

Professor: (to Alice:) Feeling better now?

Alice: (wide-eyed, innocent:) Better? Why? Was there something wrong with me?

Professor: (with a good-natured laughter:) Nothing wrong, McUlster--not really. It was just a pretty deep trance, that's all. You might still be gone, if it were not for our excellent Master Yogi. You ought to thank him at least.

Alice: Has Kadornath helped me to come back? (Without looking at him:) How very kind of you, Master. Thank you ever so much. (To the Professor:) Did Marceline's dear one materialize?

Professor: No, I am sorry to say...

Peter Brack: He might have come through, though, if the young lady hadn't disrupted the séance. How very tiresome of her to stop the music, just when the vibrations began to quiver in the most promising fashion.

Alice: Poor Marceline. She must be terribly disappointed.

Professor : (with authority:) Not for long, I daresay. I am sure her husband will come through, in the end.

Mrs. Potter: Will Mr. Martock actually appear? That's good news: I'm dying to see him. What a sensitive artist he was! - and so popular, too. All the Kalamazoo papers ran their boldest headlines when the dispatch came through that Edward Martock was drowned in a shipwreck on the Atlantic. "Celebrated young violinist of Czech descent on his way from Canada to England, where he intended to join the Czech Legion... Liner torpedoed by Nazis... Many women and children drowned... Martock among the victims..." It would indeed be a thrill to meet such a celebrity, if only as a ghost.

Professor: Your curiosity will be satisfied, good woman. The late Mrs. Van Loyden has promised us that Edward will appear - hasn't she, McUlster?

Alice: Why, yes...she intimated something to that effect...

Professor: (pointing at the marble bust, with a grandiose, rather imperial gesture:) Do we have her word that Edward Martock will materialize? Yes or no, McUlster?

Alice: (somewhat nonplussed:) Yes, Professor...Yes.

Professor: That's all I wanted to know. (He strides to the bust and addresses his solemn words to the likeness of his late wife:) I thank you Julia,on behalf of Marceline and of this little community. Tonight's séance has been another great and stirring experience due to your infinite kindness. We are only humble seekers of truth; but you, my beloved wife, are illuminated. We are mortal and fallible; but you are glorified with immortality. Where would we be without your guidance and your inspiration? Invisible, you are always in our midst - sheding upon us the divine light of Love, Peace, and Wisdom. Thanks to you, Julia, this house has become an oasis of tolerance and joy - remote from the crimes and follies of a blood-stained, insanity-stricken world. May we be vouchsafed the balm of your presence, here below and at the next stage of our pilgrimage. Amen.

(As soon as he has ended, the Three Chinese Girls - aged about fifteen, thirteen and eleven - enter from the right, dressed in their colourful native costumes, carrying trays with tea, sandwiches and cookies. They are followed by the little Negro Boy (about ten years old) and begin presently to fix the disorderly room - moving chairs and tables, drawing the curtain from the glass door at the left. The dark garden becomes visible, with a black palm tree profiled against the sky.)

Professor: (rubbing his hands, gleefully:) Our midnight snack! Well, well, well.. Now let's have a look at these fine things on your tray, young lady. (Choosing among the sandwiches:) Which one do you recommend?

The Chinese Girl: (chirps something cheerful and melodious but inintelligeable in her native tongue.)

Professor: Of course, I forget again! She does not yet understand our language.

Mrs. Potter: They are cute - aren't they, though? Where did you pick them up, Professor?

Professor: We are indeed most fortunate to have them.

Mrs. Potter: Are they Japanese?

Professor: Of course not. Their father is a famous Chinese scholar - killed by the misguided Japanese, in Shanghai. He was a friend of our friend Kadornath. That is how I came to know these lovely girls when they came to this country, as fatherless refugees.

Mrs. Potter: And the coloured kid? Is he too the child of a Chinese celebrity?

Negro Boy: (presenting a tray with cookies to Mrs. Potter:) I'm Curley, Ma'am. Curley, from Columbus, North Carolina. Any cookies for you tonight?

Mrs. Potter: Thank you, sonny: I shouldn't, really, because of my line. But I can't resist...

Negro Boy: Well, I suppose that's all, folks. Sold out, for tonight. No cookies left. We may as well go to bed. Good night-

(Exit, with the Three Chinese Girls.)

Mrs. Potter: (eating cookies, to Alice:) You should have tried these cookies, dear. They're as dainty as could be.

Alice: Thank you, dear, but I don't seem to feel like cookies - not after this terrible séance tonight. It was quite a fiasco - wasn't it ?

Mrs. Potter: A fiasco? Now, come, dear! Don't exaggerate!

Peter Brack: It was most stimulating. I enjoyed every minute of it.

Mrs. Potter: So did I, although it is a pity that I didn't have the opportunity to chat a little with my Ferdinand. He would have been thrilled to learn that the insurance company will have to pay all that dough, after all. I hope there will be another chance.

Peter Brack: Julia's remarks were more suggestive than ever. Something to think about. (To the Professor:) Your book will certainly be a sensation, old man. Julia's political views are as controversial and bold as they are truthful and inspiring.

Professor: I am Julia's mouthpiece and prophet - whatever she may have to say. Nothing on earth - no conceivable pressure or persuasion could ever prevent me from spreading her lofty message.

Toy: (to Ted, with whom she has been whispering:) There you are, Ted, naughty lizard! Did you hear what the Professor said? We have to accept the advice granted to us by our spirit guides - no matter how intricate and perturbing the suggestions happen to be.

Ted: sulkingly:) But to drop Surrealism! Imagine! The cause I have suffered for! And, then, it would mean such a triumph for the wicked old man in Pittsburgh.

Toy: Never mind Dad. He is just a half-wit who doesn't even know the difference between Surrealism and Naturalism.

Ted: You are so light-minded, almost frivolous. A real humming-bird - that's what you are. A careless squirrel; an inspired mouse. To me, Surrealism is our baby; I hate to abandon it. To you, Toy, it seems to be just - a toy.

Toy: How cruel you are, little tiger! Now you have hurt me - very badly, too. My heart aches. I'd better go to bed. (She gets up.) Good night, Uncle James. Good night, Aunt Alice. (To the marble bust:) Good night, dear wonderful Aunt Julia.

Ted: (following her through the rooms:) Don't hate me, butterfly! Let's meditate together. Prixler will help us. (Hastily:) Good night, Uncle James, good night, Aunt Alice, good night, dear wonderful Aunt Julia. (Ted and Toy, both exit.)

Mrs. Potter: Strange kind of lad, your nephew - isn't he? Rather on the eccentric side, I should think.

Professor: Ted is not my nephew, to begin with. He just calls me "Uncle" because he is devoted to me as if I were his father.

Mrs. Potter: But he loathes his dad.

Professor: That's why he calls me "Uncle".

Peter Brack: The Twins are fascinating. I call them the anaemic cherubims. They live in a magic world. The only reality they recognize is Art - and, of course, the voice of their late governess, that illuminated Miss Prixler.

Mrs. Potter: The boy ought to be in the Army.

Professor: (first aghast; then indignated:) Mrs. Potter!! Please!

Mrs. Potter: Why, I just thought... for educational reasons...

Professor: Mechanized warfare - mass slaughter, for educational reasons! Imagine!

Peter Brack: Most extraordinary.

Professor: You should remember, dear woman, that such hideous things as War, Army, and the like, are not to be mentioned in the Villa Pacific. It's not only that we disapprove of them; we don't believe in their reality.

Larue: Vous comprenez? C'est bien simple. Pour nous autres, dans cette maison bénie, la guerre n'existe pas.

Peter Brack: If a group of people intensely disbelieve the reality of a phenomenon, the reality of this phenomenon inevitably dwindles. The so-called Second World War, therefore, becomes somewhat less real as we ignore, or rather, deny, the validity of its existence. Clear enough, Mrs. Potter?

Mrs. Potter: Perfectly clear. Kind of cunning, too. I'll certainly remember the lesson. Can you forgive me, Professor, for my terrible slip?

Professor: Wholeheartedly, good woman. Every newcomer in this circle needs some time to acquaint himself with our philosophy.

Mrs. Potter: You're the kindest old boy I've ever laid eyes on, Mr. Van Loyden. Almost a saint. I love you. And now I'd better be going, or rather, some Samaritan must help me to get upstairs. I trust one of these gentlemen will be gracious enough to carry a poor old woman?

Larue: Mais certainement, Madame! Il me fera grand plaisir de vous aider. Si vous permettez... (He tries to lift her from the wheeled chair.)

Mrs. Potter:(with a shrieking laughter:) Dear me! no! I'm afraid you're not quite husky enough for that job, my poor little Fifi. I'm heavy-weight, you know. (Looking around:) Is there nobody else to risk it? I might ask Mr. Brack; but, then, I don't know... He somehow frightens me.

Peter Brack: Why is that, Mrs. Potter? I am utterly innocuous.

Mrs. Potter: That's what you want us women to believe. But you don't fool me, Mr. Brack: I know how naughty you are. One is not illiterate, after all. I've read your "Symphony in Jazz", all right. Dear me! What a novel! It simply couldn't be more cynical. A lot of fun, though - really, a lot of fun.

Peter Brack: (in an icy voice:) I am sorry but I don't remember having written such a book.

Mrs. Potter: (laughs heartily:) You don't remember? That's a good one! You don't recall the title of your most successful novel - don't you? That's just like you, Mr. Brack. Naughty - that's what you are.

Peter Brack: The man who wrote "Symphony in Jazz" may have been called Peter Brack - a vain and treacherous skeptic. Happily, he died. The Peter Brack who talks to you at this moment, has nothing in common with his infamous predecessor.

Mrs. Potter: Well, my dear, I just wonder if the"first" Mr. Brack - the wicked one - is as dead as all that. I don't trust you, that's all. (Looking at Kadornath:) Our mute friend, over there, that's a different kind of fellow. He is O.K. - muscles of steel and a heart of gold. In his arms, I'll feel safe. How is it, Master Kadornath?Will you be kind enough to transport a wretched cripple up to the second floor?

Kadornath: (nods gravely; then strides solemnly across the scene and begins to move Mrs. Potter's wheeled chair.)

Mrs. Potter: (jubilates as she approaches the door:) Isn't he cute, though, our silent Mr. Koudoulu, or whatever his name is! He does it with Yoga, you know. Well, good night, folks: I'll be seeing you. And thank you ever so much, Professor, for a gorgeous evening! (The remaining persons mumble a slightly embarrassed "Good night", while Kadornath pushs the wheeled chair through the open door. Both exit.)

Professor: May she have pleasant dreams. Poor woman.

Peter Brack: She lost her husband in a motorcar accident, didn't she?

Alice: That's right. Her Ferdinand was killed. She got away with a broken leg and a minor nervous breakdown.

Peter Brack: That's too bad: why wasn't she killed as well? - Ten years ago I might have made some evil crack of this kind. Today, I feel sincerely and deeply sorry for silly dear Mrs. Potter. In fact, I succeed in almost liking her. Isn't that extraordinary? I have overcome my nasty malice altogether.

Professor: Thanks to Julia. Isn't wonderful?

Peter Brack: Yes, I am profoundly obliged to your late wife, dear friend. Whatever wisdom I may possess, it is all due to her.

Larue: Mais ça va sans dire, cher ami. All of us would be moral wrecks, without that adorable Madame Van Loyden. (He bows gracefully to the marble bust.) Of course, my personal friend in the other world, la grande Popadour, is incomparable in her own way. Dites-moi, Madeloiselle Alice, was she angry with me because of my unsuitable costume?

Alice: Not really angry; just a bit disappointed. She seems indeed very eager to see you in your new rococo outfit.

Larue: She wants me to look like one of her intimates! C'est charmant,

n'est-ce pas?... You'll excuse me now: I have to fly to my room to unpack my wardrobe. The fine old brocades and laces are more delicate than cobwebs or even than a materialized spirit. (Addressing himself first to the marble bust, then to the Professor, finally to the rest of the party:) Madame; mon maitre; Mademoiselle, Messieurs; bon soire Je vous quitte. A demain. (Exit.)

Prince Igor: (who, during the past minutes, has been silently absorbed in a large map he produced out of his pocket:) No doubt, I'll just have to follow the course of the Mackenzie River to reach the village of Aklawik tonight. As Ivan Ivanovitch informed me this morning, via telepathic express, there will be quite an occasion at the hut of the Eskimo chieftain, with plenty of vodka and caviar. (Looking at his watch:) No time to lose. I rush. (While moving toward the door, as if talking to himself:) I only hope that the Princess is not drunk again

Professor: Is your wife supposed to be your only control tonight? In this case, I suggest that Peter join her in the guard. If the Princess is full of whiskey, our enemies will contest the validity of her testimony.

Prince Igor: Do you really think, Professor, that anybody would dare to question the authenticity of my experiment?

Professor: I am afraid so, dear Prince. We are watched and distrusted by a wicked, skeptical world.

Peter Brack: Most extraordinary, isn't it? - the instinctive aversion of the average to the unknown, revolutionary. Prince Igor's situation is indeed akin to that of Christopher Columbus. Men like you, Your Highness, and Professor Van Loyden, explore new continents of the soul, as the heroes of the Renaissance discovered the untrodden lands of the globe. I don't know whom to admire more.

Prince Igor: (very solemnly:) Thank you, Peter Brack. I appreciate your fine remarks. May we go now? My friend Iven Ivanovitch is waiting for me, thousands of miles from here. Good night, friends. (He nods gravely to the Professor, Alice, and the marble bust.)

Professor: Good night, Prince Igor - or rather, bon voyage. And don't forget to keep the logbook up-to-date. Everything has to be entered - weather conditions, the mileage covered, and so forth.

Peter Brack: As you know, it is my sole literary ambition, at this point, to render Prince Igor's travel account rendable and exact - a more exciting and more intricate task, for that matter, than is the composition of any novel or play. Good night, friends. After you, Your Highness. (He and Prince Igor exit.)

(There is a short silence as Alice and the Professor are left alone. Then:)

Alice: You look worried, Professor. Is there anything I can do for you?

Professor: I don't think so, thanks. (After another pause:) Yes, you are right. I am worried. It's because of Marceline. Why didn't her husband come through?

Alice: You know how the spirits are: wayward, unpredictable. You can't force them, after all. I tried certainly hard enough to bring about the materialization.

Professor: I know, McUlster, I know. It's not that I hold you responsible for Marceline's disappointment. And still I can't help feeling that we are somehow to blame for Edward's evasiveness. Don't misunderstand me, Alice! Of course, I realize that it is by no means your fault; but it might be ours.

Alice: And what if it were hers? She irritates or bores him perhaps. The ghosts are extremely touchy.

Professor: (shaking his head; musingly:) Possible, but not likely. Marceline is not the irritating type. Don't you think she is lovely?

Alice: She's all right, I suppose. Nothing unusual about her, though - as far as I can see.

Professor: Nothing unusual? I wonder... To me, she is unusually attractive. I wished she were my child. If Julia and I had had one, it might be like Marceline - shy and proud and obstinate and graceful.

Alice: (with a smile:) As proud and obstinate as you are, Professor?

Professor: As gracefully shy as Julia... (He smiles; then, serious again:) At any rate, there is something wrong, indeed, unbearable about her being frustrated and lonely, in this house of happiness and joy. I am happy, for I have Julia. Prince Igor has his telepathic adventure; Peter Brack, his insights and speculations. Fifi Larue enjoys his intercourse with Madame Pompadour; the Twins live in the awe of their governess; even poor Mrs. Potter and Princess Anna receive some encouragement from the spirit world. Only Marceline is left without any comfort.

Alice: Maybe her dear one will come through at the next séance. I shall make a particular effort...

Professor: But the next séance seems terribly remote. To think that this sweet young woman may lie on her bed, at this very moment - all in tears; distressed, forlorn, hopeless. It would be awful if so young and faithful a human soul lost confidence in the promise of Spiritualism. No, I don't want this to happen. I must talk to her, explain her the situation - now, without delay.

Alice: She's probably asleep...

Professor: I don't think so. She is not in the kind of state in which one falls asleep, easily and softly. Why don't you find out, McUlster? Just tell her to come down here.

Alice: (hesitates:) I don't know if that is a good idea...

Professor: (rather gruffly:) That's up to me to decide, isn't it? - Now, will you go and call her, or do you want me to go upstairs myself?

Alice: (with an irony which he seems to ignore:) Dear me! - no. That would be too dreadful for words. See you tomorrow when your wife is ready for dictation.

Professor: Good enough. And make it urgen - with Marceline, I mean.

Alice: (looks at him, in silence; shrugs her shoulders. Exit.)

Professor: (alone, he stands motionless for a while in front of the marble bust. Then he begins to whisper:) Julia... Julia dear, my dear wife; my love; my beloved Julia... Can you hear me?...Can you help me?... Listen! Listen and help! I need you. A beautiful young human being, Marceline, come here, to your altar - seeking advice and comfort. I am fond of her - not in love: how could I? I am always in love with you... But this child-like young widow is indeed very lovable. I would hate to see her faith in me disappointed. She expects everything from my contacts with the spirit world; in other words, she expects the salvation from you and your highly developed friends. I implore you, Julia!...

(The door to the right has opened noiselessly; Marceline appears, in a long, white nightgown of heavy silk.)

Marceline: You wanted to see me, Professor?

Professor: (somewhat disconcerted:) Oh, it's you, Marceline... Yes, indeed.... as Alice told you... So you were not yet asleep?

Marceline: It seems I never am, before six o'clock in the morning. The ocean keeps me awake.

Professor: The noise of the surf disturbs you? I am sorry to hear that.

Marceline: It's not only the surf; it's the waves... They are bad. I must always listen to them. And then, the nights are chilly here, too. I'm freezing - you see... (She shudders.)

Professor: I may close the door to the garden...

Marceline: Never mind. If you just pull the curtain over the opened door. (As the Professor has done what she asked him to do:) Thank you ever so much. That's better now. I don't have to see the ocean...

Professor: What else can I do for you? Something to drink, perhaps?

Marceline: Thank you, no. Just a few minutes ago, the Princess recommended the same medicine to me. But I've made up my mind not to drink anymore. - It doesn't help. Nothing helps.

Professor: Nothing?

Marceline: Not even the Master Yogi. The other night he attempted to hypnotize me into sleep. Another flop. I suppose I am incurable.

Professor: What a thing to say! There is a remedy for every disease.

Marceline: Not for mine. Or rather, I know only too well <u>what</u> would sooth the dreadful pain in my heart, in my head, in my hands. And you know it too, Professor. What's the use of talking?

Professor: You must learn to be patient, child...

Marceline: (with increasing violence:) Patient? What does that mean? ... I am sick and tired of words; they all seem so trite and empty. It must be pleasant to live under a vow of silence as Kadornath does. If he pledged himself not to pronounce a word before his native land is liberated, why should I not keep quiet until the day when Edward speaks to me?

Professor: But he <u>did</u> speak to you, half-an-hour ago, through the mouth of our friend McUlster.

Marceline: Why should I need a medium to communicate with my beloved? I shall never quite understand it. If he is able to talk to <u>any one</u> in the world - why doesn't he talk to <u>me</u> ?

Professor: Try to be logical, my dear child! Why can you not communicate directly with those you wish to address on our earthly plane but who happen to be away? You need the medium of a telephone to reach them, or some other instrument of transmission - mail, radio, telegraph. It's the same thing with the spirit world. Your husband, since he passed over, depends on a medium to come in contact with you. Of course, his message is meant for you - not for Alice McUlster. She is only the tool, the transmitter, the receiving station.

Marceline: But what guarantee do I have that she does not falsify Edward's words? She might omit or add things; she might cheat me...

Professor: Impossible. Not Alice. She is the most reliable medium in the annals of psychic science. We have been collaborating for the last six years. To question the integrity and mediumistic genius of Alice McUlster, means to doubt the truthfulness of my own philosophic work.

Marceline: I didn't mean to suggest...

Professor: I know, Marceline; don't apologize! I understand your suspicions. You will overcome them: I am sure of that. Did you read the manuscript I gave you the other day?

Marceline: "The Cosmos of Tomorrow"? To tell the truth: not yet. It seems so hard for me to concentrate on anything, except my own despair...

Professor: I am sorry. You ought to read the two opening chapters at least. You know, of course, that the whole scheme and most of the leading thoughts were conveyed to me from the other side. Twice a week, Alice comes in touch with my late wife, Julia, and takes dictation from her. The authenticity of her message is self-evident. No human brain is powerful enough to conceive such an abundance of great ideas. "The Cosmos of Tomorrow" will turn out to be a landmark in the history of modern thought: I can say that, in all modesty. For it is not my book but Julia's.

Marceli

Marceline: And Alice is the only go-between between the late Mrs. Van Loyden and you?

Professor: Julia would never agree to work with anyone else. She adores Miss McUlster. "The best secretary I've ever had", these are the words she used, just a few days ago.

Marceline: You mean, these are the words Miss McUlster pronounced, on Mrs. Van Loyden's behalf.

Professor: What's the difference? As soon as Alice goes into trance, she ceases to be an individual. All she does is to repeat - conscientiously, word by word - the messages she receives.

Marceline: And you have never had the desire to hear Julia's voice directly?

Professor: I did hear it once, Christmas two years ago. On that occasion, Julia graciously materialized and had some affable words for everybody present.

Marceline: (avidly:) So she did materialize, did she? That must have been wonderful. Did she look familiar? As beautiful as you remembered her?

Professor: Lovelier than ever. Of course, I didn't see much of her face; but the glimpse I caught is unforgettable.

Marceline: Just a glimpse? Did she vanish so quickly?

Professor: Her face dissolved almost immediately, while other parts of her remained visible for about seven minutes - her hands and her shoulders, for instance.

Marceline: Did you recognize her hands? Could you touch her shoulders?

Professor: (with a paternal smile:) Your ideas of such phenomena seem somewhat naive, my child. The stuff in which ghosts appear is not solide and tengible. Don't you know what ectoplasm is?

Marceline: I may have a vague conception...

Professor: Well, ectoplasm is a floating substance - a kind of dynamic

gas - developing from the organism of the entranced medium. It is from this nebulous material that the materialized entities are built up. The whole process is extremely complicated; that's why it takes so depressingly long, at imes, until a materialization comes through. I know of one medium who sat for more than two years before anything happened.

Marceline: But does every medium produce this magic substance?

Professor: Yes, every medium emanates extoplastic energies, to a certain extent, and has therefore potential materializing power. But very few seem capable of supplying ectoplasm in a sufficient quantity for the building up of complete forms. That is why most apparitions remain more or less fragmentary.

Marceline: I other words, the spirit has to accept a living person's ectoplastic emanation, not only as his cover, but actually as his body?

Professor: That's correct. During the whole time of the phenomenon the materialized spirit is in obvious physiological connexion with the medium. The physiological contact is sometimes perceptible in the form of a thin cord joining the structure with the medium - something like the umbilical cord joining the embryo to its parent.

Marceline: It seems all so odd...

Professor: Nature is never odd but always wonderful. The spirit realm is subjected to the rules of nature as is our earthly sphere. The more you will know about spiritualism, the more natural will you find its doctrines and implications.

Marceline: Of course, I'm just a beginner. It's only one year since... since I began to occupy myself with the other world.

Professor: So you were not concerned with metaphysical issues, as long as you had your husband?

Marceline: Of course not. I was happy. Life here below seemed completely satisfactory. Why should I have worried about life in the other world?

Professor: The blow of Edward's loss would have been less cruel, if you had already realized, at the time, that death is not the end of our life as individuals - just a change of our physical condition. A transformation - that's what it is; a dropping away our material body. We put it off, as we put off a suit of clothes. It is only forms that perish; life never dies.

Marceline: I don't know. Maybe. I hope so.

Professor: Hope is not sufficient, Marceline. I want you to believe. Providence has brought you to this house. We want to help you, and may be able to do so. But we need your support, your faith.

Marceline: I was full of faith when I first came to the Villa Pacific. I had read your writings; I admired you. All my disappointments with other spiritists were forgotten: they seemed ridiculous fakes, compared with you and Alice. But gradually, little by little, I begin to realize that this is another fiasco. Edward will not appear.

Professor: Why do you say such things? Why do you torment yourself?

Marceline: I don't torment myself. It's just that I no longer indulge in illusions. Edward will not appear. He has ceased to love me.

Professor: Marceline! This is blasphemy!

Marceline: Blasphemy? To me, it sounds rather like a sentence of death. I can't live without him.

Professor: That's what I thought, before I saw the light. Believe me, Marceline! I know the agonies you are passing through - know them only too well. When Julia passed away, I experienced the same abyssmal affliction.

Marceline: It must have been different, though. I am sure you adored your wife, but she was not all you possessed. You had your work and your fame, your pride and task as a scholar. But I have nothing - no country, no

friends, no duties. I am uprooted, derelict - a fish without water, a shadow without substance. He shaped my thoughts, molded my character, he gave me consciousness, joy, life, will, power, faith - everything.

Professor: You were very young when you met him?

Marceline: Seventeen - so they said. But in reality I was not yet born, at the time. I moved and talked like a sleep-walker - unaware of myself, indescribably lonely.

Professor: And your family? Could your mother not help you?

Marceline: (with a bitter little laughter:) Isn't that curious, Mr. Van Loyden? Now I am in your house for - let's see...: for ten days exactly; and you still don't know the basic facts of my life. Obviously, you have too many friends, too many guests, too many protegés.

Professor: I am sorry, Marceline. How could I forget that you are an orphan...

Marceline: Wrong again. My mother is still alive. Is used to see her about once a year, before she got married for the seventh time. Her present husband and I happen to dislike each other. And then, of course, Mother feels that a grown-up daughter is not the right kind of person to have around, for a young lady of her looks and of her aspirations. What she would really like to do is, to hide me from the world in a remote Swiss boarding school, as she did, until Edward discovered and liberated me. To Mother, I was by turns a nuisance and a toy. Edward showed me what it means to live, to be a human being, a woman. If he had stayed with me - who knows? - he might have even taught me how to be a musician.

Professor: I've never heard you play...

Marceline: Yes, you have, too - just an hour ago. Don't you remember? the phonograph record with the Bohemian tune? I accompany him at the piano.

Professor: Is that so? But your name is not indicated.

Marceline: Of course not. It is Edward's record: it's for his sake that people buy it and love it. I am not good enough, anyhow, to be his accompanist. He would have never allowed me to play in public with him - except in the case of the Czech melody.

Professor: It's an enchanting piece...

Marceline: To him it was more - almost a kind of fetish. He played it when he first came from Prague to England, as an infant prodigy. Since then, he has hardly had a recital without including the Czech Melody. It's such a sweet and simple little thing - simple enough even for a dilettante like me. We played it often together. In fact, we were just playing it for a little party, in the drawing room of the ship, when the torpedo hit her.

Professor: Now I know why you made me stop the phonograph, at the séance tonight.

Marceline: I couldn't bear it for another minute. I felt that I'd lose my mind if the music continued.

Professor: Yet you made a mistake. Edward might have followed the call of his fetish song. Why don't we try it again? Play the tune for me, now! There is the piano. Play!

Marceline: (raises her hands: they are red and swollen. With an outcry:) With these hands? That's funny.

Professor: I thought your hands are almost all right again, thanks to the Yogo gymnastics...

Marceline: Never. They'll never be all right again - I don't even want them to. I loathe my hands. They ought to remain as they are - frozen, stiff, and ugly. Why did they save my life? I should have been drowned, with him. But I did not even think of Edward, during the ghastly hours

I clung to the capsized lifeboat. I just wanted to live - to live at any price; I was like an animal. My mind was blank; all my energies seemed concentrated in these hideous claws. Why didn't I let loose? So many others did. First, there were about twenty persons with me - women, and men, and children. Most of them gave up - one after another; they just drifted away, or died right where they were - killed by exhaustion, by the cold, by horro. But I held fast. The will of my hands was stronger than my love of Edward.

Professor: But he certainly did not want you to die with him in the Sea...

Marceline: He called my name even while he was sinking. I saw him disappear... It was all my fault. I encouraged that sailor...

Professor: Which sailor? What are you talking about?

Marceline: The one who tried to get into our life-boat when it was already overweighted. He jumped from the burning ship - a young fellow, rather handsome, too - and he yelled to us as he swam: some thing about his being only seventeen years old, and about his mother back home. Another sailor - an older one - shouted, "Don't let him in! The boat is too heavily charged already as it is..." And then the young sailor, the one in the water, wept - real tears, I could see them, although his face was wet. So I begged Edward to help him. He didn't want to at first; but as I insisted, he bent finally over the railing and tried to get the sailor into our little boat. And then there was a scream - a roar, you know, as from hundreds of savage, desperate beasts - and the life-boat capsized. The last thing I saw was Edward struggling against the clasp of the sailor boy. A huge wave carried both away. They must have gone down together. (There is a short silence. Then:)

Professor: He did not die, Marceline, but just advanced to a higher plane of existence.

Marceline: But he did not want to advance - don't you see that, Professor? He'd much rather have stayed where he was, on our low, sinful plane - with his violin and his wife. I was less faithful than his Stradivarius. The beautiful instrument did not survive its master: it was drowned with him. I wished the same thing had happened also to me. Now he hates me because I am still alive.

Professor: I don't think so, Marceline. They don't hate us, our friends over there. They are beyond such unwise and unkind emotions. None of the many spirits I was having contact with, has ever said or done anything dictated by resentment.

Marceline: Don't try to comfort me; I know better. Isn't it only too clear why Edward hesitates to materialize? He is angry at me. We have never quarreled in life: he was too good and forgiving. But this time he lost his temper. He refuses to talk to me. He avoids my presence. He is implacable.

Professor: And what would you say if an influential friend in the spirit world had been active as a mediator? What, if that benign entity had already succeeded in reconciling your offended husband?

Marceline: Do you think that ~~xxxxxxx~~ Julia....?

Professor: She always fulfils her promises. In fact, she may already have persuaded Edward to visit this house, after all. There is something in the air, if I am not mistaken. Don't you sense vibrations?

Marceline: Whose vibrations? Edward's? (As if terrified:) No! That's out of the question! He wouldn't come here: he's cross with me.

Professor: Are you so sure of that?

Marceline: I'm afraid so - yes.

Professor: Don't you want him to come?

Marceline: What a question! It's the only thing I've been wishing for, since that terrible day.

Professor: If you really want him to appear - really, wholeheartedly -

don't move now! keep quiet! wait!

Marceline: Wait - for what? My Lord, don't let me alone...

Professor: That's precisely what I'm going to do. You don't want your husband to think that you are scared by him?

Marceline: No,,,certainly not...I am not afraid... Why should I?

Professor: That's my brave girl. And now I'll let you two young people alone. Just this before I go... (He kisses her forehead; then, smilingly:) He won't mind this little kiss, I trust. I am an old man, after all, and I'm happily married. And now, good night, my child. (Already at the door, he turns around and tiptoes through the phonograph. As the Bohemian Melody sounds again, he nods, with a cunning smile, and walks back to the door. Before leaving the room, he waves cheerfully at the marble bust.Exit.)

Marceline: (alone, stands motionless where he left her - near the door at the left. Her face taut with suspense, she listens to the music.)

(Suddenly, there is a movement behind the dark curtain covering the door. Somebody has approached the house from the park and is now entangled in the draperies. One hears him groan and curse.)

Marceline: (with a half-suppressed, yet intense scream:) Who is there?

Johnny: (falls into the room, from behind the curtain. He is a young man of about nineteen years, in a sailor's uniform all in rags and soaked with water. Some oceanic plants are entangled in his dripping hair. He lies for a while like dead, with his face on the floor.)

Marceline: (shaken, overwhelmed:) Oh, my Lord... my Lord...

Johnny: (raises his head a little and turns his face toilsomely toward Marceline:) An angel! Damn it, I must be dead...

Marceline: From where do you come?

Johnny: (stammering:) From... from... down there...

Marceline: (shaking his head and shoulders; her voice hoarse with fear and excitement:) From where?!

Johnny: (still with a heavy and restive tongue:) From the ground... from the depth... from the bottom... (His head glides back to the floor.) Couldn't I get a drop of gin, or something? Feeling kind of dizzy... kind of lousy, too...

Marcelina: He looks like the boy who clung to Edward and was drowned with him... Oh, my God, my God...

Johnny: That damned foot of mine...hurts like hell... Funny that a dead guy still feels pain, although he's in heaven, with an angel around...

Marcelina: What's wrong with your foot? You're bleeding... This looks terrible... (Touching his forehead:) Oh! And you have fever too. You must be badly wounded. Wait a moment! I just run to the kitchen to get some water for you.

Johnny: No! Don't run away! I doesn't want no water. I've had plenty of that stuff, anyhow. Don't run away, angel! Stay! And, please, leave your hands just where they're now... That feels nice and cool... I sure like your hands... beautiful hands.... I sure like them...

C U R T A I N

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A C T T W O

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Five days later.

Late Afternoon. The door to the garden is open. One sees palm trees, blooming plants, and the distant ocean , in the mellow light of an ending Californian day.

Alice McUister is seated on a little stool, near Mrs. Van Loyden's bust.

Professor Van Loyden paces the room in the foreground.

Alice: (in the attentive pose of a secretary who takes dictation. Her eyes remain closed while she writes, swiftly and dexterously, into a note book placed in front of her on a table. The voice is dull and tinny in which she repeats the words dictated to her by an invisble boss:) ...."Concentrate on the inner man, exclamation mark,"....yes, Ma'am..."The human race has reached a point,"...yes, I can follow you... "a point in evolution where its consciousness..." I have "consciousness"...."must adapt itself to unprecedented experiences and conditions, semicolon"....yes, I'm ready... "it behooves all of us...." ...sorry, Ma'am, I don't quite get the word after "all of us"... Did you say "all of us sinners?" or "all of us children?" I beg your pardon?....

Professor:(still pacing; rather irritated:) Now, come come...What's the matter again?

Alice: (without paying attention to him:) ...yes...I see, Ma'am... you have to stop now...yes...but you may grant me another private interview shortly before the official séance begins...I see.... Yes, Ma'am, certainly, I'll kiss Mr. Van Loyden on your behalf...it will be a pleasure...yes...You expect to graduate to a higher plane before long... My congratulations, Ma'am... yes... I see, in recognition

of your special merits in the spirit world...naturally...You may be compelled to withdraw completely from our low earthly sphere...

Professor: (startled, terrified:) What was that? She may be forced to withdraw completely? You must have misunderstood her...

Alice : (listening, nodding, writing:) Not immediately but perhaps fairly soon... You think, therefore, it might be a good idea... (Her voice falters; she interrupts herself, opens her eyes, looks around, seems bewildered:) Now I wonder if I am all here...What was that last thing you said, Mrs. Van Loyden? I want to get that straight... It might be a good idea, under the circumstances.... yes... I see... well, this is a surprise... If you really think so... At any rate, I'll give him your message... Thank you...yes... (She opens her eyes and closes her little note book, then remains motionless for a while.)

Professor: (avidly:) What did she say? What got you so excited? Tell me! McUlster! I have a right to know!

Alice: (gets up from her stool; walks a few steps; shakes her head:) I can't believe it - no; it sounds all too fantastic.

Professor: Now,really, McUlster, really! What is it all about?

Alice: She wants us to get married.

Professor: (flabbergasted:) Whom? Us? You and me?

Alice: Exactly. She thinks it a good idea, under the circumstances.

Professor: Under what circumstances?

Alice: Why, didn't you hear it? She'll be promoted, on account of her special merits.

Professor: Well-deserved, I'd say; utterly well-deserved.

Alice: No doubt. Nevertheless, to us it means quite a blow. Today seems to be the last time we can really count on her.

Professor: She'll be able to visit me sometimes, though? Say, once a month? or twice?

Alice: Not that frequently, I'm sorry to say. Twice a year - that's all she can arrange.

Professor: Twice a year? That's nothing! (Shaking Alice's shoulders, very agitated:) Don't you realize the disastrous gravity of what you're telling me?

Alice: I certainly do, Professor, and so does your wife. In fact she seemed rather worried about you. "Kiss him on my behalf" - that's what she said - "and try to cheer him up." (She waits for him to come and receive the kiss; as he hesitates:) Don't you care for Julia's kiss, Professor?

Professor: Yes...of course... (He moves slowly toward Alice, who embraces him in a serenely ceremonious manner and kisses his forehead.)

Alice: This is her kiss...her blessing...

Professor: So she really wants us to get married - does she?

Alice: Why, it isn't an order - just a friendly suggestion.

Professor: Didn't you tell me once that your mediumistic forces might suffer, or even vanish, as soon as you...well... if you allowed a man... in short... you know what I mean.

Alice: My first spirit teacher was indeed definitely of this opinion. However, this is several years ago. My constitution might have become less delicate since. But what about you, my friend? Do you think you could ever love me?

Professor: Why... I must say...frankly...this is embarrassing. After all, I am a married man. On the other hand, if my wife advises me a second marriage, I don't see why I should not become a loving and faithful husband to the woman of her choice.

Alice: At any rate, you had not yet picked another lady for the honorable position of a second Mrs. Van Loyden?

Professor: Another lady? Do you think of any particular person?

Alice: Not really. There are several charming girls among your acquaintances. That attractive young widow, for instance...

Professor: Marceline? You're out of your mind!

Alice : (calmly but seriously:) No, dear. I am jealous.

Professor: Already?

Alice: (realizing presently her mistake:) You don't take me seriously, or do you? I just tried to be funny, that's all. Of course, I know perfectly well that your interest in poor little Marceline is of purely paternal nature. Why should you be so eager, otherwise, to arrange a reunion between her and the late Mr. Martock? You still want Edward to materialize, if I am not mistaken?

Professor: I am deeply disappointed that he didn't come through as yet. He is indeed unusually evasive. Do you think it possible that there are political reasons behind his reluctancy?

Alice: I don't quite see what politics could have to do with Edward's materialization.

Professor: He might disapprove of our pacifism. You know how fanatic people are these days.

Alice: Frankly, that sounds a bit far-fetched to me. No, I am almost sure that Edward's hesitance is due to merely personal reasons.

Professor: You may be right. But how, then, do you explain Julia's attitude in this matter? You know as well as I do that she has considerable influence with all her fellow-spirits. She has been helpful in so many instances. Why does she fail me this time?

Alice : We must not condemn her rashly. She may have been very busy...

Professor: Too busy to live up to her promise? Alice! What a preposterous thing to say! No, I have other suspicions - utterly grave ones, too. What if Julia were prevented from communicating with us? Prevented, I mean, by hostile entities who somehow managed to gain power over her. Those wanton demons might hold Julia as their prisoner, while fooling us with counterfeit messages. Take that surprising idea that we ought to get married! It's a practical joke, perhaps - a mischievous hoax designed to ridicule, if not to ruin, us.

Alice: Is that the way you look at it? A practical joke...I thank you.

Professor: I didn't mean to hurt you - naturally not. You know how fond of you I am, McUlster...

Alice: (quickly:) Are you really?

Professor: Why, of course. In fact, I would be rather pleased to marry you, if Julia wants me to do so. But I must be quite sure that the idea comes actually from Julia - not from some malignant "poltergeist." Her failure to produce Edward's ghost is all too perturbing. I was so full of hope, the other night, when I left Marceline. And then - what an anti-climax! A stranded sailor, instead of the hoped-for ghost! It sounds indeed like a distasteful joke.

Alice: And also like an odd coincidence. For, undeniably, there is a peculiar rapport between the expected visitor and the one who actually came. Both seem most intimately connected with the depth of the sea: both emerge from the ocean. If Julia hesitates, for one reason or another, to send Edward's ghost to this house - the substitute she chose is certainly akin enough to the real thing.

Professor: The substitute she chose? But what makes you think that Julia has a hand in this? The whole incident - or coincidence - is simple enough - nothing mystic about it. The submarine to the crew of which our stranded sailor belonged was cruising off the Californian coast. A daring Jap ventured far enough into American waters to hit our submarine. Johnny - isn't that the sailor's name? - was not yet considered ripe by Providence to step across the invisible boundary. His spirit guides saved him : he was free to escape, and so arrived here as a piece of flotsam.

Alice: But why just here, of all places? Why just in front of this isolated, inconspicuous house? What spirit was it that guided him into the very room where Marceline stood - awaiting the beloved apparition? And, again, what planning intelligence kindled the flame of love in his - the sailor's - inexperienced heart?

Professor: The flame of love? How do you know he is in love with her?

Alice: I have seen him stare at her - devour her with his eyes. Nobody but she was permitted to come near to him as long as he was sick. Whenever I attempted to replace Marceline at his bed, he shouted at me in fury: "Beat it! Go away!" And: "I want my nurse! I'm dead: she is my angel!"

Professor: And Marceline? How does she take his outbursts?

Alice: You know the way she is - not very explicit; rather on the vague, evasive side. At times, she seems to enjoy his vehement affection; at other moments she appears bewildered, almost frightened. Incidentally, you may soon have a chance to watch him making love to her, and to see her reaction. Johnny announced this morning his definite recovery. If I am not mistaken, Marceline wants him to make your acquaintance today and also to attend our séance.

Professor: Now, Alice, really! Do you try to tell me that the sailor cares for occultism?

Alice: I am positive that he doesn't have the faintest idea what occultism means. But I am also sure that the boy has mediumistic potentialities. Believe me, James, I have enough instinct and experience to sense the vibrations of a fellow-medium. When I first entered the room in which Johnny lay I was struck by the dynamic quality of his psychic aura. Whether he knows it or not, he is a favourite of the invisible.

Professor: So you think that Edward might prove more responsive to the sailor's appeal than he has been to ours?

Alice: Possibly. That is to say, if my whole concept of the situation turns out to be correct and Julia's inspired ghost is really the motive power behind this peculiar romance.

Professor: (after a short silence:) It may be, Alice, that I owe you a big, great, sweeping apology.

Alice: An apology? What for?

Professor: For my skepticism, my dreary lack of faith and imagination. For I suppose you are right, as usual. The waif in the uniform of the U.S.Navy stranded on our shores is Julia's messenger. Once again I have unterrated the wisdom of the invisible and your intelligence, dear McUlster. May you forgive me, my beloved Julia. (He bows deeply to the marble bust.) I beg your pardon, Alice. (He embraces and kisses her solemnly.)

Alice: (smiling, with her arms around his neck:) And what about that "surprising idea" concerning you and me and our belonging together? Do you still believe it is a demoniac plot to ridicule, if not to ruin us?

(They still stand embracing each other when Mrs. Potter appears in

the open door leading to the garden. Her wheeled chair is gracefully pushed by Fifi Larue, who is dressed as a rococo page, with white stockings, breeches of glossy satin, a ruff of fine old laces, and a handsomely powdered wig.)

Mrs. Potter: Dear me! I'm so sorry...

Larue: (fluttering with amusement and curiosity:) Mon Professeur - Madame; je suis navré. Quelle gaffe!

Alice: (laughing:) What's all the fuss about? I was just carrying out an order received from our dear Mrs. Van Loyden. She wanted me, once again, to kiss the Professor on her behalf.

Mrs. Potter: Is that so? Of late, she gives that order very frequently.

Professor: Why, hasn't she the right to kiss me as often as she pleases? She is my wife, after all.

Mrs. Potter: Who? Miss Alice McUlster?

Professor: No: Mrs. Julia Van Loyden.

Mrs. Potter: But wasn't it Miss McUlster who....? Well, anyhow, let's skip it: You've got me all mixed up. We may as well return to our Yoga exercise - don't you agree, Fifi dear? There is no handsome sailor - not in this room, as far as I can see.

Alice: (very cheerful and nonchalant:) Oh, that's what came for! The handsome sailor - I see. How naughty of you, Mrs. Potter! What will Ferdinand say about your interest in uniformed young males?

Mrs. Potter: That's none of Ferdinand's business. Besides, he doesn't care. My poor little Ferdie! I'm afraid he has never been much of an Othello. Why should he become jealous now since he is dead and no longer in a position to consummate our marriage?

Professor: You never can tell, dear woman. The lower spirits are at times given to jealousy as are we fallible mortals.

Mrs. Potter: Very interesting. But the higher developed ones urge their widowers to exchange kisses with other women.

(Ted & Toy rush in, from the garden - dressed in gaudy pajamas; all out of breath as if after a race.)

Toy: I'm first! I've made it!

Ted: How dare you? You're slow like a snail - it's too pathetic for words. But where is the sailor?

Toy: (echoing his question, in the same voice, with the same accent:) But where is the sailor?

Alice: Shaving, I suppose. He may show up any moment, though.

Professor: There seems to be considerable excitement because of that poor stranded lad. The whole house quivers with expectation.

Larue: Mais, après tout! Pensez! Un marin naufragé, sauvé comme par miracle! Quelle histoire romantique!

Professor: (half-bantering, half-serious:) I did not expect this peace-loving community to fall for hero worship.

Ted: It's not that, Uncle James. It's by no means his heroism that seems attractive to us; it's rather his uniform.

Larue: (jubilating:) C'est ça! His uniform!

Mrs. Potter: They are so becoming, those blue jackets, aren't they?

Toy: Ted and I have decided to paint a picture called "The Stranded Sailor." Very simple, strictly naturalistic, without the slightest touch of Surrealism.

Ted: Of course, we might employ some good old Symbolist devices - say a handsome little propeller, just between his eyebrows; and, perhaps, a few miniature mermaids fooling around in his hair.

(Peter Brack and Prince Igor have meanwhile entered the room through the glass door, accompanied by Princess Anna in a fantastic house gown.)

Princess Anna: (referring to Ted's last remark:) Very cute, no doubt. But where is your fabulous model?

Professor: Well well well, it seems that our Yogi master is being deserted by all his pupils this afternoon.

Princess Anna: Kadornath suggested himself a five-minute intermission as nobody was able to concentrate. Dear me! I am not the kind of woman to stare at my own naval, with a boy from the Navy around.

Prince Igor: The young man must be widely traveled. It may prove very instructive to compare my impressions of the Arctic zones with his experiences. I am looking forward to a stimulating debate.

Professor: And you, Peter, why do you deem the sailor boy more interesting than Kadornath's lesson?

Peter Brack: As you may remember, I have always had a penchant for the formations of submarine life; to me, the ground of the sea seems more mysterious and fascinating than a jungle or than one of our own Jungle-like cities. I guess that's why I am faintly curious to have a look at our new visitor: he comes from down there, from the depth.

Ted: It sounds like Venus emerging from the foam of the waves - doesn't it, humming-bird?

Toy: Precisely. It may be appropriate to depict him in the pose of Botticelli's Venus rising from a shelf.

Larue: Quelle idée superbe!

Ted: It couldn't be lovelier. Prixler's idea, I presume?

Toy: Of course not. You just envy me my little intuition.

Ted: Butterfly! I warn you! Don't deny the obvious, tangible truth. The Venus gag is Prixler's fabrication.

Toy: Nasty insect you are! Wicked snake! morbid swindler! repulsive hunckback! capitalist!

Ted: Capitalist yourself!

(While the Twins are shouting at each other, Marceline and Johnny enter the room without being noticed by them. Johnny, in his Navy uniform, seems completely recovered, except for a very slight limping. One of his ankles is heavily bandaged. He wears colored, fur-trimmed slippers.)

Professor: (clapping his hands:) Children! Please! Will you behave yourself! Can't you see, we're having a visitor...

Ted & Toy: Visitor? Who? Where? Why?...Ge! It's he - the sailor!

Johnny: (rather self-conscious and embarrassed as he feels the general attention focus in his appearance:) Hello, folks. I'm sure glad to meet you.

Professor: (very cordial, as he shakes hands with him:) Welcome in our midst, young man. We are overjoyed to have you. Providence has saved you from perishing in the floods and guided you to our humble home. I hope that you may have completely recuperated from the terrific shock?

Johnny: (flushed with embarrassment:) Yes Sir, thanks a lot, I am quite O.K.

Professor: That's good news, my boy, very good news indeed.

Mrs. Potter: Why don't you present your new friend to us, Mr. Van Loyden? I suppose all of us would be glad to meet him.

Marceline: It's my fault, Mrs. Potter; I'm terribly sorry. Of course, I should have introduced him to you and to Princess Frolevsko. Well, ladies and gentlemen, this is Johnny Wilkens, the only survivor of an American submarine torpedoed in the Pacific. Johnny, I want you to meet our friend, Mrs. Caroline Potter...

Mrs. Potter: (shaking hands with him:) ...from Kalamazoo.

Marceline: ...the Prince and Princess Frolevsko, from St.Petersburg...

Johnny: (whispers something into her ear; whereupon:)

Marceline: (laughingly:) No, Prince is not a part of his name. It's his title, all right - something like King or Excellency.

Johnny: Sounds kind of phony, though. Like in a movie, or something.

Princess Anna: (holding his hand:) Isn't he too cute for words? What naïvité! what tonic innocence!

Larue: Mais il est superbe! C'est un plaisir de le voir...

Johnny: What did you say just now, your Excellency, or what your title is?

Marceline: He speaks French: you wouldn't understand. Just take a bow and say: "Comment allez-vous, cher ami?"

Johnny: I certainly won't say anything of the kind. It means something bad, more than likely. You couldn't pull tricks on me, Marceline; I'm a wise guy - see?

Larue: (in the midst of a general guffaw:) Comme il est ravissant! Il faut que je le presente à Madame Pompadour...

Johnny: B'cause I knows all that monkeybusiness. Just a few weeks ago a girl in Honolulu tried to kid me too. Wanted me to repeat to a guy what she said to me in that phony language of hers - Chinese, or what the hell it was. So I says to that guy, "Tching crox nuts, pi-po," or what the hell she wanted me to say. And the next thing I know is that I go down, to the floor and swallow two of my teeth. Believe it or not, that guy knocked me down, just because of that "Tching crox nuts," because it means something awful that has to do with his wife. Now nobody won't fool me again - not me, no Sir: no "Comm-ent alliz voux" with me. It means probably something so filthy that the Excellency would faint, just because he ain't used to dirt.

Larue: La Pompadour sera enchantée; elle adore des garçons comme ça...

Marceline: Evidently, John, you don't trust your old nurse! I wonder, why. You must have had a lot of bad experiences with your girl friends, not only in Honolulu.

Johnny: Yeah, man: they're the same, everywhere in the world.

Marceline: I hope, however, you won't mind too much being presented to some other wicked females. This is Miss Alice McUlster, whom you've met before.

Alice: He wouldn't remember that. All what happened between us, is that I offered him a glass of orange juice when his temperature was 104 or so. But he refused the drink - not very politely, either - and kept clamoring for Marceline.

Marceline: What a behaviour! I'm ashamed of you, John. Now, come on! - where are your apologies?

Johnny: Well, Miss...I'm sorry...sure I am...But, on the other hand, I s'ppose a guy gets kind of used to his nurse, after a while...

Mrs. Potter: Especially if the nurse happens to be as attractive as our dear Mrs. Martock.

Johnny: (presently disconcerted:) Who is Mrs. Martock?

Mrs. Potter: (with a shrill little laughter:) He doesn't even know her name! That's funny, isn't it?

Johnny: (to Marceline, in an ominously lowered voice:) Are you Mrs. Martock?

Marceline: Didn't I tell you that? My husband was drowned last year.

Johnny: (with a relieved sigh:) Oh, he was drowned - was he? That's too bad, for him.

Professor: To conclude the tedious business of introduction: This is my friend Peter Brack, the well-known English novelist and untiring seeker of truth...

Johnny: It's sure a great pleasure, Sir.

Professor: ...and these two youngsters are our "enfants terribles", Ted and Toy.

Johnny: Wilkens my name. What's yours?

Ted: Theodor....

Toy: (with an anxious little yell:) Don't tell him, nightingale! He might be one of Dad's fiendish agents!

Johnny: Thank you, Miss. That's the first time somebody takes me for something so interesting.

Ted: My poor little sister suffers from a virulent persecution mania.

Toy: What an effrontery! Don't we have cogent reasons to be vigilant and discreet? (To Johnny, apologetically:) We ran away from home. Our father happens to be insane. He hates us. An armament industrialist in Pittsburgh - imagine! Needless to say, he is as vulgar as he could be.

Johnny: An industrialist? Sounds like a lot of dough.

Ted: He is shockingly wealthy. A swine. Most obnoxious.

Johnny: Is he that tight? Or why are you mad at him?

Toy: Tight? On the contrary, he tried to corrupt us with his filthy cash. But we wouldn't touch it.

Ted: Toy and I prefer to be penniless.

Toy: That's right. We would starve, rather than...

(Kadornath appears in the open glass door to the left - silent and majestic as ever. He claps his hands three times - not very loud but most expressively.)

Johnny: (to Kadornath - rather politely at first:) How do you do, Sir? (As he receives no answer, raising his voice a little:) How do you do, Sir? How are you, Maharaja?...What's wrong with you, man? Are you deaf-mute, or something?

Marceline: (rather irritated:) Johnny! Please!

Professor: This gentleman - our friend Kadornath, from India - is under a vow of silence not to pronounce a word as long as his native country is under the British yoke.

Johnny: Why doesn't he say so, in the first place? (Noticing his mistake, increasingly embarrassed:) Or rather...I mean, why does he stare at me, as if I had done something wrong to India?

Professor: Master Kadornath, incidentally, is one of the outstanding Yogis in our time.

Johnny: One of the outstanding - what?

Marceline: Never mind. I'm afraid it would take a little bit too long, to explain to you what Yoga means.

Professor: But he might learn some of the fundamental exercises, which would be certainly a wholesome thing to do - both for his broken ankle and psychological equilibrium.

Alice: That's a brilliant idea. Why don't you people run down to the beach with him? I'm sure he will enjoy watching your gymnastics.

Princess Anna: Maybe he could even join in our evening meditation.

Larue: Il a l'air d'un petit philosophe, n'est-ce pas?

Johnny: (to Marceline:) Did he say something dirty again?

Marceline: On the contrary, they all want you to go down to the beach with them.

Johnny: That sounds sure pretty dirty. But it's O.K. with me, as long as you come along.

Marceline: I'll be with you in a few minutes, John. Just give me time to talk over a few urgent things with Professor Van Loyden.

Johnny: O.K., I'll wait for you here.

Marceline: Not here, dear! Please, be reasonable! Why don't you go with my friends? I'll follow you as soon as I can manage.

Johnny: No Sir, I won't go with nobody. I'll be waiting here until you is through.

Mrs. Potter: Well well well, I must say, young man, you are not very gallent. Is there no woman whose company you can bear, except Mrs. Martock? Of course, I am just a poor old cripple; but look at Princess Anna or at Miss Toy. Aren't they fairly attractive, in the own way?

Johnny: (without looking at them:) Beautiful. But I doesn't want to go to the beach with nobody.

Princess Anna: Not even if I promise you a nice drink, down there? (She produces a bottle and brandishes it temptingly under his nose.)

Johnny: Fancy stuff - huh? Imported brandy, or something? Thanks a lot. A shot of gin or Rye is good enough for me.

Marceline: Now, don't be tiresome! You see, Master Kadomath is already getting impatient...

Kadomath: (claps his hands three times, then turns around and strides slowly away)

Mrs. Potter: Well, as far as I am concerned, I don't feel like being cheated out of my evening meditation by this capricious young man. (She begins to roll toward the open glass door.)

Larue: (tripping behind her:) Permettez, Madame... (He pushes the wheeled chair into the garden.)

Mrs. Potter: How sweet of you, dear Fifi! Fortunately, there still are a few cavaliers of the good old school...(She and Larue, exit.)

Princess Anna: (follows them - brandishing the bottle toward Johnny:) I'll be seeing you. And, don't forget, handsome sailor: it's imported! (Exit.)

Prince Igor: (puts his arm around Johnny's shoulder; in a paternal, reassuring bass:) Don't pay any attention to her, young man! We may have a serious talk together. By the way, have you ever been in Greenland?

Johnny: No, Sir. Have you?

Prince Igor: Why, of course, I go there every night. It's very easy, you see. I just contact my old friend, the explorer Ivan Ivanovitch, who happens to be very sensible to my telepathic vibrations...(He leads Johnny, with gentle force, through the glass door, into the garden.)

Johnny: (is making desperate signs to Marceline, behind Prince Igor's back.)

Marceline: (laughing:) That serves you right. Now you just have to be a nice boy and listen to His Highness for a while ... Don't cry, Johnny, dear! I'll rescue you before long.

Ted: (gazing after Johnny, who gradually disappears in the background:) Maybe my first intuition was right and a small propeller, just between his eyebrows, would be the most pertinent image, after all... (He follows Johnny and the Prince. Exit, with Toy and Peter Brack.)

Alice: Good Lord! What a difficult lad! It will be quite a job to make a gentleman of him, Marceline. I admire your courage.

Marceline: Why do you take it for granted that I am interested in his education?

Alice: Because it would be too silly, to save a fellow's life and then let him remain a savage.

Marceline: I didn't save Johnny's life, in the first place...

Alice: Maybe not. He just would have died without you.

Marceline: You have a way of dramatizing things;..

Alice: You'll tell me that later. Sorry I have to fly. Lots of work in the kitchen. To be medium and housekeeper at Professor Van Loyden's seems to be almost too much for a nervous individual... (Exit.)

Marceline: Do you believe that too, Professor?

Professor: What do you mean, my child?

Marceline: That I am so deeply interested in Johnny; and that I've saved his life and, therefore, am responsible for his education.

Professor: Yes, my child, I believe indeed that you are deeply interested in him.

Marceline: It almost sounds as if... Tell me frankly, Mr. Van Loyden! You don't mean to suggest that I am in love with that puerile little brute?

Professor: All I know is that the puerile little brute is madly in love with you.

Marceline: If so, it won't last long. A child is not capable of real passion.

Professor: But even a child - or rather, a naive, sensual human being - may serve as an instrument to the passionate lovers over there, in the other world.

Marceline: (after a long silence:) I knew it. Yes. I knew it all along. Edward sent him to me. But why? (As if with a sudden dismay, clasping one of the Professor's arms:) Why, Professor Van Loyden? Can you explain it to me?

Professor: No, my child. I can't. At times, the motives and the methods of the spirit world are beyond our comprehension.

Marceline: (still clinging to him:) I am afraid, Professor... I am so afraid...

Professor: (with strength and cordiality:) Fear not! The invisible went your best.

Marceline: I am not so sure of that. Maybe Edward still is angry at me.

He might have sent Johnny in order to tempt me and to test my faithfulness. He is very attractive, you know;..

Professor: Who is attractive? Johnny or your husband?

Marceline: Johnny. He is attractive like an animal - erratic, unpredictable, by turns gentle and violent: rather wonderful altogether.

Professor: Are you quite sure, Marceline, that you are not in love?

Marceline: There is but one man I love and to whom I belong for ever.

Professor: What is it, then, that frightens and upsets you?

Marceline: I don't know...It's something vague and very sinister... It's not a fear - just a dark, indistinct feeling, a nameless apprehension... I think that John is Edward's messenger, but I can't grasp his message. I wonder if it is a friendly one. I am afraid it isn't. (With a new outburst of fear:) Oh, Professor! Help me! Send him away! Liberate me from his charm, his rudeness, his unbearable presence! This terrible sailor is going to drive me mad...

Professor: You don't mean what you say. Why do you lie to me, Marceline? Why do you lie to yourself?

Marceline: Believe me! Please! I want to get rid of him. It's painful to have him around. He is clumsy, inarticulate - irritating beyond words. There is something beastly in his eyes, in his voice, in his offensive caresses. Besides... (Her voice falters.)

Professor: Besides...?

Marceline: He reminds me of the boy who was drowned with Edward. The one I wanted to save and who murdered my husband. The one to whom Edward's hatred of me is due. It's not that Johnny looks actually like him. Yet I first mistook him for the other lad. There is an affinity, a mysterious resemblance - most intriguing and most ominous...

Professor: (as if talking to himself:) All this may be part of her benign, if enigmatic, scheme. (He takes Marceline's hand and leads her solemnly to the marble bust:) Marceline, my child! Once again I beseech you: fear not! It is Julia herself who has planned and arranged Johnny's perturbing visit. If he is a messenger - as I believe him to be - she has selected him in her infinite love and wisdom. Don't you remember what she promised me and what I promised you, on my wife's behalf? Edward will materialize. You will see him again. His own voice will assure you that you are forgiven. Johnny's ectoplasm has been chosen by the invisible. It is to be the mantle, nay, the body in which your husband will appear to you.

Marceline: (overwhelmed:) Is that true? really, certainly true? Do you know that, Professor Van Loyden? It seems almost too beautiful...

Professor: Too beautiful? No, my child. It's Julia's last gesture - her farewell gift to us, so to speak - before she soars to even higher planes inaccessible to us mortals.

Marceline: I ought to have thought of it... Yes, of course, Johnny must have mediumistic potentialities. All this odd talk about his mother...

Professor: Is his mother on the other side? Is he in contact with her?

Marceline: That is what I gathered...

Professor: There you are! Now doubt, his ectoplastic emanation is unusually vigorous. He'll succeed effortlessly in producing the apparition. I am looking forward with considerable pleasure to meeting your dear husband at the séance tonight.

Marceline: Of course, Johnny's fever was high when he told me that his late mother is in the habit of paying visits to him.

Professor: The fact that he was gravely ill, not far from dying himself, is but an additional proof for the truthfulness of his story. I am positive everything will work out nicely.

Marceline: Already tonight? I wonder...

Professor: Why not? If his aura is attractive enough...

Marceline: Maybe it is. I figure his ectoplasm must have a salty flavour - rather tonic and stimulating. Edward may fall for that. He was always fond of the sea... "I have three loves," he'd say to me, "the sea, music and you..." It seems that Johnny shares at least two of these tastes with him. As for the third one, music...

Professor: (peering into the garden:) There he comes. Look at him! His gait is as musical as could be. How rhythmically he moves! And now he begins to whistle. Listen! The Bohemian Melody...

(The sound of the whistling comes nearer, but Johnny is yet invisible to the audience.)

Professor: I'm off. Good luck to you, Marceline!

Marceline: Do you think I should tell him, right now...?

Professor: Naturally. The sooner the better. He'll be tickled to death. See you later, child. (Exit.)

(Johnny enters from the left, still whistling the Slavic tune. He stops as he sees Marceline.)

Marceline: Hello, stranger! Everything O.K.?

Johnny: (frowns at her, shrugs his shoulders, maintains a sullen silence.)

Marceline: What's wrong with you, Mr. Wilkens? Suddenly deaf-mute, or something? - Oh, I know what it is! You try to imitate the Master Yogi, Kadomath. Probably think you'll become as wise as he, if only you keep your mouth shot.

Johnny: To hell with that phony Indian.

Marceline: Poor Johnny! You don't seem in a very happy mood.

Johnny: I'm mad at you, that's all.

Marceline: And why, if I may ask?

Johnny: To let me alone with that bunch of idiots! A nice thing to do, I must say!

Marceline: You are very hard on Professor Van Loyden's friends.

Johnny: Aren't they your friends too?

Marceline: Not really. That is to say, I think them all delightful; but I don't know them well.

Johnny: Good for you. What kind of a place is this here, anyhow? A nuthouse? or a hotel? or what?

Marceline: All of us here, in the Villa Pacific, are the guests of the great humanitarian and philosopher, Professor James Van Loyden, winner of the Nobel Peace Prize, author of such outstanding works as "Unknown Continents of the Soul," "Seeking the Inner Man",....

Johnny: Hold it! That's enough. I doesn't understand them phony big words, anyhow. Are you trying to tell me that the old sucker supports the whole damned crowd?

Marceline: That's what he does, very generously. Of course, most of his house guests are at the same time his collaborators, in one way or another. He is interested in our sorrows and experiences. By helping us, he hopes to profit something for his own work.

Johnny: In other words, he ain't that generous, really.

Marceline: Oh yes, he is, too. Look at what he's doing for those two hysterical little runaways, Ted and Toy, the Twins...

Johnny: Now, don't say nothing nice about those two! they're the worst

of the lot. Especially the boy: he's the meanest sissy I've ever seen.

Marceline: Did you have a row with poor little Ted? How very foolish of you!

Johnny: A row? Me? With him? No Sir. I just told him a few things - that's all.

Marceline: Not very flattering things, I presume?

Johnny: Well, what do you think of a guy who calls himself a con-scientious objective? First I didn't even know what he was talking about, but then I got the idea: he is against the war. Mind you! He just doesn't believe in it! Tries to be smarter than the President of the United States. What a nerve! To go around and tell people that it's a sin to fight, and everybody should become a conceited objective, or what the hell it is.

Marceline: A conscientious objector. That's a fellow who objects to all wars, for the sake of his conscience.

Johnny: Does that mean a guy who does his duty don't have no conscience? Just because some Miss Prixler says we shouldn't fight? I don't give a damn if that old bag is a pacifist: she is dead, they tell me, and the dead have no right to bother us nomore. Why don't they mind their own business?

Marceline: (after a brief pause:) So they talked to you about their late governess. Did they mention Mrs. Van Loyden too?

Johnny: Is her first name Julia? Yeah, I had to listen to plenty of stories about her. She's mighty conscientious too, so it seems. Strictly opposed to an American victory. To hell with her - that's where she is anyhow, I suppose...

Marceline: (as if talking to herself:) It's curious, really, if one comes to think of it : how unanimously our friends on the other side

disapprove of war, under all circumstances. I wonder if Edward may have really adapted his views to those of the other spirits.

Johnny: (with violent indignation:) Spirits! spirits! That's all you keep thinking of. You're all nuts, with your spirit-talk. There's something wrong with this whole damned Villa Pacific. Must be bewitched, or something. Why do you stay here, Marceline? Why don't we beat it, together?

Marceline:Together? I don't understand...

Johnny: Yes, you do, too! Now, don't try to fool me, Marcy! You knows perfectly well that I'm crazy about you... Crazy I am...all crazy about you... You... (He tries to embrace and to kiss her.)

Marceline:(shaking him off, rather angry:) Don't do that! Stop it, Johnny! ... That's better. And don't you try it again!

Johnny: Of course I'll try it again - not once but ten times or hundred times: as long as it's necessary. I must have you, Marcy - don't you understand? I just want you - that's all; and I mostly get what I want.

Marceline: You are very self-assured, handsome sailor. But I am afraid you'll be disappointed, in my particular case. Don't forget, I am a married woman.

Johnny: Why do you say that when I happen to know that it ain't so? Your man is dead: that's what you told me yourself.

Marceline: But I still am his wife, I still love him, still belong to him.

Johnny: You still love him? Nuts. Who would love a dead guy? He has nothing to offer; he don't even want your love. The dead don't care - see ? They don't give a damn whether we love them or not: to them, it's all the same. Kind of snooty and chilly - that's the way they are.

Marceline: (suddenly very serious, fixing her eyes on him:) How do you know that, John?

Johnny: (nonplussed, blushing:) What's the difference? I doesn't know a thing. It's all guesswork - see? Nobody really knows nothing about the dead. How could a living guy know what a dead guy has in mind? The dead guy wouldn't tell him...

Marceline: (still piercing him with her eyes:) But a dead mother might tell him.

Johnny: (increasingly embarrassed:) A dead mother? What are you talking about?

Marceline: Now it's you, brother, who tries to lie - and rather clumsily, too. Do you think I didn't hear you when you clamored for her, the day you were almost dying?

Johnny: So I clamored for Mámma - did I? But she didn't come. Or did you see a ghost walking about in my room?

Marceline: No, I didn't. But I know you did. I heard you greet her - you were very pleased. "Hello, Ma," you said - with your face all flushed and beaming with joy. "Good to see you again." That's what you said - "Good to see you again." So it wasn't the first time she paid a visit to you.

Johnny: Think you're mighty smart - huh?

Marceline: Why don't you answer me, John? Why don't you give me the lie? Did you see your mother? Yes or no?

Johnny: And if I did - so what?

Marceline: So she appeared when you called for her, in your anguish? That's all I wanted to know.

Johnny: What's so exciting about it? Why shouldn't a mother look after her boy, once in a while, even when she happens to be an angel?

Marceline: Did your mother tell you that she is now an angel?

Johnny: Why, I take it for granted, after all that slaving and Church-going she's done, as long she was down here. Besides, I could see her wings. Fine, golden wings - not real big, but more handsome than anything you've ever laid your eyes on.

Marceline: When did you see her the first time?

Johnny: Let's see... That must have been about a couple of years ago. Just before I enlisted. In fact, I did join the Navy because Mámma wanted me to.

Marceline: Did she tell you so? Why? For any particular reason?

Johnny: Well, it's just that I didn't have no job, at the time, and was hanging out with a bunch of guyes that did all kinds of wrong things. So Mámma, of course, was worried: I could see that, the way she looked at me and kept shaking her head. That's what she always does when she worries: just keeps quiet, shakes her head, and gives me that curious look.

Marceline: Was it night when she called on you?

Johnny: Two o'clock in the morning. I were sound asleep. So Mámma comes down from heaven, and says, Hello, Johnny! says she - just in her natural voice, the way she always talked, not changed at all - her voice and her face, all unchanged. I could see the wrinkles around her mouth, and her false teeth, and her Sunday dress - the nice black one she was buried in. I could see her hands - kind of red and swollen, b'cause she had to do so much washing after Father's death, with my sister being so damned tight, and me being so damned lazy. So Ma had to make a living, see? And her hands show it, too. So I see all them things - her hair, and her

wings, and her hands ... And I even kiss her hands - just like that... (He kisses Marceline's hands; then, very softly:) Your hands are just like hers. Funny I haven't noticed that before. Just the same hands. Funny.

Marceline: Never mind my hands; they're hideous, anyway. Just go on with your story! So she said, Hello, and you saw her wings and her face. And what happened then? Was there anyone else with you in the room?

Johnny: Yeah, there was, naturally. I doesn't like to sleep alone, you know. So there was Catherine.

Marceline: Who is Catherine?

Johnny: Nothing much. Just some girl I was living with, at the time.

Marceline: (slightly perturbed:) Where is that Catherine now?

Johnny: How should I know? I don't give a damn where she is. Bad enough she was in my bed when Mámma came down from heaven. First I tried to hide Catherine under my cover, but you couldn't fool Ma: she'd seen her already. "Never mind," she says, "I'm an angel now, it's all the same to me, you can have all the girls you're able to take care of." Sounds kind of funny, doesn't it? Them angels must be kind of hard-boiled, in their own way; kind of cynical. Is "cynical" the right word?

Marceline: Yes, I suppose "cynical" is all right.

Johnny: Well, anyhow, Mámma says they have different ideas, up there in heaven, about what's good and what's evil. There are quite a few things - she says - that we folks down here might think fine, but them angels are different: they don't think them so hot. And that goes for dirty things too, just the other way round.

Marceline: Did your girl also see the apparition?

Johnny: The appa-ri-tion? If that means Mámma - no. Cat just went on snoring: she snores like hell, you know: that's why I couldn't stand her.

Marceline: So what did your mother say?

Johnny: Nothing much; just that I must join the Navy. "Or else," she says, "you'll get yourself into a lot of troubles. It's sure none of my business," she says. "As far as me is concerned, you might as well make a mess of your life, and go to jail, or something. I shouldn't even warn you, good-for-nothing you are. It's just that I still love you - not the way you mortal folks love each other but in my heavenly way. That's why I bother coming down to your filthy earth and advise you to join the Navy. That's all, son," Mámma says - moving her wings, kind of furiously. Then she flies off, leaving a trail of light behind like one of them shooting stars.

Marceline: You see! I am not mistaken: they still love us, on the other side. Love is stronger than death. Oh Johnny! you must help me to come in touch with Edward! I know he will appear when you call him. I am sure you can do it, John!

Johnny: (staring at her, aghast:) What's that you've said, just now? What do you want me to do?

Marceline: (very urgently:) I want you to call for Edward - just as a favour to me. It's terribly important - see? Edward is mad at me because I've saved my life when he sacrificed his, for the sake of a stranger. So, of course, he is pretty angry. I must reconcile him, or else I'll lose my mind.

Johnny: (utterly shocked, almost horrified:) I wonder if you still have it. Aren't you nuts already? Let's get out of here, Marceline!

Marceline: (furiously agitated:) That's enough now! I don't want your advice: it's your help I'm after. Do you refuse to do me this little favour?

Johnny: I most certainly do.

Marceline: A fine fellow you are, I must say! Do you forget what I've

done for you? You'd be dead, handsome sailor, if it were not for me. I've picked you up, in this room, from this floor, when you were bleeding and groaning - three-quarters dead with fever and thirst and exhaustion. Who has been nursing you, day and night, for a week? Who has been sitting at your bed - singing, talking, kissing you to sleep? I've taken care of you, sailor, as if I were your mother, or your sister, or your wife.

Johnny: (in an ominously lowered voice:) And why has you done all this for a lousy bum like me?

Marceline: Because I knew - I felt from the beginning that you are capable of doing me that favour - the only one I care for.

Johnny: And that favour is...

Marceline: You've heard me the first time. I want you - I implore you to evoke Edward's ghost.

Johnny: (after a grave, stone-like silence:) I've never been so insulted in my whole life.

Marceline: (with a bitter, hysterical laughter:) You have never been so insulted? That's a good one! Ha ha ha ! Touchy - aren't you? Mighty delicate, I must say! Never so insulted! That's really too much!

Johnny: Skip it. I sure thought you'd more sense than that.

Marceline: And I sure didn't think you so mean and selfish, so cowardly and ungrateful.

Johnny: Mean and selfish - that's what you think of me? O.K., Mrs. - what's the name? - Mrs. Martock. You can think whatever you want to - see? It don't makes no difference to me. I'm through with you - see? (He is on the point of leaving.)

Marceline: (with an anxious outcry:) Johnny! Don't go now! Please, don't go!

Johnny: Why shouldn't I, Mrs. Martock? Aren't you rather pleased to get rid of such an ungrateful coward?

Marceline: I am sorry, John - I really am: believe me! I apologize for having lost my temper. I certainly didn't mean those nasty things I've said.

Johnny: Bu I meant what I said, Marcy. I'm through, and that's that.

Marceline: But why? I don't see any reason... Why don't you want to call my husband for me?

Johnny: Because I can't, in the first place. I ain't no sorcerer. I doesn't know nothing about magic and such as that.

Marceline: What's wrong with trying?

Johnny: And even if I could, I know it wouldn't be right. Mother has told me so, and she knows what she's talking about. It's a mortal sin to fool around with them spirits - a mortal sin: do you realize what that means? It means that the Lord will never forgive you for it - never: not in a billion years.

Marceline: My God is a God of Love. He forgives for all transgressions that have been committed for the sake of love.

Johnny: Mother says that ain't so. Not when it comes to fooling around with ghosts.

Marceline: But didn't she materialize herself? Didn't she come to see you?

Johnny: That's a different story: I didn't call for her - see?

Marceline: You did call for her, too: I've heard it myself.

Johnny: Yeah, when I was high with fever...

Marceline: You have an answer for everything - haven't you?

Johnny: And you have another question for every answer of mine.

Marceline: Don't I have the right to ask a few questions at least, when you charge me with so awful things? After all, a mortal sin is a terribly serious matter...

Johnny: I don't give a damn - don't you know that, Marcy? I wouldn't care if the Lord is mad at me, for ten billion years, or longer. Even with Mámma I'd take a chance, if it was for your sake - naturally I would. I'm crazy about you - didn't I tell you so?

Marceline: But if you are not afraid, why don't you try it,then?

Johnny: B'cause I'm in love with you, young woman - don't you get the point? Why on earth should I go out of my way to get you another man - ghost or no ghost: what's the difference? - since I want to be your man myself : I, John T. Wilkens of the U.S.Navy.

Marceline: Oh, I see...

Johnny: Took you pretty long - a simple thing like that. Do you understand now why I am insulted?

Marceline: It's so sad... so muddled... Do you really believe I just meant to use, to exploit you?

Johnny: Isn't that exactly what you tried to do?

Marceline: I don't know...You're not quite wrong, perhaps... Oh,Johnny! (She tries to get hold of his hand.)

Johnny: (withdrawing:) Cut it out. I know what you're after. And now, I'd better beat it, before it becomes quite dark. So long, Marcy. Look after yourself.

Marceline: It's terrible to let you go like that... What can I do to make you change your mind?

Johnny: (from the door to the right; not rudely but in a dry, matter-of-fact way:) It's simple enough - a bargain. I'll try to contact your guy, over there, on the other side: if you promise me...

Marceline: ...What?

Johnny: What the hell do you expect? I want you to go to bed with me when I have got for you what you're yelling for. That's my price. Think it over. (Exit.)

Marceline: (left alone, flings herself into an armchair - convulsed with nervous sobs. She still is in this pitiful state when Alice enters from the right - carrying a bunch of flowers.)

Alice: My Goodness! Marceline! What's the matter, child? Won't you tell me what happened?

Marceline: (shakes violently her head - covering her face with her hands. Runs to the door. Exit.)

Alice: (shrugs her shoulders, then begins to busy herself with arranging the flowers on the pedestal of Julia's bust.)

(During the last minutes the scene has rapidly darkened. There is an eerie twilight when Kadornath enters - noiselessly, from the garden.)

Kadornath: (speaking with a faintly German accent; in a sharp, penetrating whisper:) All clear? Nobody around?

Alice: My Lord! You've frightened me... I didn't hear you coming.

Kadornath: Are you sure nobody listens?

Alice: I suppose so. They're all upstairs.

Kadornath: (with a sneer:) Meditating before the séance? That's what I told them to do when I broke off the lesson. Uff! If only I'd never have to hear the word "Yoga" again. One has to take quite a bit, for the sake of the Fatherland.

Alice: What are you up to, Herbert?

Kadornath: I just meant to ask you the same question, dear. That's what I came for, incidentally.

Alice: To find out what I'm up to? That's all you worry about?

Kadornath: Did I say I am worried? It's rather you who seem somewhat out of balance.

Alice: Well, I can reassure you...

Kadornath: I don't want to be reassured. I want to know what's cooking.

Alice: Really, I don't have the faintest idea what you're talking about.

Kadornath: Is that so? Well, in this case, it will be my pleasure to enlighten you. I don't like your new strategy in dealing with Professor Van Loyden and his defunct old lady. What's the idea behind your clever scheme? Why do you send poor Julia up to some higher plane? Just to remove her from Van Loyden's life? Do you intend to spirit away a spirit?

Alice: And if so - what's so wrong with it? Frankly, Herbert, I am pretty much fed up with that whole Julia nonsense. The cult of her gets gradually on my nerves.

Kadornath: No wonder, under the circumstances.

Alice: Would you kindly explain to me, Herr Baron von and zu Riefenbach, what circumstances you mean?

Kadornath: I mean your baroque caprice to fall in love with that senile "Untermensch", Professor James Van Loyden.

Alice: (for one moment petrified with surprise; then, in a trembling voice:) What on earth makes you think....?

Kadornath: (interrupts her, rather gruffly:) Do you deny you love him?

Alice: Why, Herbert - love is such a big, ambiguous word. It can mean so many different things...

Kadornath: You admit it, then?

Alice: I feel sorry for him, that's true. It's no fun to fool a fellow who is so good-natured and so credulous. I hate to abuse his confidence: it makes me feel pretty low. Besides, I don't think it wise to carry this game too far. He might be become suspicious, in the long run. If we let Julia disappear now, he'll never doubt in the future that she actually spoke to him - using me as her mouthpiece.

Kadormath: The point of the matter is that you are sick and tired of being her mouthpiece. Right?

Alice: As I told you before - yes : I am disgusted with the whole sordid trickery.

Kadormath: What you choose to call a "sordid trickery" happens to be one of the most ingenious propagandistic schemes ever conceived by my bosses. But I do not expect you to appreciate true statesmanship. All I want is that you do your job - neatly and punctually, without grumbling and criticizing. And don't you try to play the sensitive moralist! Don't we know each other too long and too intimately for such clumsy gags? After all, it's your profession, dear, to bamboozle old suckers like Professor James Van Loyden.

Alice: You hardly need to remind me of my cheapness and crookedness. What you seem to forget, however, is, that I was not always that base. Don't you remember, Herbert, that I used to be a real medium, an authentic clairvoyant, before you corrupted me?

Kadormath: I corrupted you? That's a good one.

Alice: I may have been quite a mess, at the time when you picked me up; but there was one thing at least I had not yet prostituted: my mediumistic vocation.

Kadormath: It's remarkable, though, how quickly you've caught up. Your mediumistic vocation functions as nicely now as did your womanly charm, in the good old, distant days.

Alice: It no longer functions at all: you know that. I am through as a medium. I've been cheating for too long a time. My spirit friends have withdrawn from me altogether.

Kadornath: That's too bad. Happily, we still have our Chinks. They've done a neat job, on the whole. But their last show was lousy. That's one of the things I meant to discuss with you. The Boss is dissatisfied.

Alice: He is mighty exacting, that fabulous Boss of yours.

Kadornath: He most certainly is. Besides, he is your boss as well as mine.

Alice: If so, why am I not permitted the great man's name and his whereabouts?

Kadornath: That's the way we work. Must I explain to you, once again, the basic rules of our hierarchy? Discretion and discipline are the fundamentals on which our organization rests. There always is another boss invisibly behind and above the one from whom you receive your orders. The whole set-up climaxes in the glorious person of the supreme Boss, the Boss of all Bosses, the Super-Boss, the Führer.

Alice: I have nothing to do with your God-like super-Boss. Fortunately, he is far away, in a foreign and savage country.

Kadornath: It happens to be the land from where you obtain your dough - you and your dreamy Professor.

Alice: Don't speak so loud! Imagine! - if he heard you...

Kadornath: I'd love to see the goofy face he'll make when he finds out at last to whom he owes the luxury of his life.

Alice: He must never know! Under no circumstances!

Kadornath: The old fool is certainly good at fooling himself. Does he really believe the royalties from his books are sufficient to keep this circus here run?

Alice: He is just a child - money means nothing to him.

Kadornath: But he knows how to spend it, all right. Your starry-eyed idealist and his Villa Pacific cost my Government quite a bit of cash. It's only fair, therefore, that we fulfil our part of the contract.

Alice: Isn't that exactly what I try to do? And so far I haven't done badly. After all, Van Loyden is not an anonymous little scribbler. Whatever he says carries weight, is discussed all over the country. Even now his pacifist proclamations are very valuable, from the viewpoint of your Government. And as for his forthcoming book - his and Julia's, I mean - it cannot but stir a sensation.

Kadornath: It ought to be out by now. The old man should already be on his lecture tour - telling American boys what a mistake it is, seen from a cosmic angle, to oppose Nazism. The longer the War goes on, the more difficult it will be to influence public opinion.

Alice: I may be able to speed up the composition of the concluding chapters, if...

Kadornath: If - what? New conditions?

Alice: (with a somewhat forced nonchalance:) Nothing serious - just a bagatelle; a little favour I meant to ask you...

Kadornath: Skip the introduction! How much do you want?

Alice: Silly! What on earth should I spend money for?

Kadornath: For cocaine, perhaps. It's pretty expensive now, if I am not mistaken.

Alice: But you know that I've practically stopped taking it.

Kadornath: Maybe "practically", but not really. Besides, I don't give a damn. Now, what is your bagatelle?

Alice: A divorce, darling: that's all.

Kadornath: (glacial:) That ain't funny.

Alice: It isn't supposed to be. But, funny or not, don't you agree that it is about time to annul our farcical marriage?

Kadornath: It may be a farce to you; to me, it means something different.

But that is beside the point. What I'd like to know is, why you wish suddenly to get rid of me. Do you hate me that much?

Alice: Why, darling, you don't expect me to be in love with you, at this point. And as for our matrionial life, it has never been what I would call a romance - or has it? So why shouldn't we break it off, since it seems more convenient?

Kadornath: More convenient to you. As far as I am concerned, I consider myself very happily married.

Alice: Teaser!

Kadornath: Laugh at me, if it amuses you! I know that our German idealism seems ridiculous to you Americans. My conception of marriage may be extremely old-fashioned. But that's the way I am; I'll never get used to the cynicism of our anarchic time.

Alice: You're telling me, Herr Baron! A gentleman in the grand old style - that's what are, at bottom. I appreciate your principles. But now, let us talk turkey. Do I get a divorce?

Kadornath: Of course not. Why should I let you go?

Alice: Because you could not hold me against my will.

Kadornath: Couldn't I? I wonder.

Alice: Besides, why should we quarrel? My proposition is reasonable enough. If you are generous and grant me a divorce, I shan't be petty either. I promise you to boost your interests wherever and whenever I may have a chance to do so. And, no doubt, there will be plenty of such opportunities, once I am Mrs. James Van Loyden.

Kadornath: Mrs. James Van Loyden, indeed! I've been waiting for that. Now I know where I stand: the situation is clear. And now listen to me, "Frau Professor!" You'd better forget this whole preposterous little scheme of yours: it might get you into trouble. You know that we treat our employees decently as long as they behave themselves. But you know

also that we are not in the habit of fooling around with traitors.

Alice: It's no use to threaten me. I know how to cope with blackmail. There is nothing you could do to me. I'm through. I quit.

Kadormath: (laughing - abruptly and raucously:) You're through, are you? What a scream! Now, really, darling, really!

Alice: I have nothing to lose. Besides, there is always a place where I would be cordially received and carefully listened to, when I feel like telling a few stories: namely, F.B.I. headquarters in Los Angeles.

Kadormath: If I'm not so good at blackmailing - you're worse, beautiful; you are lousy. That F.B.I. gag is indeed as hackneyed as could be. How can you expect me to take it seriously? As if I didn't know that you're incapable of doing such a thing! First of all, you are a lady and not in the habit of visiting such a dirty place as an office of the F.B.I. Secondly, you are scared - not only of me and our organization, but also of the F.B.I. Of course, you realize that your criminal record is even more staggering than mine. If I have disregarded the obsolete laws of this country, I did so for the sake of certain ideas in which I believe - my Fatherland, my Race, my Führer. In your case, there are no extenuating circumstances: you're a plain, vulgar swindler.

Alice: Is that all?

Kadormath: No, honey. There is another consideration that will prevent you from denouncing me. You don't want your Professor to know what kind of a dame he had almost made his wife. The shock may be a little too much for him. It would be a shame - wouldn't it? - if the old chap fell dead, killed by a stroke or something.

Alice: (after a silence:) Aren't you afraid, Herbert - once in a while - by fear of punishment? Punishment on the other side, I mean?

Kadornath: Never mind the other side. Let's get down to earth.

Alice: All right. I'm ready to take your orders.

Kadornath: (trying to pet her hand:) That's my good girl now!

Alice: (withdrawing her hand:) Make it short!

Kadornath: Why, let's be friendly together! Don't you realize you're too old for changes? You'd better stick to your old pimp. Am I right?

Alice: I'm waiting for your orders, Herr Baron.

Kadornath: (with a resigned sigh:) O.K., if that's the way you're feeling... The Boss wants you to speed up the composition of the Professor's book and to stress the political angle as much as possible.

Alice: That's exactly what I try to do. Anything else?

Kadornath: The whole set-up here seems inadequate to the Boss and to the bosses above him. They conceive the Villa Pacific only as a starting point - the first, preliminary phase of a vast scheme designed to sap the fighting morale of the nation. The next step, as planned by the bosses, is to be the foundation of a league, "Against War: For the Inner Man"; President: James Van Loyden. This league - if publicizing the right way - will undoubtely prove most attractive to the so-called intellectual élite - college professors, editors of little magazines, clergymen of the slightly eccentric kind, restive youngsters, blue-stockings - male and female -, worried mothers, frustrated spinsters, Ivory-Tower poets, and other types of Isolationists. They'll all be crazy about the Inner Man. They'll form an inconspicuous vanguard of the Fifth Column - working for our cause in an indirect, subtle fashion.

Alice: And what is my role in this new comedy?

Kadornath: It begins right now. You go upstairs, to your "fiancé", and tell him that you've just that word from Julia, to the effect that it is high time to establish a League "Against War: For the Inner Man." You may add that out of this organization a regular cult may gradually develop — a veritable new religion, with Julia Van Loyden as goddess and the Professor as her high-priest and prophet. Main principle of the Julia creed: "Be humble! Be peaceful! Let Hitler win!"

Alice: All right, I'll tell him that. Anything else?

Kadornath: Plenty of minor things. But not now. There is no time to lose. Kiss me, and run upstairs!

Alice: Let's skip the kiss. I'm off.

Kadornath: As you like it, honey.

Alice: (from the door:) What about the divorce?

Kadornath: Don't be tiresome, dear! The first time, it was quite funny; in the long run, it's just a loves

Alice: As you like it, honey . (Exit.)

Kadornath: (alone; shakes his head; grins; lights a cigarette. Then he claps his hands, three times, rhythmically, and calls, in a lowered but sonorous voice:) Lee-To-Pas!

(The Three Chinese Girls enter, followed by the Little Negro Boy.)

The Three Girls: (unisonously; in high, chirping voices:) Yes Sir.

The Negro Boy: (echoing their twitter with a surprisingly deep, forceful bass:) Yes Sir.

Kadornath: What is wrong with you, kids? You gave a lousy performance, at the séance last week.

The First Girl: (rather flippantly:) We're doing our best, Sir.

Kadornath: Then your best happens to be pretty poor. It may be good enough for a traveling circus, but it's disappointing to me.

The Little Boy: Our salary is disappointing too, Sir.

Kadornath: Unverschämtheit.

The Girl: Don't be unfair, Kadornath! I happen to know that "Unverschämtheit" is a very rude word, in Indian.

Second Girl: And don't forget, please, how many different responsibilities our job involves. The séances are just a part of what we have to do - not the easiest one, to be sure. But, in a sense, we don't mind it so much as the work in the kitchen.

Third Girl: We, the illustrious artists, have to waste our time with vegetarian cooking!

The Negro Boy: K.P. is hell: every private knows that.

Kadornath: If it is true that you have a double job, it is also true that you have double payment. The Professor pays you as the servants he believes you to be, while I give you the salary due to the first-rate artists you undoubtedly are.

The First Girl: That sounds better...

The Negro Boy: So you recognize, after all, the extraordinary quality of our voice-imitations?

Kadornath: Your vocal work is fairly good indeed. But as professional illusionists, you should not content yourselves with such a limited speciality. You ought to become much more ambitious and more versatile. A faked materialization, for instance, shouldn't mean a major problem to you.

The Oldest Girl: I beg your pardon, Sir, but we are not magicians.

The Second Girl: Our agent sells us as "the famous musical clowns." He doesn't want us to do anything except our vocal tricks.

Kadornath: Not even in a private circle where nobody knows who you are?

The First Girl: Our agent is very strict.

Kadornath: That's a pity. You might have made an extra fifty dollars.

The Negro Boy: An extra fifty bucks? Why, that's different....

Kadornath: Fifty dollars in cash, if you manage to produce something ghost-like tonight. Just a floating, nebulous apparition that might be taken for Edward's materialized spirit.

The First Girl: Just a minute, Sir! We have to talk that over.

(They stick their heads together and whisper for a few seconds. Then:)

The Negro Boy: (steps forward and announces:) It's O.K., Boss. But we want the 50 bucks right now, before the show begins.

Kadornath: Gemeine Erpresserbande....

The Boy: Does that mean, yes or no?

Kadornath: That means, to hell with you - and here are your fifty dollars. (He gives him the money.)

The Boy: (examines the money very carefully, before handing it over to the First Girl:) It isn't phony, as far as I can see.

Kadornath: The séance is to begin in a few minutes/ from now. So you'd better get your trumpets fixed. Meanwhile, I'll go upstairs with Miss Lee-To-Paa, to give her all the dope about tonight's program. We'll write the whole text down, for a change; I didn't feel like taking chances. Are you ready, Lee?

The First Girl: I am with you, Sir.

(Kadornath and the First Girl, exit through a secret door in the background.)

(The two other Girls and the Negro Boy rush about like busy imps in the eevie twilight. They move furniture, pull the curtain over the glass door at the left, lighten the candles on Julia's altar, and so forth. Then they produce fine, almost invisible wires and fix them in part on the ceiling, in part in the background, behind the secret door. The wires are connected with the trumpets placed in front of the medium's chair, in the center of the room.)

The Negro Boy: (in the midst of the general bustle:) We'll show him something ghost-like, all right! (He and the two girls giggle.)

The Second Girl: (aping Kadornath's tone:) "Unverschämtheit!" "Erpresserbande!"

The Third Girl: Some Indian!

The Negro Boy: Some Baron!

The First Girl: (who has entered, noiselessly, through the secret door:) Some crook!

The Second Girl: What did he say?

The First Girl: Never mind what he said. Somebody will have to say a few words, pretty soon . Uncle Brown is here.

The Two Other Girls: Really?

The Negro Boy: That's swell!

The First Girl: At the police station, just around the corner. Asked me to let him know when the show begins.

Second Girl: So this is the day of reckoning?

First Girl: Yes Sir: that's it.

Negro Boy: Ge! We'll have lots of fun!

First Girl: Let's get started! I run over to the police station to notify Uncle Brown. And as for you, folks...

Negro Boy: Gosh! They're coming... (In almost no time the First Girl sneaks out to the left, while the two others disappear in the background. The Negro Boy - nimble like a monkey - somehow manages to climb up to the ceiling, where he hides in the chandelier.)

(From the right enter in solemn silence, the Prince and Princess Frolevsko - Prince Igor in a kind of Polar outfit, with high boots, a round fur cap, etc. -; Fifi Larue in a luxurious rococo costume, lavishly embroidered and adorned; Kadornath; Ted & Toy; Peter Brack; Marceline and, as the last ones to enter, the Professor and Alice McUlster. They all bow deeply to Julia's bust before they sit down, in a demi circle like in the opening scene of Act One.)

Princess Anna: (whispers to Larue:) A new outfit, Fifi? You're becoming more spectacular from day to day.

Larue: Merci mille fois, Madame. C'est joli, n'est-ce pas? Une création de ma grande amie Pompadour.

Professor: Friends! Silence, if you please! - Let us pray.

(All present, except Mrs. Potter, rise from their seats , as the Professor speaks:)

" O thou infinite and eternal Being, who hast interwoven the worlds in mysterious union, grant that we may esteem, as a priceless treasure, the inspiration flowing from the spiritual realm and the privilege of communion with those who have passed from embodied life into the life of the unseen world."

(Then, in a somewhat more conversational but still solemn tone, while the party settles down again:) Good evening, friends. I have great, stirring news for you. Julia sends her love. (There is a general murmur of approval and expectation, which dies presently down as the Professor

continues:) I am happy to tell you that my ~~beloved~~ developed wife has recently been promoted to an even higher plane of the cosmic hierarchy, in recognition of her manifold, unselfish activities. (Another general whisper of approval and admiration, which the Professor silences with an impressively sacerdotal motion:)

It seems, friends, that Julia has a new message for us. - The essence and bloom of her newly acquired wisdom. I do not yet know the contents of her revelation and, therefore, am looking forward, as you do, to what our friend Alice McUlster will have to say, on Mrs. Van Loyden's behalf.

Alice: (gets up and produces a piece of paper:) Friends! Five and a half minutes before the beginning of this séance, I received the following trance communication, which the immortal Mrs. Van Loyden wants me to deliver. (She reads the text, in a strangely mechanical, tinny voice:) "Friends! I have misguided and cheated you - unwittingly, it is true; but not innocently. Forgive me, please, for having been rash and irresponsible. A malignant spirit - a 'poltergeist' - succeeded in fooling me. I was wrong when I told you that the present War is irrelevant from a cosmic view. I was utterly mistaken when I advised you to ignore or sabotage the national War effort..."

Kadornath: (makes automatically a bewildered and angry motion.)

Alice: (continues her reading:) "My new teacher - Abdul Baha, the Master Spirit - has illuminated my mind. I am neither allowed nor able to explain to you, mortal friends, the profound revelations I owe to the illustrious philosopher, who lived on this earth 2000 years ago, in Persia. Suffice it to say that all my former ideas as regards the War and politics are completely erroneous."

(There is a general movement of bewilderment, as the speaker continues, with increasing emphasis:) "This struggle, friends, is indeed a struggle between Good and Evil; or rather, between the forces of absolute wickedness and the fallible powers of relatively good will. The tyrants and agressors - our enemies - are possessed by the Devil..."

(At this point, Mrs. Van Loyden's portrait falls noisily from the wall; several persons scream hysterically.)

Princess Anna: Dear me! The demons! I'm scared....

Mrs. Potter: So I am - scared stiff.

Professor: Are you sure, McUlster, that you got Julia's message straight? It sounds almost incredible....

Peter Brack: Most extraordinary indeed...

Mrs. Potter: Not to say, outrageous...

Alice: (continues her reading - shouting against the uproar:) "It behooves all of us to do our bit in this crucial fight against inimical entities..."

(The luminous trumpets arranged in front of Alice begin to flit about and to produce odd noises - a chaotic concert of neighing, mooing, giggling, crowing, twittering, and barking.)

Princess Anna: My two little dogs! I recognize their voices! Thank God! Now I am not scared anymore...

Mrs. Potter: But I am. Miss McUlster has provoked the demons...

Alice: I am not yet through, Mrs. Potter! In fact, I am just beginning...

Toy: This mooing cow must be Miss Prixler: she adores cows - doesn't she, Ted my eagle?

Professor: All the "poltergeists" of the lower planes seem mobilized against us...

Alice: (tries desperately to make herself heard, in the midst of the ever-increasing noise:) Julia recommends the establishment of a league under the slogan, "The Inner Man and his Mission in the Present War."

Mrs. Potter: Stop her! She lies! She is mad! She incites the evil spirits against us!

(When the uproar is at its climax, Johnny comes from the right.)

Johnny: (to Marceline, whom he finds in the foreground:) I just drop by to say goodbye to you, Marceline.

Marceline: What do you mean - "goodbye"? Are you going to leave?

Johnny: That's right, nurse. I'll report to the next Navy station.

Marceline: Doesn't your ankle bother you anymore?

Johnny: Practically not... Well, then, let's shake hands....

A flying Trumpet: (crows, near his ear:) Hands off, sailor! She is poison! You'd better be careful, man!

Johnny: (with a terrified grin:) I'll sure be happy to get out of here. The whole house seems nuts. Who's shouting at me, through them trumpets?

Alice: (screams, ecstatically:) It's our duty to fight! That's Julia's message, and Abdul Baha's message as well! Friends! Listen to me!

Mrs. Potter: Is there nobody to stop her? The demons will kill us if she goes on talking...

Alice: (at the top of her voice:) Mrs. Van Loyden's last wish, before her elevation to the higher ranks, is, that James Van Loyden and I ... (At this moment all the trumpets fly towards her like

luminous arrows. Hit at the breast, forehead and hands, she collapses - convulsed with a hysterical laughter that gradually becomes a spasmodic sobbing.)

Johnny: (to Marceline:) Let's beat it! This is hell... (He tries to draw her out.)

Marceline: Not before you've done what I've asked you for.

Johnny: Still that husband of yours? Can't you forget about him?

Marceline: I can't. This is the moment, John! He will materialize - I know he will: if you call for him now.

Johnny: I won't do nothing of the kind...

Marceline: You have to! You've promised me!

Johnny: What a nerve! I haven't promised you nothing, and you know I haven't. Why do you lie to me?

Marceline: Don't you remember what we agreed upon? You'll help me to come in touch with Edward, and I - shall pay you the price you want.

Johnny: But if you love only him - how can you give me what I want to get? Won't you try to cheat me out of it?

Marceline: I won't! I swear you, Johnny, that I will not cheat you. As soon as I'll have seen my husband, I'll let you have what you are after.

Johnny: You swear it, Marceline?

Marceline: I swear.

Johnny: O.K., it's a bet. Let's try it, then. You'll have to play our song.

Marceline: What song?

Johnny: You know - the nice one you was playing when I saw you first.

Marceline: But I cannot play...

Johnny: That's too bad. So there won't be no Edward.

Marceline: Look at my hands, Johnny! How do you want me to play with such terrible hands?

Johnny: I've looked plenty of times at them hands of yours, Marceline. They're O.K. with me: so, I guess, They'll be good enough for that piano.

Marceline: If you insist... (She walks slowly to the piano; sits down, and intonates, slowly and toilsomely, the opening chords of the Czech Melody.)

(The party, which has been clustering around the weeping Alice, now concentrates on Marceline.)

Professor: Marceline! Are you really going to play for us? But that's wonderful!

Larue: Mais c'est prodigieux!

Peter Brack: Almost a miracle...

Mrs. Potter: The result of Kadornath's Yoga exercises, no doubt...

Johnny: Shut up, all of you! You'll frighten the ghost away, with all your stupid talk. (He stands leaned at the piano, in the pose of a singer who is going to sing. The whole audience watches Marceline who plays the Bohemian Melody - slowly, softly, solemnly.)

Marceline: (talking to herself as she plays:) I can't play at all... My poor fingers... they are stiff and sore...My terrible fingers... Edward will think I've lost whatever talent I've ever had...

Johnny: You'd better shut up, too, Marcy. Besides, you're playing beautifully.... (As her play becomes more fluent and expressive, he stands with closed eyes, as if hypnotized:) You're playing beautifully...just beautifully... (The upper part of his body begins to sway rhythmically. He seems to fall into a kind of trance - eagerly watched by all those present. As the piano music gains

power and momentum, he whispers - blinded and bewitched -:) Now he comes... he's around... I can feel him... he enjoys the music... Yeah, man: he sure gets a kick out of that tune...

Marceline: (stops playing, but only for one moment; then she resumes the melody.)

Johnny: (his face tense and transfigured:) Hello, Mr. Martock... Hello, you are there... Doesn't your little wife play beautifully?... Why don't you join her?... Ain't that a smart idea?... Just join her... for a while...

(The tone of an invisible violin can be heard - remote and feeble at first, but then growingly strong.)

Professor: (breathless:) That's his tone... that's his violin...

Marceline: (whispers as she plays:) You are good in form, Edward my heart... Why don't you materialize?

Johnny: (smiling in his trance:) He'll materialize, all right... Wait and see!... He'll materialize beautifully....

(During his last words, the tone of the violin has become increasingly powerful. It suddenly stops, however, as the left door opens and two portly Policemen enter the room, rather noisily.)

First Policeman: Hello, folks.

Second Policeman: Nobody leaves the room.

Mrs. Potter: (jumps from her wheeled chair, in a surprisingly agile manner. She makes hurriedly for the door at the right, while shouting:) What the hell...

First Policeman: (stops her:) Nothing doing, Ma'am.

Toy: (with an almost terrified outcry of surprise:) She can walk.

Princess Anna: And how!

Professor: A miracle!

Kadornath: Quatsch - "miracle"! Verflucht noch mal!

Ted: He can speak!

Peter Brack: Even German!

Mrs. Potter: (wrestling with the policeman - uttering a bitter, desperate laughter:) Another miracle, I suppose! Fools you are - all of you....: fools... fools.... fools.....

Kadornath: (caught by the second policeman:) I warn you, officer! You have to let me out. I am a secret emissary of Mahatma Gandhi...

Second Policeman: You'll explain all this to Mr. Brown. Don't move.

Larue: (in a shrill, penetrating voice - very different from his usual piping falsetto:) Ne bougez pas! (He produces swiftly a gun and directs it against the Policeman, who withdraws gradually. Everybody stares aghast at Larue, who walks slowly, step by step, towards the left door, always holding the gun against the two horrified cops.)

Mrs. Potter: (follows him towards the door:) Bravo, Little Marquis! Good Work !

(As Larue passes under the chandelier, the Negro Boy jumps down from his hiding place, landing just on Larue's shoulders and snatching the gun from him.)

Larue: You little beast... petit monstre... (He tries frantically to shake him off.)

Johnny: (still in a state of trance:) Why've you stopped playing - you, over there?.... You play beautifully.... I sure got a kick out of it...

Larue: (struggling with the Negro Boy, while the two Policemen

hold Kadornath and Mrs. Potter:) Merde alors....

(At this point, Mr. Brown of the F.B.I. enters from the left - jovial and dynamic:)

Mr. Brown: (very cordially:) How right you are, cher ami! - Excuse me for intruding at this late hour, ladies and gentlemen- I am Mr. Brown of the F.B.I.

C U R T A I N

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ACT THREE

* * *

The same night, a few hours later. A plain table, a lamp, and a simple chair have been moved into the foreground. At the table, Mr. Brown is seated - smoking a big cigar; sipping coffee; rummaging, once in a while, through a pellmell of papers piled up in front of him, on the table.

Alice McUlster sits at the opposite end of the table — very erect, her face taut with hysteria and gravity.

Brown: Let's recapitulate your story, Baroness.

Alice: May I ask you again not to call me "Baroness," Mr. Brown. My name is AliceMcUlster.

Brown: Of course, Miss McUlster; I'm sorry. (He reads from his note book:) So you were born in Boston, Massachsetts, on November 18, 1901. - A curious date, incidentally, as far as the stars are concerned. A very ambiguous constellation. Pretty dangerous, too.

Alice: Are you interested in astrology, Mr. Brown?

Brown: Slightly. In an amateurish way, you know. But we'd better continue. There are other customers waiting... Your father - you say - was a successful business man. Your mother died in 1905. Ten years later, when you were fourteen years old, your father got involved into a financial scandal resulting in the bankruptcy of his firm and, subsequently, in his suicide. The night after your father's death, you had your first contact with the Other World. Is that correct, Miss McUlster?

Alice: It is correct, Mr. Brown - whether you believe it or not.

Brown: (in a casual, matter-of-fact way:) I believe it, Miss McUlster. (Reading again:) From 1920 to 1929, you lived in London as the wife of Professor Leopold Mathews, who was connected, at the time, with the Institute of Psychic Science. Incidentally, Mr. Mathews was twenty-four years older then you.

Alice: Why do you mention that, Mr. Brown?

Brown: Never mind. It's just a little coincidence that amuses me. You are undoubtedly aware of the fact that your father, Professor Mathews, and Professor Van Loyden were all born in the same year - twenty-three years before the year of your birth.

Alice: (somewhat bewildered:) Frankly, I've never thought of this curious detail...

Brown: Why should you? It's hardly significant. Of course, a psychoanalist might interpret it as a cogent proof for your subconscious father complex, and what not...

Alice: Is psychoanalysis another hobby of yours, Mr. Brown?

Brown: Yes, it seems I have quite a few hobbies ... So you returned to this country in January 1930, a few weeks after your husband's death. You tried to make your living as a professional medium - is that correct? And at first you were fairly successful, too.

Alice: That's right. At first I was quite successful.

Brown: But in 1932 and 1933 things didn't go so well anymore. In 1934 you were three times arrested for vagabondage and disorderly conduct; in 1935, you underwent a cure to heal you from cocainism...

Alice: Please, don't speak so loud, Mr. Brown! They might hear us outside. It would be terrible if Professor Van Loyden...

Brown: So sorry, Miss McUlster. By the way, I asked Mr. Van Loyden to stay upstairs, in his studio. (Checking his notes again:) You met Baron Riefenbach in 1935...

Alice: Excuse me for interrupting you, but this happens to be not quite accurate. I made Herbert's acquaintance in London, several years before, when I was still working for the Psychic Institute.

Brown: Of course, you mentioned that. Did the Baron keep in touch with you during his long stay in the Orient?

Alice: He wrote me occasionally - first from Tibet, then from China and India.

Brown: He traveled, at the time, under the name of a Baron von Fuchs. Did you know that he was deported from India by the British authorities, in 1933?

Alice: I was told so, later. But even now I don't have the faintest idea as to the date when Herbert actually becams a Nazi agent.

Brown: His journey to the Far East was financed by the Reichswehr. But, according to our files, the Baron was in contact with the Nazi Party as far back as 1925.

Alice : At first, of course, he concealed these things from me very carefully. I wouldn't have married him if I had known his profession.

Brown: But why did you marry him, Miss McUlster? Frankly, I'm still unable to understand...

Alice: There are things which seem extremely difficult to explain, although they are not really very complicated. I married Baron von Riefenbach because - well, simply because I had no other alternative,

at that point. I was through - do you realize what that means, Mr. Brown? I was lonely and penniless, a dope fiend, a frustrated medium on the point of becoming an amateur prostitute: I was a mess altogether. Herbert picked me up from the gutter - almost literally. He gave me cocaine and cash and beautiful words. I don't think I was in love with him but I was entirely in his power - hypnotized, as it were. There is no crime I wouldn't have committed, for his sake.

Brown: Did he ask you to commit any crimes for him?

Alice: You know he didn't - not in the beginning. He organized my career as a fashionable medium. He managed me, built me up. He is certainly a first-rate publicity agent: almost over night I became a celebrity in the most exclusive circles of Washington, New York, Philadelphia, Boston. And, I must say, my success was not entirely unjustified. I was indeed at my best, during the first year of my second marriage; I did a good job; the spirits responded most graciously to my appeals and questions.

Brown: You still were innocent, at that point; you did not yet know for what purposes Riefenbach used your contacts - and I mean both, your contacts with the spirit world and with influential American citizens like Professor Van Loyden.

Alice: He was in a pitiful state when I met him - a year or so after the death of his wife - almost insane with sorrow, obsessed with the idea to come in touch with her. I tried to help him - without guile at first. But, curiously, Julia did never come through. She must have distrusted me, right from the beginning. So I was forced to do what I had never done before - to invent messages, to feign

trance communications. It's not that I meant to cheat poor Van Loyden; I just felt sorry for him - infinitely sorry. That's the way I'm still feeling about him, incidentally. In my whole life I've never felt so sorry for anybody - not even for myself.

Brown: Yet you managed for quite some time to fool him with a vengeance.

Alice: It all developed so gradually: I scarcely realized what I was doing. Herbert talked me into it - cleverly, diabolically, little by little.

Brown: Baron Riefenbach is remarkably smart, no doubt. It was a brilliant idea, from his point of view, to pick as naive and as respectable a man as Professor Van Loyden and to train him as an unwitting Nazi agent, with the help of metaphysical authorities. The release of his book, "The Cosmos of Tomorrow", would have been quite a coup. One of the most illustrious American scholars and philosophers, denouncing the War effort of his nation! Imagine! Besides, the Professor's house is an excellent hiding place and observation post - conveniently situated on the Pacific coast; most valuable, under the circumstances, to such gentlemen as Master Kadomath and Monsieur Larue.

Alice: Believe it or not, I was completely unaware of Larue's connection with Baron Riefenbach.

Brown: What may seem even more unbelievable: the Baron was unaware of this connection himself - as unaware, indeed, as you were, up to this evening, of Mrs. Potter's importance.

Alice: Is it really true that she is the mysterious boss Herbert kept talking about? That vulgar, ignorant, half-paralyzed woman? It sounds all too absurd...

Brown: She may be pretty vulgar, but I'm afraid she isn't quite so ignorant as you think. And as for her broken leg, that's just a special touch of her masquerade. She is quite a personality, that so-called Mrs. Potter - in charge of most Nazi organizations between Chicago and Los Angeles. An extremely interesting character: we keep watching her for a year or so.

Alice: But, being so well informed, of all her activities - why did you allow her to remain at large?

Brown: Of course, we might have caught her before, But it was worthwhile to be patient, in this particular case. A year of waiting means nothing, if the result is as brilliant as that of tonight's raid. Riefenbach, the Big Bertha, and the little Marquis at one coup - I would have happily waited two or three years for such a triumph. It will take the Fifth Column some time to recover from this major blow.

Alice: My congratulations, Mr. Brown. You know that I tried my best to co-operate with you. I wished that I were able to support you even more effectively. But whatever information I may have had to contribute, it always turned out to be in your records already. In fact, I feel rather useless, and a little bit ridiculous, with my pompously announced "comprehensive confession"- Not only that you knew everything I meant to reveal to you - you told me a great many things entirely new to me. Isn't it ironical? From you of all people I had to learn the inside stories Herbert concealed from me - about the Little Marquis, and Big Bertha, and what not. There is only one question that still puzzles me: How did you manage to find out all those secrets yourself? You seem indeed informed even of the most trifling event that took place in this house during the past six months.

Brown: (with a grin:) It may seem odd to you, Miss McUlster, but in reality it is very simple: I'm just omiescent - that's all. I even know that I can trust you, sister - paradoxical as it sounds. The only bit of information you tried to conceal from me, happens to be the one speaking most in your favour. Why didn't you tell me that Mrs. Julia Van Loyden has changed her mind - suddenly and fundamentally - as regards the present world situation and the responsibilities of the Inner Man?

Alice: Why should I have mentioned such a minor incident? Just another unsuccessful trick of mine... I don't even know exactly why I wanted to do it. Out of resentment against that man, I suppose. However, it didn't work. I was interrupted by the "poltergeists" when I had hardly started. The truly miraculous thing took place afterwards - as you ought to know, since you know everything.

Brown: Do you mean the beautiful violin solo that followed your address? If so, we enter indeed the realm of mystery. All I know is that my Chinese girl friends did not produce those enchanting harmonies. They came from a sphere in which I don't feel competent and which I prefer not to touch.

Alice: Don't tell me, Mr. Brown, that you are afraid of that "sphere"! I don't want to be disappointed.

Brown: I didn't say that I am scared, Alice. There is nothing frightful about spirits, as far as I can see. But there is something confusing about them, and I hate confusion. Illusionists, professional magicians - those are people I understand. In fact, I have done quite a bit of magic myself, in my days. Music Halls always enthralled me. Hence my friendship with your charming "poltergeists" - Lee To Paa and her gifted companions.

Alice: They are cute, aren't they? Especially Curley: what a delightful imp! One of Herbert's most successful discoveries, no doubt.

Brown: I beg your pardon, Ma'am. But Curley and the three young ladies happen to be my discovery, of which I am very proud. I saw them on the stage, in San Francisco, several months ago, and was so impressed by their stunts that I insisted on being presented to Miss Lee To Pan. Subsequently I had the good chance to be instrumental in bringing about the contact between Baron Riefenbach and those talented young illusionists.

Alice: You don't try to tell me, Mr. Brown, that our "poltergeists" are your agents?

Brown: If you want to put it that way...

Alice: (suddenly convulsed with a somewhat hysterical laughter:) But that's wonderful! That's the funniest thing I've ever heard in my life. You are admirable, Mr. Brown! You are priceless! What a pity I didn't meet you before it was too late...

Brown: It's never too late, Alice.

Alice: (very serious again:) For the first time you are wrong, Mr. Brown.

(The little Negro Boy insinuates himself into the room, entering from the right.)

Brown: What's the matter, Curley?

Negro Boy: Sorry to bother you, Uncle Brown; but we don't quite know how to handle Kadornath. He's kind of mad, because of the handcuffs. Says they are an insult to an Indian gentleman; tried to kick me, too.

Brown: That sounds pretty grim, doesn't it? Well, let's have a look at the Indian gentleman. Please, ask him to come in.

Negro Boy: But you'd better be careful, Boss! He's kind of wild, you know... (Exit.)

Alice: I'd much rather not see him now. Besides, I ought to have a talk with the Professor, anyway. After all, I owe him some explanations...

Brown: But you'll meet the Baron when you cross the hall...

Alice: Not if I use our secret corridor, here, behind Julia's back. (Exit, through the secret door in the background.)

(Kadornath, with handcuffs, enters from the right, followed by a Policeman.)

Kadornath: (in a state of fury:) This is outrgeous! I protest solemny...

Brown: (in a casual, matter-of-fact way:) Just take it easy, Baron Riefenbach.

Kadornath: You are mistaken, Sir. My name is positively not Baron Riefenbach.

Brown: Do you prefer to be called Baron Fuchs again? I thought that pseudonym long outdated. Of course, I might have addressed you as Professor Mierendorf; but, as far as I know, this is your name only in the Latin American countries.

Kadornath: It is obviously your intention to confuse and to frighten me. But you won't get away with your notorious tricks - not with me, Mr. Brown. I happen to be an American citizen.

Brown: I know, Herr Baron: your naturalization has not been annulled as yet.

Kadornath: I consider it beneath my dignity to answer to your insinuations. In fact, I refuse to have any dealings with you until I have seen my lawyer.

Brown: You seem to take it for granted that I wish to have any dealings with you, Baron Riefenbach.

Kadornath: I know what you are after, Mr. Brown of the F.B.I. But don't expect any information from me! I have nothing to tell you.

Brown: Happily, I don't depend on you altogether. Some of your good friends have been as co-operative as they could be.

Kadornath: (quickly:) Whatever Miss McUlster may have told you, is likely to be sheer invention. You know, of course, that she is dangerously hysterical.

Brown: Yes - isn't it too bad? Poore woman! She is indeed in an alarming state. I had no chance to talk with her at all: she left the room with all symptoms of a complete nervous breakdown. Thank God, there still are sturdy, reasonable women - our friend Big Bertha, for instance.

Kadornath: Your tricks are all too obvious, Sir. I know Big Bertha: she wouldn't tell you a word.

Brown: Your confession that you know the lady is interesting enough. (Dismissing him with a gesture:) That's all, Baron Riefenbach. (To the Policeman:) Jackson, will you please show the gentleman back to his apartment.

Kadornath: (with a new outburst of fury as the Policeman leads him towards the door at the right:) You'll regret that, Brown! I'm not quite so helpless as you may believe. My friends in Washington...

Brown: (seems absorbed in his papers, while the Policeman pushes Kadornath through the door. When the two are already on the point of leaving the room, he calls after them:) He, Jackson! Listen! I'd like to see what the gentleman looks like without his beautiful beard and his exotic complexion. Miss Lee To Paa has the cosmetic liquids to remove his make-up and to restore the original blond of

his Germanic mane.

Policeman: (from the door:) O.K., Boss.

(Kadermath and Policeman, exit.)

Brown: (alone, looking suddenly very old, very tired. He sighs; covers his eyes and forehead with his hands. In this position he is found by Curley - the Negro Boy - who has noiselessly entered.)

Negro Boy: Something wrong, Uncle Brown?

Brown: (starting at the sound of Curley's voice:) Nothing wrong, boy. What makes you think there is?

Negro Boy: Why, it's just that you look kind of worried.

Brown: I'm not worried, boy. A little worn-out, perhaps. You see, I'm not quite so young as I used to be.

Negro Boy: Yes, I see what you mean, Uncle Brown. Must be kind of tough to be old, I suppose. Especially for a guy who has no kids, and nothing - like you, or like Mr. Van Loyden.

Brown: (with a short, somewhat forced laughter:) Now, don't feel too sorry for me, young fellow! After all, it has its advantages, too, not to be so green anymore as you are, Mr. Curley. In a sense, life becomes the more interesting the more one knows about it. Youngsters like you are missing a lot of fun. And so do our mystics, here in the Villa Pacific. As for myself, I'm having a grand time, on the whole.

Negro Boy: Good for you, Uncle Brown. Do you want me to fix this messy room a little?

Brown: That's precisely what I called you for. And, please, open the door to the garden. A bit of fresh air couldn't do any harm, I guess, before I continue the examination.

Negro Boy: It's as you say it, Boss. In fact, I'm feeling like a

mouthful of fresh air myself. (He removes the curtain from the glass door at the left. One sees the garden landscape in the pallid light of the dawn.)

(At the same time, somebody outside is knocking at the door to the right. Brown mumbles , " Come in!", whereupon the door slowly opens. Enters Johnny - rather despondent-looking.)

Johnny: (clears his throat to catch Mr. Brown's attention.)

Brown: (absorbed in his notes:) What's the matter?

Johnny: It's only me, Sir - Johnny.

Brown: Johnny - who?

Johnny: John T. Wilkens of the U.S. Navy, Sir.

Brown: Yes, of course... I remember. Why are you still hanging around here, sailor?

Johnny: Does that mean, Sir, I'm free to go?

Brown: Exactly. In fact, you shouldn't have stayed that long. Why didn't you report to the next Navy Station as soon as you came ashore?

Johnny: Well, Sir, you see, I wasn't quite able to. That damned ankle of mine... And then, I've had fever, too.

Brown: Still, your friends ought to have informed the authorities. As things stand now, your officers may believe that you have been drowned, or something.

Johnny: I nearly was, Sir. I wonder how many of them officers have had as much good luck as me.

Brown: Good luck - that's what you've having, all right. First, you escaped from the fishes; and now I let you run off, 'though I might think you mixed up with the fishy affairs of this house.

Johnny: Is things really that fishy here, Sir?

Brown: It couldn't be fishier. But that's none of your business,

John; I know you have nothing to do with what's going on in the Villa Pacific.

Johnny: It's sure none of my business: you're quite right there, Sir. It's just.... well, you see, Sir: a guy gets kind of fond of people who have been good to a guy, and have nursed him, and such as that....

Brown: The young woman who nursed you, and such as that, is quite all right, I suppose. Yet, I'd try to forget all about here, if I were you, sailor John. If I'm not mistaken, she's pretty much tied up with another fellow.

Johnny: She is maybe, in a sense. Only, it so happens that the other fellow is dead.

Brown: That makes things rather worse - doesn't it?

Johnny: Maybe yes - maybe no. 'f course, a girl might care a lot for a dead guy: that's what makes a dead guy dangerous. But, on the other hand, the dead guy - he don't care for the girl: so he ain't that dangerous, after all.

Brown: There you've got something, sailor. A dead guy doesn't care: that's undoubtedly so. The only thing that still puzzles me, at this point, is whether the Navy authorities will be very interested in this kind of problem. Desertion in wartime - I'm afraid - remains a damned serious charge - no matter how the dead guys feel about a girl or about deserters.

Johnny: Desertion in wartime? That's bad, and that ain't good...

Brown: I should say it isn't. So I suggest that you beat it now and make for the next Navy Station - and more snappy than that, young man! I happen to know one of the big-shots there: he'll be notified that sailor Wilkens is on his way to report. Besides,

I'll tell my friend that you haven't been over the hill, but rather down, in the depth - in a kind of spooky underworld where dead guys play violin and bewitch living women. My pal at the Navy Station will appreciate that such experiences do something to a fellow.

Johnny: That's right, Sir: such experiences do funny things to a fellow... Well, anyhow, thanks for your advice. I'm off, to the Navy Station.

Brown: Good luck to you, sailor...

Johnny: (exit, into the garden - waving at Mr. Brown.)

Brown: (softly, to himself, as the sailor has left:)...and God bless you!

The Negro Boy: (who has witnessed the scene, discreetly from the background:) Seems a damned nice guy, Johnny the sailor - don't you think so, Uncle Brown? You wouldn't take him for a medium, either: looks too healthy to me, for that kind of disease.

Brown: Why shouldn't the ghosts be attracted by healthy people? The poor spooky creatures - being rather on the morbid side themselves - may be particularly sensible to the wholesome vibrations of a lad like Johnny. It's only natural, in a sense. After all, the most fragil women have usually a penchant for the most husky men. "Les extrêmes se touchent..."

Negro Boy: I don't like that last statement of yours, Uncle Brown - if you allow me to say so. It sounds like Fifi Larue.

Brown: À propos Fifi Larue, I ought to have a talk with that colourful character. Why don't you ask him to come down, Curley?

He's probably upstairs, trying new rococo costumes in the little boudoir which Professor Van Loyden put so generously at his disposal.

Negro Boy: (with a sour face:) If it has to be... (Exit.)

(The Three Chinese Girls enter the room, while Curley is leaving it. All three of them seem highly amused; they giggle.)

Brown: What's so funny, girls?

First Girl: The Baron...

Second Girl: He's a scream!

Third Girl: We've washed his beard!

First Girl: It's a genuine beard, you know...

Second Girl: Fair like the beard of a Teutonic god...

Third Girl: And his eyebrows! His hair! His complexion!

First Girl: You won't recognize him, Uncle Brown!

Brown: Are you talking of Kadornath, the Master Yogi?

First Girl: He looks like a superman, the morning after..

Second Girl: I've never seen anything nearly so ridiculous!

Brown: Haven't you? Well, here is something...

(He points at Fifi Larue, who enters, accompanied by the Negro Boy.)

Larue: (still wearing the shoes, stockings, breeches, and the satin shirt of his rococo costume, but not the whig and the jacket; crowing in his highest falsetto with enthusiastic cordiality:) Mais, mon cher Mr. Brown, je suis enchanté de vous revoir! C'est incroyable, mon cher, que je ne vous ai pas reconnu au premier moment...

Brown: That's only too understandable, Monsieur Larue: I have a common-place face, there are millions of fellows like me. With

you, of course, that's an entirely different matter: you are indeed unique. That's why I recognized you at the first look, although we've met just once, if I am not mistaken.

Larue: Une fois, c'est exacte - at a Soirée of the Hungarian Minister in Washington. C'était charmant, n'est-ce pas? It seems ages ago.

Brown: And yet it's only a few years since. We met in October, 1938 - some weeks after Munich. I shall not forget the ardent eloquence with which you defended the policy of appeasement. Hadn't you spend the preceding summer in Germany? At any rate, I recall distinctly your dramatic tales proving the magnificent accomplishments of the Nazi régime.

Larue: Ah, oui! Que voulez-vous? Les Allemands... Un grand peuple, sans doute. Pensez à Goethe, Wagner, Beethoven...

Brown: I thought you are more interested in Horst Wessel, the hero of the Nazi movement.

Larue: So you were kind enough to read my little booklet, " Horst Wessel: Symbol of German Youth."

Brown: I was indeed kind enough. A most remarkable document - that slim booklet of yours. You found truly rhapsodic accents in predicting and praising the coming world hegemony of the Germanic race.

Larue: Yes, I know, it's beautifully written. Somewhat lyrical, I suppose - very naive, extremely innocent... But, undenisbly, c'est de la poésie...

Brown: "Innocent" is the word, cher ami! "Innocent" is priceless: considering your interests in the chemical industry of the Reich...

Larue: (giggles cheerfully:) C'est rigolo, n'est-ce pas? Life is full of such coincidences. As my developed friend, Madame Pompadour, is wont to say...

(At this point, Alice McUlster enters hastily through the secret door in the background.)

Alice: May I talk to you for a minute, Mr. Brown?

Brown: If Monsieur Larue is good enough to excuse me...

Larue: Mais je vous en prie...

Alice: (in the foreground, with Brown; turning her back to Larue, she whispers:) I didn't tell him. Not yet. Wasn't able to. Don't you see? I just wasn't able to tell him...

Brown:Now, tale it easy, Alice! You were not able to tell - what? to whom?

Alice: To Van Loyden, of course. He is the only person in the world to whom I still have anything to say. Only, I couldn't do it.

Brown: So he has actually no idea of what's going on in his house? And you didn't dare to tell him the awful truth? But what, then, did you tell him? What kind of story did you make up to explain my presence in the Villa Pacific?

Alice: I don't know... I was so embarrassed: I hardly recall what I said. I'm afraid it was something about our Shanghai girls and some criminal afair in which they are involved...

The First Girl: (who has been listening:) Why, I must say, Miss McUlster...

Alice: (utterly irritated:) My dear child, you must try to understand my situation: the Professor is very annoyed; I had to explain to him why Mr. Brown and his cops intruded on our séance, just when Edward's ghost was on the point of coming through at last.

The Girl: (in a lowered voice:) Yes, that is true, he was on the point of coming through... And how beautifully he played!

Alice: The Professor is bitterly disappointed that the process of materialization was interrupted by the police. You know how much this particular experiment means to him...

The Girl: (rather catty:) The old gentleman is very fond of poor little Mrs. Mertock - isn't he?

Alice: (ignoring her malice:) I found Marceline in his studio when I was up there, just now. She was all in tears; He tried to comfort her. Edward's ghost - he said - is probably still around...

(During the last minute, Fifi Larue has tried to sneak out through the door at the right, which he found blocked by a Policeman.)

Alice: (still whispering to Brown:) Please, be kind, Mr. Brown, and leave this house as soon as possible! Could you move your office to police headquarters around the corner? Van Loyden may come down any moment now, to make his morning prayers in front of Julia's altar. He would think it sacrilegious that this examination takes place in the very room where her sacred ashes are shrined.

Brown: But, sooner or later, he'll inevitably find out...

Alice: Leave that to me, Mr. Brown! I'll tell him the whole truth: I promise you I will, as soon as I have a chance to be alone with him. Just let me stay here for a little while - half an hour or so - and I will explain everything to Professor Van Loyden. I will not try to run away - you know that.

Brown: I know that. Besides, you wouldn't have much of a chance to do so, anyhow.

Larue: (near the door again:) Alors, cher Monsieur, avec votre permission.... I would like to go upstairs and finish my toilette.

Brown: You better stick around, brother; or you might get yourself into trouble. (To the Negro Boy:) Please, ask the others to come down at once.

Negro Boy: The whole bunch of them?

Brown: The whole bunch, except Mr. Van Loyden.

(The Negro Boy, exit.)

Larue: I wonder which member of our innocuous circle may seem suspicious to you. La Princesse Frolevsko, peut-être? Pauvre femme! I was having a hunch all along that there is something wrong with her....

(Enter the Prince and Princess Frolevsko - he stoically composed; she, quivering with excitement.)

Princess Anna: I am an honest woman: whoever says I am not, is a deliberate liar...

Brown: But my dear Mrs. Potchikoff....

Princess Anna: (yelling with indignation:) My name is Princess Frolevsko, and whoever says my name is Potchikoff...

Prince Igor: Cut it out, Anna! The gentleman knows who we are - can't you see that? Besides, I'm fed up with that Prince-Frolevsko comedy, anyway. Who wants to be a prince? All the princes I have known were drunkards or deranged in some other way. And I know what I am talking about: several members of the Imperial family were among my clients when I still was a prosperous dentist in St. Petersburg.

Princess Anna: (sobbing and screaming:) You liar! You fool! You crook! Don't you realize what you're doing to me? Do you want to drive me into suicide?

Brown: Now, come, come, Mrs. Potchikoff! What's all the fuss about, after all? I know perfectly well that neither you nor your husband has anything to do with the subversive things going on in this house. And as for that minor incident in Chicago, you don't need worry too much. On the contrary, you ought to realize that any information you may be able to give me concerning the Villa Pacific will considerably improve your situation in the Chicago affair.

Princess Anna: What Chicago affair? What are you talking about?

Prince Igor: Don't be tiresome, Anna! Evidently, Mr. Brown is well familiar with your criminal record. (To the others present:) Mrs. Potchikoff was running a house of evil reputation in Chicago, Illinois.

I thought it was fairly harmless - just some gambling and a so-called massage salon; but the police did not like it.

Princess Anna: (shaking her fists against him:) You half-wit! you damned son-of-a-bitch!! I'll fix you!... (She is on the point of attacking him physically when Ted & Toy enter, hand in hand.)

Prince Igor: Pas devant les enfants, if you please, Madame!

Ted: (to Toy:) It's all a dream, humming-bird! Don't cry! Don't shiver so! Don't look so sad and frightened! It's all a feverish, baroque, surrealistic halucination...

Toy: But what has a F.B.I. man to seek in our dream world? This is utterly irritating.

Ted: Prixler is with us. Don't be afraid, my pigeon...

Brown: Is your name Ted Turner?

Ted & Toy: We are Ted and Toy.

Brown: You are wanted as a draft-dodger.

Toy: Both of us?

Brown: Only the male part of the team, under the present regulations.

Ted: I am not a draft-dodger, I am a conscientious objector.

Brown: You'll have the opportunity to explain this subtle differentiation to men more competent in such matters. I am just a minor F.B.I. official, and have order to bring you to police headquarters.

Toy: But there must be some mistake involved! My poor brother is innocent, He did not even know that the Army is interested in his fragile personality.

Brown: The Army is not very particular, at this point: they seem to be interested in nearly everybody. Besides I'm pretty eager to have a little talk with you myself. Just a harmless conversation about art, mind you.

Ted: Are you interested in artistic things, Mr. Brown?

Brown: I used to be - rather passionately so, too. In fact, I did quite a bit of painting myself, in my days ...

Alice: I wonder what kind of craft you did not try out, in your days, Mr. Brown.

Brown: I've never been a Surrealist, for instance - in whatever sense you may conceive this term. That's why I was so pleased, at first, when I heard that the late Miss Prixler has come out against surrealism at last.

Ted: One of Prixler's enigmatic whims...

Brown: Not so enigmatic, if you know the inside story.

Toy: Now, don't try to tell us that you know more about Prixler than we do.

Brown: Maybe I am more familiar with the mysterious motive-powers behind her. Certain personalities seem keenly interested in Father Turner's armament factory, where our friend Ted was formerly occupied as a designer.

Ted: Only for two or three months, though, if you please! I couldn't stand it longer...

Brown: Yet you must have picked up a few things while you were working there - at any rate, that's what those interested personalities imagine. They want you to give up surrealism, so that you remember, and bring down to paper, the technical patterns that bored you so in Pittsburgh ,- the newest models of American guns, planes, tanks, and what not.

Toy: This is absurd! It sounds as though Prixler were under the influence of enemy agents...

Brown: You never can tell, nowadays. There is a Fifth Column, perhaps, active in the other world...

(The Professor enters from the right, followed by Marceline.)

Professor: The other world? What surprising words to be uttered by a gentleman of the F.B.I.!

Brown: Why shouldn't a poor, harrassed Government official have the right to indulge in metaphysical reveries, once in a while?

Professor: Indeed, why shouldn't you, Mr....? - I do not yet have the privilege of being presented to you.

Brown: Infinitely sorry, Professor. My name is Brown - Ernest Brown, of Washington D.C. I have to apologize for having intruded on your beautiful home, Mr. Van Loyden.

Professor: That's quite all right, Mr. Brown. My developed wife and I believe in having an open house: everybody is welcome to partake in our modest pleasures and meditations.

Brown: You are very kind, Professor. I'm afraid, though, that I shan't be able to profit by your hospitality as much as I'd like it.

Professor: It's a pity that your duties oblige you to leave us so soon.

Brown: Why, if I can do you a favour by staying a little longer...

Professor: Let's leave it for another time, my dear Mr. Brown, if that is all right with you. It so happens that I too am rather occupied, this morning. Several spirit friends have announced their visits...

Marceline: I'm afraid they may change their minds and withdraw again, unless we come in touch with them, without any further delay. Where is Johnny?

Brown: Johnny Wilkens is gone. Had to report for duty, I suppose.

Marceline: Is that so? Well, and I suppose that there are human duties, even outside the Navy. Johnny had no right to run away from here: I have his word of honor that he wouldn't do this to me.

Brown: Johnny's departure seems to affect you considerably, Miss.

Marceline: My name is Mrs. Martock. And I have very specific reason to be interested in Johnny's where-abouts.

Brown: I don't doubt it, Mrs. Martock. Unfortunately, however, the Navy

authorities, too, take a certain interest in the sailor John T. Wilkens.

Professor: It seems that the authorities - military and civilian - are most keenly concerned, of late, in our innocuons. What about the peculiar story I hear in respect to our Chinese friends and a mysterious theft in San Francisco?

Alice: (quickly:) But I've told you all about it - haven't I, Professor. Its not a very interesting affair, anyhow. Just a minor criminal affair into which Lee To Paa got involved - innocently, I take it.

First Chinese Girl: (feigning an expression of embarassement and insulted dignity:) It's all a sordid plot, Professor Van Loyden... I swear you I didn't steal the jewels of that Italian countess at the St. Francis Hotel...

Professor: Be this as it may: I want you to know that I trust you and that you'll be always welcome in the Villa Pacific. I know that Julia thinks very highly of you: that means more to me than the sentence of any jury. This is a house of love and understanding; an oasis of peace...

(His speech is interrupted by the turbulent entrance of Peter Brack and the Second Policeman.)

Peter Brack: (stumbles into the room - almost blind without his eye-glasses; with one of his eyes black and nearly closed:) This is the most extraordinary experience I've ever had in my life...

Professor: Good Lord! What's the matter?

Brown: (almost simultaneously:) What's wrong, Liddleton? A holdup, or something?

Policeman: (rather breathlessly:) No Sir... It's just that damned woman, that Mrs. Potter... The devil! - she is gone...

Brown: (jumping up, in fury:) Are you mad, man? What are you talking about? Mrs. Potter is gone?

Policeman: That's right, Sir: she's gone, all right. I sure don't know how it happened. I was watching her and this English guy here, the way you had told me to, and all of a sudden that devil of an old gal produced a gun - I sure don't know how she managed to do it; was hiding the damned thing in her stockings, I guess, or in her false teeth, or something. But there it was, and before I had a chance to get out my own gun, she had already knocked down Mr. Brack, and leaped over him - just like that - (he imitates the motion) - and in no time she was out of the window.

Peter Brack: It was the most staggering, most overwhelming, most appaling display of beastly vitality....

Brown: Never mind Mrs. Potter's beastly vitality, Sir...

Peter Brack: There was an indescribable flash in her eyes as she hit me - a flame of triumph: diabolical...

Brown: We have to get her back...

Professor: Gentlemen, I am flabbergasted. Will you please explain me what it is all about? Has poor Mrs. Potter gone completely mad?

Larue: (in his most penetrating falsetto:) Elle n'est guère folle: au contraire, elle est heroique! But what would you know about heroism! You are just Americans...

Brown: That's enough, Little Marquis!

Larue: (crowing puguaciously:) Vive la race Germanique! Vive Hitlère!

Kadormath: (transformed into a Teuton - blond-bearded, fair-maned, with pink complexion - he appears in the open door and thunders:) Heil! Heil! Heil! - (stretching his arm and darting formidable looks under bushy brows.)

The Negro Boy: (who shows up behind him - aping his voice and motion:) Heil! Heil!!

Professor: (completely aghast:) What is this hideous man? Why does he produce such an unpleasant noise? What is the matter here?

Kadornath: You wouldn't understand it, blind old fool you are! Complacent, blind old fool! Old fool!

Alice: (with an outcry:) Herbert! Stop it!!

Professor: What do you have to do with this madman?

Alice: I'll explain everything to you...

Professor: (interrupts her with an imperial gesture:) No, don't tell me anything now. I don't want to listen. I am disgusted with all of you. (He withdraws toward the door.) Leave me alone! Only Marceline may come with me: I know that she is pure - not involved in these lurid secrets. Give me your hand, my child. Our spirit friends will comfort us.

Alice: (following him to the door:) Don't be unfair, James! You must listen to me! I implore you...

Professor: (in the open door:) Later, maybe. First let me meditate. (Exit, with Marceline.)

Alice: (following them:) Now, James! Now! There is no time to lose! (Exit.)

Brown: (who has meanwhile been giving orders, in a lowered voice, to the Second Policeman:) And& another thing, Liddleton - you take these people over to the police station, while I call headquarters in Los Angeles. Curley and the girls go with you. Jackson stays here and watches the house. Is that clear enough?

Policeman: Clear enough, Boss.

Princess Anna: Have you heard that, Igor? All of us are going to be arrested! That's what you get for your insane talk...

Prince Igor: Never mind, Mrs. Potchikoff. In fact, I am rather pleased to come in touch with the authorities. It will be indeed a pleasure to tell them all about my telepathic journey to the Arctic zones. I am

positive my experiments will be of tremendous use to the War effort of the United Nations....

Princess Anna: War effort? What are you talking about? We're pacifists, here in the Villa Pacific, as far as I'm told.

Prince Igor: Rubbish= I am a Russian patriot, and that's that.

Toy: But your Highness always asserted...

Prince Igor: Cut it out, sister: you're as much of a "Highness" as I am. My name is Potchikoff; I am a dentist from St. Petersburg - or, from Leningrad, to be more precise.

Larue: Alors ça, c'est trop fort! He betrays his own past, the glory of his country! An exiled Russian intellectual who gives to the City of St. Petersburg the name of a hideous rebel and usurper - c'est vraiment honteux!

Brown: I'm sorry, gentlemen, that I have to interrupt your intersting argument. But it's high time to go to the police station...

Prince Igor: Shall I have the opportunity to make a detailed report about my stunning experiences in Island, Greenland, and Sibiria?

Brown: You certainly will, in due time, Mr. Potchikoff.

Prince Igor: The point of the matter is that my friend Ivan Ivanovich - the noted Russian explorer - is tourring those regions for the last ten years. Now, it so happens that our respective vibrations are so perfectly attuned to each other...

Brown: Hold your horses, Mr. Potchikoff! You'll soon enough have a chance to tell your story...

Prince Igor: Do you believe that I'm lying to you, Mr. Brown?

Brown: No, strangely enough, I don't think so. On the contrary, I'm pretty sure that you try to stick to the truth. But let's go now! For one reason

or another I feel a little apprehensive in this hospitable house.

Peter Brack: I'm afraid somebody will have to lead me. I can't see a thing, without my glasses. That formidable Potter woman has rendered me practically a blind man...

The Negro Boy: I'll be your guide, Mr. Brack. Used to do the same thing for Grandma', back home. She was ninety years old and quite blind, unless there was something to eat on the table.

Peter Brack: I wonder whether your poor grandmother may have had the same uncanny sensation I'm experiencing now. It's like walking under water, if you know what I mean. Everything blurred and floating... The most extraordinary thing about it is that I don't really dislike it...

Brown: I'm hardly surprised to hear that, Mr. Brack. Haven't you always had a weakness for everything blurred and floating? Besides, there are curious things going on, down there, on the ground of the sea - just the amphibious kind of life you like to describe in your stories. - Is everybody ready, at last?

Toy: (occupied, for the last few minutes, with attempts to revive her brother, who has quietly collapsed:) My poor twin has fainted: the shock was too much for him. None of you callous people noticed his collapse...

The First Chinese Girl: My sister and I will carry the humming-bird.

(She and the two other girls carry the unconscious Ted towards the door - followed by Peter Brack, who is being led by the Negro Boy; Prince Igor, Princess Anna, in tears; Toy, caressing her fainted brother; Kadornath and Larue - closely watched by the Policeman.)

Brown: (who is marching as the last man in the slowly moving procession:) I'm sure happy to get out of here. A police station is a temple of Reason

compared with this crazy place...

Kadomath: That's what life is like, in a decadent democracy.

Brown: You are wrong, as usual, Baron Riefenbach. That is what life becomes when the principle of Freedom is being misunderstood or wantonly abused.

Princess Anna: I don't give a damn. All they can give me is two years, the most...

Toy: Ted, my butterfly! Don't you hear my voice?....

Prince Igor: Tonight, I'll be somewhere in the Arctic solitued - alone with my Russian God....

Peter Brack: They have all the weird faces of submarine monsters...: it's too extraordinary for words!

Larue: Moi, je ne me foue pas mal...

Kadornath: They wouldn't dare to touch me: they're afraid of the Führer. Scheissbande! (He spits at the floor.)

(The whole procession exit.)

(The scene is empty. There is a stillness, lasting a few seconds. Then the violin can again be heard, playing the Bohemian melody - thin, uncertain, far away.)

(Alfter a while,

Marceline enters from the right - attracted by the mysterious music as a moth by the flame. Her gait and the expression of her face are those of a sleepwalker; sightless and bewitched, she strides slowly from the door to the pianoforte - whispering:) Yes, my love: I can hear you... I sense your presence... It's so sweet - so infinitely sweet to have you here at last ... We are alone, my darling - just you and I: all the others are gone... This is the moment, dear! Why don't you materialize? Why

don't you permit me to have a look at your face? Why don't you tell me that I am forgiven?

(The music seems to wander; it withdraws, comes closer, becomes weaker again.)

Marceline: Do you want me to darken the room, my sweetheart? Yes? All right... (She pulls the curtain over the glass door at the left; the room lies in a shadowy twilight.) Do you want me to play with you, dear? (She sits down at the piano and begins to accompany the violin recital.) Your tone is better than ever... better than I've ever heard it, since that recital at Prague. Do you remember, dear? The first journey we made together... The Bohemian villages; the country inns; the rainy nights; the kisses... Why don't you materialize? What are you waiting for? Is my ectoplasm not good enough for you? Is the stuff he emanates so much better than mine? You know whom I mean... What has he got I haven't got? I don't understand you, Eddie. What are you driving at? You know the price I shall have to pay, if you appear in Johnny's ectoplasm. Do you want me to go to bed with the sailor boy? I'm capable of doing it, just as Mr. Van Loyden may marry Alice McWister if Mrs. Van Loyden insists. You are very capricious, you dead... Wait, darling! I have an idea! I'll close my eyes, for a couple of minutes or so, and you materialize while I am not looking. Is that all right with you? Let's try it... (She closes her eyes and whispers:) Accept my humble ectoplasm, Edward dear! It's all yours. Take it. There is nothing else I can give you....

(As she whispers and plays, Johnny enters from the left - emerging noiselessly from the draperies of the curtain covering the door.)

Johnny: (very softly:) Here I am...

Marceline: Yes, dear...This is your voice...It's wonderful to hear it... May I look at you now?

Johnny: If you want to, honey.

Marceline: (opens her eyes; starts at the sight of Johnny:) You?! I thought you on your way to the Navy Station...

Johnny: That's where I was. But I felt that you need me. So I came back. Here I am.

MarcelineYou are mistaken, Johnny: I do not need you, quite the contrary. To tell the truth, you're disturbing us.

Johnny: Us? Is he still around?

Marceline: He most certainly is. I could hear him play, up to the moment when you entered the room. (The violin, which has been silent since Johnny's arrival, resumes the Bohemian tune.) There! Don't you hear it? This is Edward's tune!

Johnny: It's our tune, Marceline. You were playing when I came - the first evening: remember?

Marceline: Pst! Don't talk now! He'll withdraw again, if you don't keep quiet...

Johnny: I wished he'd beat it, and more snappy than all that. He has no business sticking around here, in the first place. Should be in hell, or in heaven, or whereever a ghost belongs.

Marceline: How do you dare...

Johnny: (shouts in the direction from where the violin music comes:) To hell with you, Mister Edward! Go back from where you've come! Beat it! Don't you hear? This is our world - not yours! Beat it! Beat it!! Beat it!!!

(The violin continues to play, increasing the volumen of its tone.)

Marceline: (triumphantly:) You see, he is stronger than you! He defies you! He loves me! He stays!

(The contours of a violin begin to loom between the draperies of the curtain. One second later, one can also see two pallid hands holding the instrument and the stim.)

Marceline: (with a half-oppressed scream:) Johnny! Look! His hands!

Johnny: I can see them, all right: they're hideous. Hideous ghost hands... Go away, ghost! Beat it! Disappear!

Marceline: Don't say that, Johnny! I don't want him to disappear. I'll touch his hands... I'll kiss them. I'll kiss his face... Where is your face, Edward? I must see your lips and your eyes and your hair...

Johnny: (holding her back:) Don't touch them hands, Marceline! Don't talk to him! He is dead. He'll kill you when you look at him. There is death in his eyes, there is death in his music...

Marceline: (hypnotized by the apparition; trying to liberate herself from Johnny's grip:) I must see his face... I must! I know he will let me see it when I embrace his hands. Let me go, Johnny! Please! I am his bride - for ever! I belong to him... Let me go!

Johnny: Don't touch him! Don't look at him! It's a mortal sin: I warn you.

Marceline:(shakes him off; makes a few stumbling steps toward the ghost-violin:) I must... I can't help it...

Johnny: (produces a knife; follows her with slow, heavy steps:) I'll kill you, Marceline, if you touch that spook. Don't you hear me? I'll stab you with this knife of mine. It's better for you to be killed by me than to be killed by him...

Marceline: (very close to the apparation:) It's stronger than I... I must...

(At this moment, the detonation of a shot can be heard. The violin fades away, while the pallid hands are stretched out as if they wanted to embrace Marceline.)

Marceline: (shaking with horror; clinging to Johnny; gasping:) What ... was that....?

Johnny: (holding her in his arms:) A shot, upstairs. Don't be afraid, Marceline! Let's run! Let's beat it! - together!

Marceline: (hiding her face on Johnny's shoulder:) Are these terrible hands still there?

Johnny: They've become very pale... they're almost gone... Come, Marcy! Come with me! Don't tremble so! Pull yourself together!

Marceline: (whimpers:) I can't... I can't...

Johnny: Don't be afraid! I'll take care of you... (As she clinges to him even closer, he lifts her and carries her through the left door into the garden. Both exit.)

(The curtain covering the glass door remains half drawn aside when Johnny and Marceline have left. The ghost hands disappear presently in the morning light.)

(The Professor enters - looking pale and upset.)

Professor: Marceline! Where are you? Listen to me! Something terrible happened. Alice has shot herself - just a few minutes ago - she is dead. Don't you hear, Marceline? Is nobody here? Am I quite alone? No, I am not: I have Julia. (On his knees before the marble bust:) Julia, my dear! It is my saddening duty to inform you that our friend Alice McUlster has committed suicide. If it was really your wish that she and I should marry, Providence decided otherwise. Alice got mixed up with some kind

of sinister plot: frankly, I don't quite know what it is all about. She tried to explain it to me, but I was unable to concentrate on her story. There are other things in my mind. "The Cosmos of Tomorrow" worries me profoundly - especially since the abrupt change of your attitude, Julia my dear. Your recent revelations seem to refute everything you told us previously. Was Alice correct? Or did she misquote you? It's too late now to ask her... I depend all on you. What do you say? Nothing?... Look at me, Julia! You are my wife! Say a word! Have mercy! (He embraces the bust; then shudders.) You are cold like marble - like death. You don't listen. You don't feel sorry for me. You are terrible. You are dead. You don't care....

C U R T A I N

T H E E N D.

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Fiction Under Construction F. 2. 1.

"Ghost" notes.

The Dead don't Care

Notes

THE DEAD DON'T CARE

A PLAY

in Three Acts

by

KLAUS MANN

PERSONS:

Professor James Van Loyden
Marceline, his Daughter
Kenneth Jackson, his Disciple and Secretary
Miss Alice McUlster, a Medium
Kedornath, a Teacher of Yogi Gymnastics
Prince Igor Frolevsko, from St. Petersburg
Princess Anna, his Wife
Peter Brack, a Novelist, from London
Jo O'Matty, a Poet and Explorer, from Dublin
Fifi Larue, an Aesthete, from Paris
Mrs. Potter, a Widow, from Kalamazoo
Toy & Ted, the Twin Children of an Industrialist, from Pittsburgh
Mr. Brown, from the FBI
Two Policemen
Seven Negro Children
Johnny

*

TIME: 1942

PLACE: Van Loyden's house, called "Villa Universe", on the Pacific Beach, in Southern California.

SCENE: A large room of dignified, somewhat austere character.
In the foreground, a group of chairs arranged a tall, shaded lamp. The portrait of a beautiful young woman conspicuously displayed in a sumptuous gold frame.
In the background, a pianoforte, adorned with the likeness of an artistic-looking young man playing the violin.
In the middle of the background, a broad folding door flanked by two portly bronxe statues representing Dante and Plato.
Over the door, an inscription in prominent gold letters, GOD IS LOVE.
At the right, a smaller door to the lobby. x)
At the left, a large glass door to the garden. This door can be covered with a dark curtain of heavy silk. When the curtain is removed, however, one can see that the house is situated almost directly by the Pacific Ocean, the open horizon of which is visible behind the palm trees and blooming bushes of [redacted] a Californian garden.

* * *

x) Right and left from the audience.

Act One

I

Night. The door to the garden is open. One discerns the silhouette of a palm tree profiled against the black background of the near Pacific.

The scene is empty when the curtain rises. One hears music coming from the background - the simple, melancholy saturnine tune of a Slavic folksong played by violin with piano accompaniment. The audience is not to realize at first from where the music comes, as the phonograph is invisible in the wall.

Marceline:(enters the scene from the background. She opens the large door rather violently, but not wide enough to let the audience look into the back room from which she comes.
She is an attractive girl , about 25 years old - fragile and yet dynamic, with dark, passionate eyes under a beautifully arched forehead. The long, white garment she wears is something between a fancy house robe and a simple evening gown.
When she has closed the door behind her, she falters and seems on the point of fainting. Her voice sounds raucous as if in physical pain as she groans, while covering her ears with her hands:) The music! It kills me, it drives me mad...
(She rushes to the phonograph and turns it off. The music ceases abruptly. Marceline sighs as if with profound relief. She walks through the room and lingers in front of the pianoforte. As she begins to talk, she lifts the portrait of a young man from the piano cover - very carefully, with a soft, affectionate gesture - and raises it gradually up to the height of her face:) I couldn't stand it, Edward - see? Just couldn't bear it for another moment. It's not that I got tired of listening to you, dear - you know that isn't so. I'll listen to your violin for the rest of my life, if only you show up for one short, heavenly minute. Just once, my

beloved one! I am positive that it can be done: Father says so, and he is never mistaken. Why, then, don't you do it? Why don't you materialize? I'm longing for you. I'm dying to have one more glimpse at your face. Why do you torture me so? (She puts the picture back at the piano cover; almost angrily:) Oh, how obstinate, how self-righteous you are! You let me suffer and whimper, just in order to prove that Father is wrong and that all spiritualists are fools; only you are smart. Oh, you... you...(She lifts the photo again, covering it with kisses:) Oh, you my sweetest, my soul, my life and my heart...oh, chéri, my darling, why don't you appear, right now? If you don't, how can I believe that you still love me, my love? Or don't you care for me anymore? Is it that what makes you so cruel? You ~~no longer~~ don't care for me, that's all. You don't care... You don't care... (She stands bent over the piano, convulsed with sobs.)

Kenneth Jackson (slips through the same door through which Marceline came before. He looks like a serious, good-natured fellow - somewhat stocky and inhibited, but by no means ridiculous or ugly. He may be of the same age as Marceline. He speaks in a somewhat lowered voice as he lays his arm around Marceline's jerking shoulders:) What's wrong, Marceline? Don't you feel well? Why did you run away?

Marceline: He doesn't care for me anymore. He doesn't love me. He refuses to materialize.

Kenneth: But Marceline! ~~don't~~ You must not be so impatient! Don't you know how long it takes, at times, until a materialization comes through? It's such a complicated process. I know of one medium who sat for two years before anything happened.

Marceline: But Father promised it for tonight, and so did Miss McUlster.

Kenneth: Your husband might have appeared, perhaps - at least certain fragments of him: his hands, or the back of his head: if only you hadn't

stopped the phonograph, just when Miss McUlster was in her most promising trance.

Marceline: But it is the music that gets so unbearably on my nerves - don't you understand? The music, you see, is by far the worst part of the whole affair. This Bohemian song will make me lose my mind, the next time I'll have to hear it. We practised it, Edward and I, in the drawing room of the ship, just when the torpedo hit her.

Kenneth: I didn't know that. I'm sorry, Marceline.

Marceline: (without paying attention to his remark:) I was so proud that he permitted me to accompany him at the piano. During all these years we were married he didn't think me good enough to play with him in public. But on this tour through Canada and the States I was to act as his accom= panist, for the first time. The Czech Melody was scheduled as our opening piece. .... All this seems incredibly far away. I'll never touch a piano again.

Kenneth: Don't say such things, Marceline! I'm sure you'll play even more beautifully after this tragic experience.

Marceline: (raises her hands: they are red and swollen. With a short, bitter laughter:) With these hands? Dear me!

Kenneth: Your hands will be all right. Kadornath's Yogi gymnastics must help...

Marceline: ~~Rubbish~~ Never. They'll never be all right ~~again~~ never. To tell the truth, I don't even want them to become all right ~~again~~. I loathe my hands. They ought to remain as they are - frozen and stiff and ugly. Why did they save my dreary, meaningless life? I should have followed Edward. But I didn't even think of ~~them~~ him, during the terrible hours I clung to the capsized life- boat. I was like an animal that wants just to live - to live at any price. My mind was blank; all my energies seemed concentrated in these hideous claws. Why didn't I let loose? So many others did. There were about twenty persons in the beginning - children, and men, and women. Most of them gave with me

up - one after the other; just drifted away, or died on the wreck itself, killed by exhaustion, by fear, by the cold. But I held fast. My horrible hands were stronger than my love of Edward.

Kenneth: But he certainly did not want you to be drowned in the ~~ocean~~ sea...

Marceline: He called my name even while he was sinking. ~~I~~ y saw him disappear. It was all the sailor's fault.

Kenneth: Whose fault? What sailor do you mean?

Marceline: The one who tried to get into our life-boat when it was over=weighted already. He jumped from the burning ship - a young fellow, rather handsome, too - in a brutal, ungainly way. He yelled to us as he swam - something about his being only seventeen years old, and ~~something~~ about his mother back home. Another sailor shouted in our boat: "Don't let him in! The boat is too heavily charged already as it is..." At this point, the young sailor wept - real tears, you know: we could see them. So Edward bent over the railing and tried to help the lad into our boat. And then there was a scream - a roar, you know, as from hundreds of savage, despe=rate beasts - and the life-boat capsized. The last thing I saw was Edward struggling against the clasp of the young sailor, who clung to him as if Edward were his sole hope and predestined savior. So they went down to=gether...(There is a short stillness. ~~She cries~~ - no sound but Marceline's sobs.)

Kenneth: (caressing her with brotherly tenderness:) Now, come come, Marce=line! Be quiet! Relax! Come come...

Marceline: (wiping off her tears and sniffing like a child:) So sorry, Kenneth. To behave like a hysterical little girl... It has to do with the ocean, I suppose. We are here so close to it. It may be a good idea to draw the curtain over this door - don't you think? It makes me always kind of jittery to look at the sea or to hear its sound - that terrible sound of the waves...

Kenneth:(covers the door to the left; then comes back to Marceline:) Feeling better now?

Marceline:(with an effort to smile:) Definitely. Thanks. Now I'll powder my nose, and then we'll have a smoke. Is that all right with you?

Kenneth: (offering her a cigarette:) Swell. It's swell, I mean, to see you smile again.

Marceline: Thanks to you, old man. There is something reassuring about you.

Kenneth: Am I such a bore?

Marceline: It's just because I've known you for so many years, I guess. When did Father adopt you as his assistant, not to say as his son?

Kenneth: It was in 1934 that the Master asked me to stay with him, in this house.

Marceline: (musingly:) Two years after Mother's death; one year before I left for Switzerland; three years before I got married../. Time is a curious thing, isn't it?

Kenneth: Something extremely variable and flexible - no absolute; just an aspect and product of our consciousness, according to the Master.

Marceline:(with a faint, distrait smile:) Never mind. It's real enough for me. Incidentally, do you think the séance in there is going to last for ever?

Kenneth:It may go on for some while. Your father hoped that Plato and Socrates would show up tonight. If so, it may become a fairly extensive sitting.

Marceline: Why don't you have a look to find out what they're doing now?

Kenneth:(reluctant:) Well, Miss McUlster is very sensitive even to the slightest disturbance. But if you want me to look... (He tiptoes to the door, which he opens with the utmost caution. As soon as the door is open one can hear various noises from the back room, which lies in complete

darkness. Two dogs seem to be barking inside - one of them in a high, yelping voice, the other with a deeper, more sonorous organ. A soft, silvery giggle accompanies the duet. Kenneth closes the door, very carefully, and comes back to Marceline. Very seriously:) The pet-dogs of Monsieur Larue. Cute - aren't they? Were killed in a railway accident, about fifteen years ago. He's still very fond of them, though. It means a lot to him ~~she~~ to hear their voices again. It seems the characters of the dogs considerably improved, on the other side. But their voices , Larue says, remained exactly the same.

Marceline: And who produced the naughty little laughter?

Kenneth: A "poltergeist", more than likely.

Marceline: I thought it was Fifi Larue. What a ludicrous creature, with his piping falsetto and ~~with all~~ his old lady-like whims! I wonder how Father manages to take him seriously.

Kenneth: Maybe he doesn't, really. You know how the Master is: kindly and generous, but at the same time strangely indifferent.

Marceline: That's the only way to explain some of his curious contacts. Those anaemic twins from Pittsburgh, for example - they are really rather irritating. I have nothing against poor old Mrs. Potter: she is dignified and pathetic in her wheeled chair, ~~with her ever-shaking head~~. Of course, I don't think her a very stimulating kind of person to have around. Princess Anna Frolevsko, on the other hand, may be stimulating enough, under propitious circumstances, but I'd hardly call her dignified. Jo O'Matty is a scream, with his imaginary Arctic expeditions. Peter Brack has at least some first-rate books to his credit. And as for our master Yogi, Kadornath from Benares...

Kenneth: Mrs. Van Loyden seemed particularly fond of him when she made his acquaintance, several months ago.

Marceline: ~~My~~ Mother? But...

Kenneth: She was gracious enough to materialize for a little while, ~~a~~ last

Christmas. The whole party was introduced to her and she had an affable word for everybody. But ~~the~~ Kadornath was the one she liked most.

Marceline: The Yogi teacher? What a curious taste! I presume that he was not yet under a vow of silence, at the time?

Kenneth: He was indeed. It is five or six years ago that he pledged himself not to pronounce a word as long as the English subjugate his native India. Nobody in this house has ever had the opportunity to hear Kadornath's ~~human~~ voice.

Marceline: How, then, did he manage to chat with my materialized mother?

Kenneth: Highly developed spirits like the late Mrs. Van Loyden have their own methods of communication. At any rate, there was a lively contact between her vibrations and his.

Marceline: (laughingly:) How indecent! Didn't Father mind such frivolous goings-on?

Kenneth: (unsmilingly:) You know how the Master is.

Marceline: You've said that before - just a minute ago. Yes, I suppose I know Father, although I've spent much less time with him than you did. I watched and loved and admired him at a distance. Edward has often teased me with my so-called father-complex. "You may be ~~kind of~~ fond of me, Marceline," he'd say to me, "but the one man you worship is Dad."

Kenneth: Your father is a very great man, Marceline.

Marceline: (laughing again:) You're telling me... But he is terribly lonely. Too many admirers; no friends. Nobody here has the nerve to talk back when he makes one of his more dubious statements.

Kenneth: Have you ever questioned or criticized any of his ideas?

Marceline: Not really, I'm a coward myself, in the first place. Besides, I think that Father happens to be right, in most cases. Of course, his turn for the occult meant at first quite a shock tom me. Spiritualism... it sounded so strange to me, almost frightening and at the same time a trifle fatuous. But after a while I came to realize

Marceline: You've said that before - just a minute ago. Do you know what Father is like, really? But then, who does? Do you?

Kenneth: I wonder...

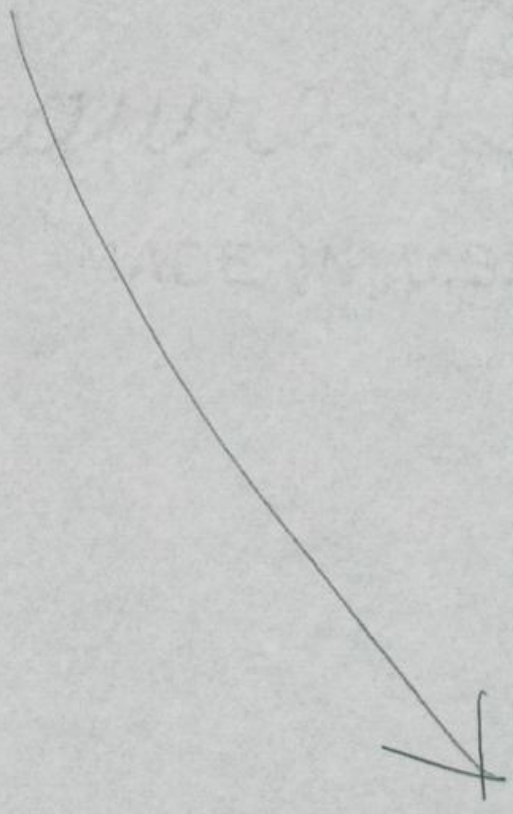
Marceline: Mother - yes, she did. That's the secret, perhaps, of the power she had over him.

Kenneth: Did Mrs. Van Loyden indeed have power over the Master? It sounds almost incredible.

Marceline: He loved her - simply and passionately: What is so incredible about it? That's why he could never come over this loss - never. Poor Father! - he had to build up a whole philosophy in order to comfort himself.

Kenneth: Did you ever object to his sudden turn to the occult?

Marceline: Did I object? Not really. Of course, it came as a surprise, at the time - even as a shock, in a sense. Spiritualism... it sounded so odd to me - a bit frightful and a bit fatuous. But after a while I came to realize



I realized at last the boldness and grandeur of his new vision. Of course, I could not foresee that this metaphysical philosophy was to become, one day, my sole hope and comfort. (light.)

Kenneth: It must have been very bitter - the period of doubt, I mean. One feels so treacherous, so forlorn, when the faith in him wavers.

Marceline: Have you experienced too anything of the kind?

Kenneth: Not really - not (Never) up to this point. But just now - during the past few months - there have been certain moments...Oh, Marceline! if I could ever tell you how confused and bitter (painful) they were! It's like an obsession, a fever - the qualms and scruples, the uncertainty...

Marceline: Poor Kenneth! How despondent you look! What's puzzling you?

Kenneth: It's rather complicated, and probably it's absurd. There are certain implications in the Master's philosophy which have upset me of late. It has to do with our national emergency...

(Before he can finish his sentence, the door in the background is being flung open by Professor Van Loyden, who appears on the threshold. Behind him, one can see the neighbouring room in the light of several candles. It is of round shape - a kind of intimate chapel, its black walls decorated with gold inscriptions unreadable to the audience. Miss Alice McUlster is seated in the center of the room, surrounded by the other members of the party.)

~~(A circle of persons, who we shall presently meet.)~~

(Professor Van Loyden is an impressive man of about sixty-five - tall and lean, dressed in black, almost like a priest. His face, with an aquiline nose and wide, piercing eyes, is framed by a rich mane of white hair. There is an odd mixture of tyrannic arrogance and absent-minded kindness in his attitude. He is a domineering personality and yet strangely aloof - not quite here, as it were.)

Professor: (curtly but not impolitely:) A glass of water, please, for Alice McUlster.

Kenneth:(who got up with a start, as soon as Van Loyden entered:) Just one second, Master... I'll rush to the Kitchen... A bit of brandy might help her. I'll try to find one of the Seven Dwarfs... (Exit, hastily, to the right.)

Marceline: Is Alice not well?

Professor: A malignant spirit must have hurt her when she was in trance.

Marceline: A "poltergeist", I presume?

Professor: Possibly. But I suspect the influence of inimical vibrations.

Marceline: You mean, vibrations from - the other side?

Professor: Something of the kind. Of course, wanton and disturbing energies are much more difficult to locate than the friendly ~~ones~~ ghosts.

Alice McUlster: (groans on her chair, in the back room.)

Marceline: She sounds ~~pretty~~ pitiful... Here's Kenneth again.

Kenneth:(returns with a bottle of brandy and a glass of water:) Funny, I couldn't get hold of any of the kids. Must be somewhere outside, the whole lot of them.

Marceline: Maybe they're sleeping already? It's almost ~~midnight~~ twelve o'clock, you know.

Kenneth: Our kids go never to bed before one or two in the morning. Usually they serve a cold supper after the midnight séance. (To the Professor:) May I try to wake up Alice? (As the Professor nods, he goes into the back room, where we see him work on Miss MCUlster - throwing water into her face, shaking her arms and shoulders, infusing her generously brandy out of the bottle. Finally she changes her rigid position, moves, sighs, and rises toilsomely.)

Alice McUlster: (strides slowly and with gravity from the back room to the main scene; she passes by the Professor and Marceline without looking at them, and stops in the middle of the scene - stiffly erect and silent. She is a woman in her late forties - remarkably well preserved as far as her figure is concerned. In her tight tailor-made costum of glossy, black

material, she looks like a slightly neurotic Amazon - experienced in horseback riding and in black magic. Her features are hard and tense; her complexion appears dried out, as if parched by mysterious rays. There is nothing mean or petty about her physiognomy, which is not without a certain tragic and dangerous beauty.)

(She remains motionless in the foreground, while the other guests gradually drop in from the back room. One after the other, or in small groups, appear Ted and Toy, the twin children of a Pittsburgh industrialist - he, an effiminate youngster, she a boyish-looking girl; both about 2o years old, dressed in white tuxedos, alarmingly frail and anaemic; Fifi Larue, an elderly, dwarfish creature shrouded in colourful shawls; Kadermath, the Yogi expert - conspicuously Indian-looking, with his dark skin, beautiful black beard, and big, purple turban; Jo O'Matty, a pugnacious Irishman with a terrific red mane and a bloated, expressive face of almost equally intense redness; Prince Igor Frolevsko, an ungainly, flabby giant with dreamy, beautiful eyes in a grey, shapeless face; Princess Anna, a spectacular personality with bluishly colored hair, a monocle, and a long cigarette holder; Peter Brack - long and thin, very British, his eyes hidden behind thick double-eyeglasses, his features marked by ~~exorbitant~~ intelligence and ~~hopeless~~ weariness; and Mrs. Potter, a homely-looking little female in a wheeled chair, which she can move with her own hands, thanks to an ingenious mechanism.)

Mrs. Potter: (is the first to arrive. She zigzags the room - remarkably agile and animated. Passing by the Professor, she cooes:) It was so much fun, Professor! I ~~had~~ was a ~~delightful~~ gorgeous time! Thank you ever so much! Poor little Alice! I feel so sorry for you! (She ~~now~~ rolls her chair to Alice, who still stands as if petrified.) What's the matter with you, honey? Do you realize how terribly worried we are? ~~that you worry me?~~ And what a pity that you deve= loped your naughty little ~~convulsion~~ cramp just before you could contact my poor Ferdinand. I'm sure he'll be as disappointed, on his higher

plane, as I am here, in my earthly arrestment. I'd have loved to tell him the gorgeous news I had from the lawyer today. It seems that the evil man who almost murdered me - I mean, the nasty driver whose car bombed into ours - it really seems that he'll have to pay quite a bit of money for his nastiness. Yes Sir - it's $ 2o.ooo, or else, fifteen years. Why, he'd deserve an even more drastic sentence. To ruin my brandnew roadster! And, on top of it, to kill my Ferdinand!

Peter Brack: (who listened to her with seeming seriousness:) How right you are, Mrs. Potter! 2o.ooo is certainly not too much for a fine motor car and a well-preserved husband.

Mrs. Potter: Well, as far as I am concerned, I don't care much for money. But I know my Ferdinand. A business man, every inch of him. So I presume it would make him feel better, if I could tell him about all that dough we'll get. Don't you agree with me, Alice darling?

Alice: (still motionless; she moves hardly her lips as she says:) Sorry he didn't come through. It was one of the worst séances I've ever had.

Larue: (in a grotesquely high, chirping voice:) Mais, ma pauvre Madame! Mais pas du tout! Au contraire!... I think you have been as successful as usual. My two little friends - Chi-Chi et Cho-Cho - ah, quel plaisir d'entendre leur voix de nouveau.... after so many years... J'étais ravi, Madame, j'étais profondement ému.

Alice: (rigidly:) Thank you, Monsieur Larue.

Ted & Toy: (approaching her hand in hand, like a couple of anaemic cherubim hovering over the floor:) We are thanking you, dear Alice.

Professor: (from the background, where he stands with Princess Anna and with Jo O'Matty:) The twins are perfectly right. We all are grateful to you for am rich, inspiring performance.

Alice: (seems to relax at last but does not turn her head to the Professor when she says, in a softer voice:) You are very kind to

me, Master. And you too, Twins. You're all much too sweet and indulgent. You're making me very happy.

Mrs. Potter: But you don't look it, dear! You know what you're looking like, poor thing? Like one of your own ghosts! (She bursts into cheerful laughter but stops it as she notices the hostile silence around her.) Dear me! Have I said something shocking again? But Alice knows how I mean it. We're old friends, after all - Alice McUlster and I - aren't we, dearest? Of course, I wouldn't make cracks about your looks or your health, or anything of the kind, if you didn't look as swell as you really do, and if I didn't know who strong and wholesome you are. Alice is the toughest girl in the United States - take it from me! By far the toughest girl between San Diego and Staten Island.

Alice: (her face slightly distorted in an effort to smile:) That's right, Fanny. The toughest girl in America - that's what I try to be. Just a little tired tonight. I'll be fine tomorrow. Will you excuse me now. (Her gait is composed and self-assured, if somewhat forced perhaps, as she crosses the room and leaves through the door to the right.)

Jo O'Matty: (gazing after her:) She's as splendid a gal as they come. Believe it or not, I'm in love with her.

Ted: So are Toy and I. In our opinion, there is nobody quite like her, except our beloved governess on the other side.

Marceline: I'd better look if she has everything she needs. She did seem rather shaky ~~pretty weary~~, didn't she?

Mrs. Potter: Nerves - that's all. Too much nerves and much too much liquor: that's Alice's ~~d[illegible]~~ whole trouble.

Marceline: I'll be back in a few minutes. (Exit, through the right.)

Prince Igor: (in a deep, sonorous voice with a melodiously Russian accent:) There is one great moot question, Professor, which I shall never solve: Who is more attractive, your daughter Marceline or your friend Alice?

Professor: (laughing:) There you've got me, Prince!

Princess Anna: (speaking with a faintly exotic, rather affected accent:) What a silly question to ask, mon ami! Toutes les deux sont charmantes. Et alors?

Prince Igor: (gentle but obstinate:) Et alors? Et alors I want to find out which one is more charming. No doubt, Mademoiselle Marceline has the most fascinating eyes...

O'Matty: But Alice has more pep than any other living woman. She is almost as dynamic as my lady friend on the other side - Lucrecia Borgia. Maybe Alice is Lucrecia's reincarnation?

Peter Breck: Not very likely, old man. Lady Borgia seems still confined to otherwordly regions. If she were here, embodied as Miss McUlster, how could you converse with her, every other night, through Miss McUlster's transmission?

O'Matty: (sulking:) Oh, you, with your your drab rationalism! No vision, no inspiration. Typically English. ~~Irishmen would have understood me.~~ As I pointed out in my long poem, "Mephistopheles"....

Prince Igor: (musingly:) Marceline's voice is sweeter than Alice's; but Alice has finer hands.

Princess Anna: And you, mon cher, seem mortally in love with both.

~~Prince Igor: (gravely and slowly:) I feel mortally sorry for both. My pity for Alice is even more overwhelming than my sympathy with Marceline. For she has a dear one on the other side: attractive as she is, she must succeed in attracting him before long. But Alice has nobody - neither here nor there.~~

Mrs. Potter: (rather fidgety in her wheeled chair:) Well, I think it's high time to get a little sleep. Frankly, I am dead-tired. (She moves towards the door.)

Princess Anna: There you have a woman of real ~~American~~ common sense!

We are sleepy too - aren't we, Igor dear?

Prince Igor: On the contrary, my dear Anna, I've never felt more energetic in my whole life. In fact, what I would like to do, just now, is, to tell Professor Van Loyden everything about my alchemic experiments. That would keep us busy for the rest of the night.

Professor: Another time, my dear Prince - tomorrow or next week, I hope. I'll be only too pleased to discuss your experiences with you. But tonight I would hardly be an adequate listener or advisor. I'm afraid the Princess is right: it is indeed very late.

Princess Anna: (pushing her husband gradually towards the door:) Yes, my little Igor is indefatigable when it comes to searching and experimenting. He hopes to produce sufficient supplies of gold, thanks to the Philosopher's Stone, to reconstruct the complete gala set of plats, bowls, and dishes, which the Bolsheviks stole from the Frolevskos in St.Petersburg.

Prince Igor:(mumbles something, rather angrily, in Russian.)

Princess Anna: (with a shrill giggle:) Very good! That's indeed very funny! .... But, chéri, you shouldn't speak your native tongue, here, in a foreign country. Remember! Our friends don't understand Russian.

Prince Igor: (in a lowered voice, as he leaves the room, arm in arm with his wife:) Neither do you, ma belle.

Mrs. Potter: ~~(sulking coquettishly:)~~ Oh, those married people! It makes you feel so lonely to ~~watch their little quarrels and~~ witness their happiness! And I, poor thing I am, don't even have a man to carry me upstairs. ~~This wheeled chair is almost miraculous, but not quite enough so to fly with me to my room.~~

Larue: (tripping through the room:) Mais, Madame! Il me fera un tel plaisir de vous aider. Si vous permettez... (He tries to help her get up.)

Mrs. Potter: (laughingly:)No, I'm afraid you're not quite husky enough, Fifi, - not to carry me: I am heavy-weight. Our mute friend, over there

in the corner, has muscles of steel: he should be able to transport me somehow up to the second floor.

Kadornath: (was standing during the whole scene in a remote corner of the room - motionless, erect, his arms crossed over his chest. As Mrs. Potter talks to him, he bows with Oriental solemnity and then strides across the scene, towards the wheeled chair.)

Mrs. Potter: (jubilates, as he begins to move her;) Isn't he cute, though, our silent Mr. Koudulou, or whatever his name is? He does it with Yogi, you know!

Kadornath:(pushs Mrs. Potter's chair through the door to the right. She beckons the party with facetious coquetry before disappearing.)

Peter Brack: A fascinating character, isn't she? Most extraordinary indeed. There is nothing in the world quite so exciting to me as the spectacle of pure, blaring stupidity.

Professor: (dryly:) Most people are stupid.

Peter Brack: No doubt. Yet there are certain shades and degrees - most interesting to study.

Professor: Mrs. Potter is perhaps not quite so idiotic as you presume, Mr. Brack. She is here on the recommandation of Alice's control spirit, the German philosopher, Franz von Baader. He adviced me, through Alice, to invite Mrs. Potter for an extensive stay when she had lost her husband in a motor car accident.

Peter Brack: Yes, the German mystics of the early nineteenth century are full of baroque ideas. In particular Herr von Baader struck me always as most extraordinary. What odd compound of confusions and intuitions!

Larue: The nineteenth century is so vulgar and tiresome; even its mysti= cism has a touch of democratic vulgarity. I live exclusively in the seven= teenth - the period before Voltaire. Ah, ce Voltaire! Quel monstre!

Peter Brack: (very casually:) He is indeed quite a bore. (He yawns.) Well, Professor, I suppose we are all more or less exhausted... (He walks towards the left door.)

Professor: (smilingly but with determination:) You forget your duties, dear friend. It's your turn tonight to control Mr. O'Matty's Arctic expe= dition.

Peter Brack: Is that so. I was under the impression that Mr. O'Matty had ended his extraordinary journey.

O'Matty: On the contrary. We are due tonight at the village Aklavik, on the Mackenzie River. As Pat informed me this morning, via telepathic telegram, we'll have quite an occasion tonight - with Eskimos and a bunch of Russian girls.

Peter Brack: That sounds all too amusing. The trouble is only that I am developing one of my silly migraines and rather feel like going to bed.

Professor: I am extremely sorry, Peter Brack, but I must insist on your spending the night with Mr. O'Matty. I have done the same thing yesterday, Prince Igor the night before. Ted and Toy were very helpful last week, and Monsieur Larue accompanied our friend on his flights from New York City to Winnipeg.

Peter Brack: You make me feel exceedingly ashamed, Professor. But I can assure you that my reluctance to join Mr. O'Matty is not entirely selfish. It so happens that this gentleman does not like me.

O'Matty: I certainly don't. As far as I am concerned, I'd much rather travel by myself than with an Englishman.

Professor: (with force and dignity:) Gentlemen! National frictions and jealousies are excluded from this house of peace. We here, in the Villa Universe, should despise such obsolete prejudices. (After a long and suggestive pause, in a more matter-of-fact way:) Besides you know perfectly well, O'Matty, that I do not want you to travel alone. Your telepathic experiment may turn out to be of singular importance: provided that you

carry it out under the strictest scientific control. If you make any entries into your travel account without at least one other person being present to watch you, I have to withdraw my promise to write a preface for you. I don't want people to suspect that your friend, who does the actual traveling, kept providing you with cable reports, and that your telepathic contact with him is all faked.

O'Matty: You know that isn't so, Master.

Professors: I do. But the world is skeptical and lazy - always afraid of new discoveries. (Pulling a big, old-fashioned watch out of his vest pocket and looking at it:) Gentlemen, it is time. You'd better hurry, or you might miss your rendezvous with the Eskimos.

Peter Brack: I do it as a favour to you, Professor.

O'Matty: For your sake, Master, I'll even endure the company of the most dreary creature there is - namely, an English highbrow.

(Both exit.)

Ted & Toy: (approaching the Professor hand in hand:) Good night, Master. Thanks for another blessed day in the Villa Universe.

Professor: (with an absent-minded smile:) That's all right, children. Sleep well.

Toy: It was an especially important day for us, Master.

Professor: (even more distrait:) Is that so?

Ted: Our beloved governess on the other side...

Toy: ...our dear Miss Prixler in her present spiritualized form...

Ted: ... adviced us, through a trance communication to Miss McUlster,...

Toy:....to drop our Surrealist approach to art and to paint from now on realistically.

Ted: Real apples! Real faces! Real clouds!

Toy: No more abstractions at all!

Ted: Isn't that too funny for words?

Professor: Quite surprising indeed. Why does Miss Prixler suddenly dis=

approve of Surrealism? To me, it is the most adequate expression of our new irrational philosophy.

Toy: We do not know, Master.

Ted: And we don't think it proper to talk back when Miss Prixler condescends to advice us.

Toy: Miss Prixler is infallible: she must have her cogent reasons when she turns against Surrealism.

Ted: So we'll try very hard to paint things as they are. It may seem paradoxical...

Toy: Paradoxical or not - Miss Prixler's wishes are our laws. Good night, again, dearest Master. (They stoop simultaneously each kissing one hand of the Master. He tolerates this ceremony without any surprise.)

Ted & Toy: (exit, hand in hand.)

Larue: (crowing with enthusiasm:) Ah, les enfants! comme ils sont superbes! Quelle douceur! quelle grace!

Professor: You are not going to bed, Larue?

Larue: Mais naturellement - mais toutesuite... C'est seulement... C'est que moi aussi j'ai reçu des nouvelles assez extraordinaires ce soir - des nouvelless de - l'autre côté...

Professor: (looking very tired now:) What is it, Fifi?

Larue: Pas grande chose; mais, enfin - ça me fait grand plaisir...My developed friend, Madame Recamier... Vous la conaissez sans doute, Professeur?

Professor: The great letter writer of the seventeenth century? Yes, I remember, she came through quite a few times.

Larue: C'est ça. But tonight she was unusually gentille; in fact, she told me that she loves me as if I were her "petit frère." C'est ravissant, n'est pas? Her little brother - after 25o years!

Professor: (faintly impatient:) And....?

Larue: Madame Recamier suggested, in her gracious ~~and sparkling~~ fashion, that I wear from now on my pretty rococo costum more frequently - vous savez, la grande péruque, le manteau au satin avec les jolies broderies... She thinks the lovely outfit may help me to live even more intensely in the spirit of her own epoch.

Professor: That sounds like an excellent idea to me.

Larue: So you do not object to the little masquerade? You do not feel, then, that it might offend the style of the Villa Universe?

Professor: Our little community recognizes but one style: that of kindliness and of beauty. And I am sure you'll look quite beautiful, in your fancy clothes and your powdered wig, my dear Fifi.

Larue: (capering with delight:) Ah, ~~vous êtes délicieux,~~ mon maitre! Vous si bon, si large! Vous êtes en effet un grand homme! (He too kisses the Professor's hand - executing the little ceremony with exquisit daintiness, much in the rococo fashion. Then he trips towards the door. Exit.)

Professor: (thinking himself alone, he sighs deeply and covers his forehead for one long moment with his hand, as if in utmost fatigue. He has evidently forgotten the modest presence of Kenneth, who has been sitting during all this time in the back room, half visible to the audience - compiling and correcting papers.)

Kenneth: (comes from the background - walking slowly and glancing at Van Loyden timidly:) Well, Master, I think it's about time for me too.

Professor:(starting at the unexpected sound of a voice:) Oh, you're still around, Kenneth. What were you doing, back there?

Kenneth: Going through the stenograph of tonight's séance. I found it kind of messed up. But now it's in a good enough shape to be filed tomorrow. Good night, Master. (He walks towards the door, but stops immediately when "the Master" calls him.)

Professor: Wait a moment, Kenneth! All day long I meant to show you some=

thing. Here it is, in my pocket. (He produces a newspaper and unfolds it with solemn circumstantiality:) The Los Angeles "Times" of last Monday. I found it in you room, on your desk - shamelessly displayed.

Kenneth: (stammering, very nonplussed:) Why... I bought it the other day, in town.... you know, when I went to meet Mrs. Potter at the train...

Professor: Never mind whom you met at the train. It is not of my business whom you choose to meet or what you do outside of this house. But here, my dear boy - within the walls of the Villa Universe - I still am the master. I want this place to be a harbour of contemplation and creative thought - comforting to both our dear spirits and ourselves. The atmosphere of my home must not be poisoned by the lies and the trvialities with which this sordid sheet is filled.

Kenneth: Well, I suppose real life has always a touch of sordidness and of vulgarity.

Professor: ~~Real life? Have you lost all your sense, Kenneth Jackson? Do~~ you ~~actually~~ think that the topics discussed in this ~~[illegible]~~ paper have anything to do with real life? The death of a flower or, the song of a bird are more relevant, from a cosmic point of view, than the outcome of a battle or of an election campaign. The laughter of a child or the tears of a lonely woman possess more metaphysical validity than does the tiresome rant of dozens of kings, presidents, editorial writers, and other dreary impostors.

Kenneth: To some people the war is real. My younger brother, for instance - the one who is in the Navy...

Professor: (suddenly milder - anxious rather than indignant:) You don't consider to join him, my boy? You wouldn't do that to me nor to the invi=sible, who advice and protect you. ~~And~~ Have you forgotten the message sent to you from the other side, on behalf of my dear late wife? Your tender contact with the spirit world will be ~~destroyed~~ disdurbed - she said - as soon as you take up weapons and become a part of the ~~[illegible]~~ murderous machinery. War

refuse military service of any kind, as

You promised her to become a conscientious objector, rather than to stain your innocent hands with the blood of your fellow men.

Kenneth: Yes, that's what I promised.

Professor: Do you regret your decision? Would it no longer wound and upset your conscience to participate in the hideous slaughter?

Kenneth: Nobody enjoys fighting, I think. But why should I be more saintly than millions of other boys?

Professor: Because those millions are blind; without moral consciousness; cowardly; prone to compromises. If they were different, there would be no war.

Kenneth: But there happens to be one...

Professor: (ending the dispute with a short but expressive gesture:) Enough! I have your word. I know you, Kenneth Jackson: you are not going to break a promise you gave voluntarily to your teacher and friend.

Kenneth: (bending his head:) Thank you, Master. Thank you for the "friend." No, I will not break my promise.

(While he pronounces these words, Marceline enters from the right.)

Marceline: I beg your pardon, Father. I didn't mean to intrude...

Professor: It's all right, my child. I am happy to see you. Kenneth was just retiring.

Kenneth: Yes... of course... I'll have to get up pretty early.... Well, good night, then, Master. So long, Marceline. (Exit, through the right.)

Marceline: (with a soft, affectionate chuckle:) He seems always so painfully embarrassed - dear old chap he is.

Professor: Somewhat muddled, at times. How is Alice now?

Marceline: (Now embarrassed, in her turn:) Better, I suppose. She was in an awful state, though, when I came up to see her. Screaming and weeping like mad. It was really quite upsetting.

Professor: (rather casually:) She has such fits fairly often - particularly after a séance. Every trance implies a considerable strain on her nervous system.

Marceline: I see. (There is a short stillness; then she says, very softly:) I do not believe that Alice is happy, Father.

Professor: (somewhat nervously:) Happy...happy... What is happiness? The very notion seems vague and illusive to me.

Marceline: But, undoubtedly, a woman can be more unhappy under certain circumstances than she would be under others.

Professor: Sorry; I don't quite get you.

Marceline: Don't you? Well, it's just that I believe you may have the power to render poor Alice less unhappy than she is now.

Professor: (very disconcerted:) What are you driving at?.... What right do you have to suspect that there is anything between Alice McUlster and me, except good comradeship and the solid tie of mutual interests.

Marceline: My sole suspicion is, Father, that Alice would be happier if your feelings for her were somewhat less - detachedly temperate.

Professor: You don't know Alice. She has other interests. Her vocation is her happiness - her lofty mission as a go-between and transmitter between the spirit world and ours. Do you realize that Alice is one of the most remarkable mediumistic talents of our century?

Marceline: I did not mean to disparage her abilities as a medium by suggesting that she may be a woman to boot.

Professor: You have not yet seen the kind of work she can do when she is at her best. Her performance tonight was obviously hampered by hostile energies: otherwise she would have succeeded in materializing Mr. Krofta's ghost.

Marceline: You mean, Edward's ghost.

Professor: Of course, it is difficult to define the circumstances which may have baffled her efforts. Maybe your husband has a definite aversion to Alice's ectoplasm, although it seems to be popular even with the most fastidious spirits.

Marceline: Why, then, should Edward be more choosy than the rest of them?

Professor: There are peculiar animosities. Evidently, the process of materialization implies a good deal of intimacy between ghost and medium. The spirit has to accept a living person's ectoplastic emanation, not only as his ~~clothes~~ cover, but actually as his body. It is indeed a kind of temporary symbiosis between the otherwordly visitor and the medium.

Marceline: Symbiosis sounds rather shocking. (After a brief silence:) And yet I wouldn't mind Edward's intimacy with Miss McUlster's ectoplasm, if only I could see his face again.

Professor: Of course, there might be other reasons that prevent his coming. He is perhaps in preliminary quarantine - not allowed to go out. Some sort of punishment or precautionary measure - they are rather rigorous, over there.

Marceline: But Edward hasn't done anything wrong, ~~when he was still alive. There is nothing to punish him for.~~ What could they punish him for?

Professor: You never can tell. Some actions we deem innocuous are considered ~~sinful~~ evil on the other side. He took you away from me, after all. That was ~~sinful~~ evil, perhaps.

Marceline: (rashly:) What an absurd thing to say! (He looks at her - deeply surprised rather than indignant. She blushes and lays her arm around his shoulders:) So sorry, Dad! I've become unpardonably rude in the savage countries of Europe. But it certainly was not Edward who sent me to that stupid boarding school in Switzerland. Don't you remember, Dad, that it was you who wanted to get rid of me?

Professor: ~~You~~ Now it's you who ~~are becoming absurd.~~ talking rubbish. ~~I did~~

My purpose in sending you overseas was not to get rid of you - you know that,Marceline. You were radiant with youth, wit, and loveliness, whereas I - I was a moody old fellow. I did not think it fair to keep you here, in this gloomy house.

Marceline: I've seen gloomier houses.

Professor: My way of life has altered during the past few years. I have escaped from the arrestment of opaque, joyless materialism. New revelations were granted to me by the invisible. I am happy now, Marceline.

Marceline: (embracing him:) I'm so glad for you, Dad!

Professor: But I want you to be happy too.

Marceline: How could I, without Edward? Of course, it would make things much easier, much less hopeless and sinister, if I were permitted to see him once in a while - or just once, one minute.

Professor: Another element delaying or hindering his materialization may be his dogged skepticism as regards the occult. It seems utterly difficult, if not impossible, for a spirit to materialize if he denied formerly the possibility of spiritualistic phenomena.

Marceline: It is true, he was pretty obstinate in his opposition to all mystic systems and experiments.

Professor: His political dogmatism was more mystic, though, than our metaphyiscal science. Edward was a fanatic and a partisan. The orthodox principles he adhered to are indeed incompatible with our cosmic vision.

Marceline: Edward was a musician - primarily, above all.

Professor: Being of Czech descent and naturalized in Britain, he was literally possessed by his rabid hatred of the German people.

Marceline: I've never heard him say a single word against the German people. If you mean the Nazis - he disliked those indeed.

Professor: No person of any transcendental insights would condemn millions of human beings for something as ephemeral as is a political creed.

He played Betthoven and Brahms in London, long after the Nazis had invaded his native country and even at a time when Britain was already at war with Germany.

Professor: He may have played the works of German composers, but he certainly did not mind the RAF destroying the very cities in which those geniuses were born.

Marceline: Now, that's enough, Father! I didn't come here to listen to your attacks on the RAF or to your eulogies of Nazism. (There is an apprehensive stillness; then she touches her father's hand with rueful tenderness:) Don't be angry at me now, Dad! One is so irritable, these days...

Professor: "One" is, perhaps; but not I. No, child; I could never be angry at you. ~~Quite the contrary, I am rather moved.~~ If you knew how much you are like your mother! ~~She used to have exactly the same manner of turning aggressive as soon as~~ she felt that her position was weak. Of course, she has considerably changed her attitude since she stepped across the boundary. It is indeed amazing how rapidly ~~she amplified and deepened her philosophic vision.~~

Marceline: Do you hear much from her?

Professor: Every other day. Didn't Alice tell you that Mother and I collaborate on a book?

Marceline: She said something to this affect, I suppose. But I didn't feel like insisting. After all, this is a very intimate affair between you, your wife, and your medium.

Professor: Alice acts only as a receiving station. Mother dictates to her from the other side. She often praises Alice for her detachment and conscientiousness. "The best secretary I've ever had," she said recently. You may imagina how utterly pleased Alice McUlster was.

Marceline: What's the book going to be about?

Professor: Mother wants to call it, "Cosmos of Tomorrow."

Marceline: I hope it has nothing to do with current politics?

Marceline: Is your book all about politics?

Professor: Not in the usual sense. You know how despicable this most sordid aspect of modern life is to me: a newspaper in this house offends my feeling of cleanness and dignity. Your mother agrees with me. From her detached point of view all our current troubles are without any significance. Still she chooses to dwell on certain political issues, mainly to disclose and prove their utter hollowness. That is why she tackles such inflated concepts as Freedom, Progress, Democracy, and reduces them, most incisively and most shrewdly, to their proper dimensions.

Marceline: (who hardly listens to him - absorbed in her own thoughts:) I wonder if Edward will ever dictate a book to me, from the other side.

Professor: The most striking chapter is the one called "The Great Anachronism." There, your mother arraigns the corrupt and short-sighted Anglo-American politicians, who think they can stem powerful revolutions by means of the most outdated strategy. War is of course a glaring anachronism in this epoch. The wave of the future will sweep away all our obsolete devices, of our general staffs.

Marceline: Where is the Wave of the Future?

Professor: At any place where men and women are sensible to the elating voices of the invisible. The wave of the future is not confined to any party or country...

Marceline: (with a sudden shudder:) Excuse me, Father. The word always causes a sudden pang in my stomach.

Professor: What word, darling? I don't understand...

Marceline: The word "wave." It's laden with terrible memories.

Professor: My poor child...

Marceline: (clinging to him, as if in physical pain:) Oh, Father! Can you promise me that I shall see him again?

Professor: (caressing her:) Promise you? My sweet little Marceline, how could I do such a thing? The moods and motions of the other side are unpredictable

Marceline: But you can help me, Father! You are such a great man, you can do everything. Oh, Father! I've always believed in you - only for a few days or weeks I had doubts... I mean, I wasn't quite sure if you went into the right direction, with all your spooky devices. But since then I've long understood that your new faith is true - it must be true: otherwise there would be no hope for me - no chance to see Edward again.

Professor: (caressing her hair; with a great, sincere paternal tenderness:) Oh, my child, my child! Believe me and be confident! There is immortality. Life only changes its forms: its substance is ever-lasting. Our pilgrimage, here below, would have no point, would be too much to ask of man, without immortality.

Marceline: (whispers:) I believe you, Father. So I shall see Edward again?

Professor: Yes, my dear: if you call him strongly, passionately enough. Do you really love him so much?

Marceline: I love him - as you love Mother. I need him. I depend on him. I must see his face to find out whether he still cares for me. I must see him, Father, to believe beyond any doubt that I shall have him again; that there will be a reunion on the higher plane.

Professor: So you're not yet quite convinced, after all, that there is such a thing as individual survival after a person's death?

Marceline: (trembling in his arms:) I don't know, Father... Yes, I am convinced... I want to believe in it... It has to be as you say...

Professor: (with impressive determination:) It is as I tell you, child. Death is just a dropping away of the physical body; we put it off, as we put off a suit of clothes - that's all. Believe me, Marceline! I am closer to your mother now than I used to be when she was still alive. Here, we are all muffled from each other by opaque barriers. As soon, however, as you step across, you become weightless, transparent, endowed with never heard-of sensitivities. Love in the spirit world is infinitely purer, more loyal and more intense, than are our sensual emotions.

Marceline: Thank you, Father! Thank you! - What do you want me to do?

Professor: Try to believe - firmly and ardently! Overcome your doubts! Be strong and faithful! Be pure!

Marceline: But besides? I mean, technically?

Professor: (in a more matter-of-fact way:) I think you made a mistake when you stopped the phonograph record. The music is likely to attract your husband. I don't say, to attract him immediately; but little by little; slowly.

Marceline: It's so painful to me - this music. I can hardly stand it.

Professor: Pull yourself together! Don't be sentimental! Your refusal to hear that tune indicates that you still question Edward's immortality and your own. Put the record on! Play it! At least two men will appreciate your fortitude: I - and he, on the other side.

Marceline: (walks silently and slowly to the phonograph. The Slavic melody sounds again.)

Professor: (withdraws towards the left door as soon as the music begins:) I'd better leave you alone. Your invisible guest, who might be in this room already, would be disappointed if he found you in my company. (Exit.)

Marceline: (stands motionless near the phonograph, her face covered with her red, swollen hands. She listens to the music - sometimes shaken by a nervous shudder.)

(When the record approaches its end, but is not yet quite over, there is a certain movement behind the dark curtain covering the door to the garden. Somebody must have come from the park and seems now hopelessly entangled in the smooth, heavy draperies. It seems to be a tall man. One hears him groan and curse.)

Marceline: (produces a soft, yet intense scream, while she removes her hands from her face:) Who is it?

Johnny: (falling into the room, from behind the curtain. He

is a young man of about nineteen or twenty years, in a sailor's uniform all in rags and soaked was water. His hair, his hands, his bare feet - everything is wet. Some oceanic plants are entangled in his dripping hair. He lies for a moment like dead, with his face on the floor.)

Marceline: (joining and lifting her hands like a praying child:) My Lord... my Lord... what is that...

Johnny: (raises a head a little and turns his face toilsomely towards Marceline:) An angel! There is an angel... Dam it, I must be dead...

Marceline: (with an outcry:) From where do you come?

Johnny: (stammering:) From... from... down there...

Marceline:(stooping down to him; shaking his head and shoulders:) From where, young man? Tell me, for God's sake, from where!!

Johnny: (still with a heavy and restive tongue:) From the ground...from the depth... from the bottom... (His head glides back to the floor.) Couldn't I get a drop of whisky, or something...?

Marceline: He looks like the boy who clung to Edward and killed him...

Johnny: Just a little glass of...of...something...

Marceline: Oh! he's bleeding! his foot...

Johnny: (with his eyes closed; dazed:) What's...is...the difference? I'm dead, anyhow... It's kind of fun to be dead, for a change... A guy sees angels if he's dead enough... But whisky - no! No liquor for the dead...

Marceline: (yells:) Is there nobody to help me? A sailor is here - wounded! Is nobody here? Help! Please! Help!

(Almost noiselessly, the seven Negro children sneak into the room, led by from the background. They move rhythmically in a line, the smallest child, closed by oldest one - a girl of about thirteen or fourteen years.)

The Seven Children:(unisonously, their chirping little voices perfectly attuned to each other:) There we are!, Miss! Don't worry! We are tough enough! We'll take care all right of the wet big man. (They surround Johnny and begin to lift him.)

The oldest girl: Mighty heavy guy all right.

The smallest boy: Mighty heavy myself. Easy job for strong man. (They lift gradually.)

Johnny: (opens his eyes as they begin to carry him towards the door:) Shit, I'm not in heaven, after all... Thought it must be a mistake, in the first place... Dam it, bunch of little devils carrying me to hell... That's bad and that ain't good...

Marceline: (still standing to the left, near the glass door. Her eyes follow the group of children crossing slowly the room with their heavy burden. Before the little caravane reaches the door at the right, she says in a surprisingly clear and sonorous voice:) What's your name, sailor?

Johnny: (already from the door, through which the Seven try to transport him:) Johnny. Don't forget me when I'm in hell. Nice having met you, Angel.

(The scene becomes gradually darker, while the Seven Kids disappear with Johnny, and Marceline stands motionless near the garden door. The dim light fades by degrees away altogether: the scene is blacked out for a short while, to indicate that the night passes.

Then it becomes one shade lighter again, but is still so shady than one can hardly discern the Seven Negro Children, who have insinuated themselves into the room again. One notices them only when they begin to produce all kinds of odd noises, such as barking, mooing, twittering, and bleating. At first the curious concert seems to suggest the presence of a well-assorted menagerie. Finally, however, the children begin to sing: we recognize the Slavic Melody somewhat adapted to a jazzy rhythm. The smallest boy draws the heavy curtain from the glass door to the left. The bright light of a Californian morning presently fills the room.)

(When the scene is bright, we see the Seven Negro Children hopping and dancing about - occupied with setting one of the small tables, which they have moved into the middle of the room. They bring bread, butter, a bowl full of gaudy fruits, spoons, knives, forks, etc. - arranging everything neatly on the table. While thus busying themselves, they keep humming and twittering. Their musical variations of the Czech Melody become more and more saucy and eccentric.)

The oldest Girl: (balancing a tray with one cup and a coffee pot:) Handsome guy, our prisoner, isn't he?

The smallest Boy: Pretty heavy, too.

Another Child: Kind of looks like that lion tamer we've had at the circus, remember? Kind of fair and tough, remember?

The oldest Girl: Kind of handsome, too.

A third Child: They're coming! Look out!

(They all rush to the back wall, where they form swiftly a neat row - standing motionless, with hypocritically lowered eyes.)

(Alice McUlster and Johnny enter from the right. She is now dressed in light gray; the style of her costume, however, is almost as severe as was her ~~suit~~ black toilet in the preceding scene. Johnny wears a colourful pajama, definitely too large for him, and huge fancy slippers. One of his ankles is bandaged. He makes the impression of somebody who has had some hours of sound, even intense sleep - very awake and eager.)

Alice: (after having reviewed, with a casual and yet penetrating glance, the silent parade of Negro Children:) You'll be starved, I suppose.

Johnny: (with a grin:) You've said it, Ma'am.

The oldest Girl: (stepping out of the line, like a soldier who has to report:) Breakfast is ready, if you please.

Johnny: (leering at the table:) Looks mighty good, too. Who are them kids, Ma'am? They couldn't be all yours, could they?

I.) ends with Stars 6 ii

a/ Johnny exhausted.

go bed.

II.) a) Morning.

Alice Scolds Negro

Johnny's breakfast

Th. parade of musicians

they go exercising.

~~Da Costa~~ ~~Alice~~ scene

Johnny — Magician

~~Johnny about to go~~

III.) a) ~~Das Lotta~~ Alice

Das ... Prof-no.

Alice —

Prof no — symposium.

Kenneth off. Johnny

stays.

~~Alice~~ — Prof no.

Alice — Das Loya —

Act One:

1.) Marceline alone (from the background.) Playing piano. Weeps.

2.) Marceline - Alice. (Why does Edouard's ghost not appear? Why does Miss McUlster hesitate to get married? What is wrong with the Universe Farm? etc.) - Meanwhile Professor finishs his speech in the Chapel, behind the closed door.

3.) Door opens: ceremony is over. Enter:

II.

Kenneth's departure. Johnny stays.
(He's Mayerling to the ganza)
Bolero — Alice. He refuses.
Bolero gathers horse hell
for Nadia.

Meanwhile, Kadorenath / Alice.
Alice exit — ostensibly
to attend Nadia.

Kadorenath — Negro kids.

Kadorenath
Johnny.

Party.

Sequence: Johnny) instead of
Alice.

Police.

"I have to talk with
you the light..."

the medium — as "receiving station"

("the process of communication is more like a wireless message than anything else in your next moment")

Obsession — : the spirit, entangled in another person's aura ...

Spirit guides shaman as friends, not controllers, to help you to walk ...

"Ghosts"

Personae:

(Hints will [illegible] changes [illegible] the medium...)

Rutha (Eva-Thomas) *
Madame Julia Nessnoff (Alice Tarbinian)
Mynheer Ter Braegg (Quentin. Richard Harrison Davenport co-author)
Mynheer Ter B. (Frank Psychic Quentin...)
Pater Hasheesky Ramsdens Twenty (Czech financier. Seeking Ruth's dat. husband, Ghost.)

~~Foy (Ruth's Sister)~~
"Hab", ~~her husband~~ (Young Czech. anti-Spiritualist. Then "mummasked" himself)

Signor Crescendo (Second medium. Wrist... Unmasked by Quentin... Johnny)

Jim Fuller
His Mother

Friend of Ramsden, her Spirit Guide Spirit.

The Deserters

[3 Acts]

Professor Van Loyden [Master of the House. Brazilian. Of Dutch descent, with Indian affiliations. Great cultural background: Madame Blavatsky, mandalas, gnosis. Well-meaning, etc. —

Miss McVish (his friend, assistant, Alice Van Kleuten — Scottish, fiery, tragically wicked. Scottish type. Tragically married to:)

Mr. Thallo (handsome Portuguese, Italian, of gold, fantastic, black-mailing. Very Sicilian to Lawn

Marcella ((His daughter) The young widow. Pure. Tribal. Sicilian con text will drowned eyes hypnotic. Has vampire powers...

The Twins (Young brother & sister. Always Very anemic. Weak hands. Pointy. Bewitched.)

(Rich, but taking money. (Children of armament lords) Paint. guided by gods... Poor art

of Indian saya: Angel stings.

Gaston La Roche, with Madame.
(Member of L'Académie Française (= Académie Goncourt)
Marmois)
Ted Freeman (Young man from the West. Gunner with Middle West. Commands Drinks steadily.)
now the V.P. Booth in Chicago. Robert.
old (Leans to Army. Drinks
Russian Princess. Old monster.
Phonyl but will (sign fraudulent
is really a Princess.) dolls.)
Austrian Baron (Baron ex-dost. Klavionalist. Under
German Yung Jordan Socialist.) Religious
a now of Anarchist
Jo B. O'Malley (Wrist original. Embodiment.
Banker of Boyle- shoulders against
Drinks Heights Tammy type-
Does not Police in Spiritualism)
Peter Pratt (English writer:
Hall Skeptical. Hanley.)
F.B.I. Men Doesn't Know
Mahoney. (Without address.
Mahoney's Mother (Ghost.)

Johnny: "That's bad, and that ain't good..."
"I got a kick out of it..."

Phony

"You're engaged to be..."
"Then you're more of a bomb than I am..."
"Sometimes I see him: he's all mad..."

About

"He is all mad..."
"Gorgously inarticulate"

Beneath-the-surface: a savage in quiet

"Smile of horse. Of course, to me."

Professor: (medals)

Act One.

1) Room empty: to dining room. Marcelin plays piano with (his) husband's [illegible] Marcella comes from dining room. Marcella follows by Mlle DuVals. disappointed; Hostess said disappointment. Dialogue. Alice intervenes. "Why don't Marcella asks: "Father?" You marry Your mother is against it." Your money drops in the family

2) Rest of Ensemble scene with roll-

3) Dialogue: His indecision. Prof. Hos - Tid: Should he [His family brother-in-law etc.] his conscience objects?

4) Pitou Path, O'Mally, Twins join discussion. Then Gaston La Roche, who is seated by the fireplace subject.

5) M. et Mme Ra Roche, shows Fourth dialogue. She advises him to leave, etc. — Marcelin. (English)

6.) Marcelin — Path Plays piano (Intermezzo) (He is left alone with Engineer Gaston.

6.) Johnny's [illegible] Blinding the dogs.

~~Robert, Fight~~ ~~call for help~~:

[4.) Tullio, Johnny, (the last exit.)

Tullio Yak. Johnny to the Kitchen.

R. Yaaaas.] (Big chum to Johnny Carson)

8.) Tullio — Alice. Tullio: "Somebody

are married) to police"

mind, he dons Massimo's husband.

ghost of Massimo

Alice [illegible] significant [illegible] Johnny

Ghost but Massimo

9.) Johnny Yes to Stan Kitchen

Thm. Ted, who is made of

his mind; he will enter

the army. Ted, Johnny.

10) Go Buddy,

"Let's celebrate!"

Drinking Stan. Stigma of the mother,

Johnny's his birth

medium, his abilities: his

name with Sir (Vaga-

Sir mother.)

Stan wears

black wings

!

the experiment. But it seems that our dear ones on the other side are pretty fastidious as to the kind of ectoplasm they choose for their materialization. The ectoplasm of Miss McUlster doesn't appeal to your late husband, perhaps?

Marceline: I wouldn't be surprised.

Kenneth: (musingly:) For it is not likely, in his case, that he begins already to forget his own earthly appearance. You know, of course, that even a master medium is unable to materialize a spirit, unless he - the spirit - remembers distinctly what he looked like in life. It seems they are rather oblivious, up there, on their higher plane.

Marceline: Not my Edward. He was much too interested in his looks. He won't forget so quickly how very handsome he was.

Kenneth: Of course, there might be other circumstances preventing him materialization. A kind of punishment, perhaps, involving temporary immobility? It is also possible that he hasn't even realized, at this point, the fact of his being dead. In certain cases it takes surprisingly long until they understand that they've graduated to a different plane. Suicides, for instance, or persons killed in technical accidents are often reluctant to recognize their new status. Be this as it may, I feel it would be indeed unfair if you blamed Miss McUlster, for your husband's failure to appear. She certainly tries her best,

Marceline: (milder, as if exhausted by suffering:) Of course she does; I don't doubt it. There is nothing I hold against her. It's just.... it's just that I can't stand it anymore. If she would try it without music at least! The music, you see, is the worst part of the whole ceremony. It's the music that gets so terribly on my nerves, - this lovely, agonizing piece by Chopin... Do you know that he intended to open his first New York recital with precisely this étude? He played it in the drawing room of the City of Bombay, just when the torpedo hit her...

Act One

Early evening. The glass door to the garden is open. One sees the palm trees and the distant sea in the pale light.
The scene is empty when the curtain rises. One heard music - Chopin's Etude in , known as the Rain Etude. The audience is not supposed to know at first from where the music comes, as the phonograph is invisible inside the back wall of the room.
Marceline enters the room through the large door in the background, which she opens very carefully and softly - just wide enough to slip through on her tiptoes. One has no chance to catch a glimpse of what is behind the door. For the brief moment, however, when the door is somewhat open, the sound of the piano music increases, which indicates that the phonograph has a direct connection with the other room.
Marceline is a very delicate and lovely girl, about 26 years of age. Her pale face has the noble fragility of an antique gem - the forehead nostalgic and intelligent under the dark crown of her hair which she wears parted in the middle.
She is dressed in black, in a simple but not too austere style. There should be a few coquettish touches to her outfit, such as a broad collar of fine old laces, nice shoes, or the like.

She lingers for a few seconds at the door when she has closed it. She covers her face with one of her hands; falters, seems on the point of fainting. Presently, however, she pulls herself together and goes to the phonograph, which she opens. With one quick, surprisingly energetic motion she stops the playing of the piano record. It is still. The girl stands in an attitude as if expected the music to continue, although she has just stopped it herself. But there is no sound.
Marceline walks slowly from the phonograph to the left, where she stops near the open door and stares for a few moments at the dim panorama of garden landscape and sea. She shudders and has the same helpless gestures she showed before when covering her face with the hand.

Marceline: (still near the open door, speaking to herself: it almost sounds like a groan:) I can't stand it... I can't...I can't... (Her voice dies away in a whimper. She makes an effort to move the heavy curtains over the door, but fails, and sinks into the chair in front of the piano - utterly despondent, weeping noiselessly.)

The door in the background opens again softly and carefully. This time it is a young man who insinuates into the room - Kenneth Jackson. His age is about the same as Marceline's. He looks serious and good-natured, somewhat scholarly, but in a ridiculous way. A frank, healthy and pensive face with eye glasses.

Kenneth: (whispers at first, but soon enough speak in his natural, if somewhat lowered voice.)

What's wrong, Marceline? Why did you run away? Don't you feel well? You look terribly pale...

Marceline: (tries to smile) It's nothing. Don't worry about me, Kenneth. Just do me a favour and pull these curtains down. I don't know why I couldn't do it myself. Felt kind of dizzy, all of a sudden.

Kenneth: (Does silently as she told him to do.)

2.)

~~It's just that~~

(Ombwsil.)

She promised me he would
meet us this time.

Kenneth: Patience
is a virtue.

Marsha: He promised
too!

(He exhales,
trans.)

Kenneth: ((Closes eyes))

Marsha: ((calm down)) Does she
go on?

Kenneth: (looks into the room:)
she's busy signing ...)

Marsha: Was bella here before ...

Kenneth: So it may seem to us who cannot conceive death but from the dubious angle of our earthly annoisement. But all our friends on the other side agree that it is not really painful to step across, once the dying person has renounced his futile attempts to resist the invisible powers. You surely have not forgotten the magnificent description of death your late mother sent us the other day? The process of death - she said - is like a gradual awakening; one begins to see, for the first time...A fiery stream of vital electricity emanates from the dying body and illumi= nates the spiritual landscape of the person who passes away... It must be a grand experience.

Marceline: (with faint irony) You'll know what it is like - soon enough, Kenneth...: if this terrible War continues...

Kenneth: (seems somewhat struck by this last remark; wants to say something but changes his mind and keeps silence. There is a short stillness. Then:)

Marceline: (very gentle, as if exhausted by her inordinate suffering) Don't be cross now, Ken And don't blame me if I forget things. I am still familiar as you are with the teachings we received from Father, - the revelations, I mean, Father obtained from Mother since she passed over, to the other side. Of course, I know that the plane on which Edouard lives now is at least as real as the one on which we struggle and suffer. I know that his present life is more intense and more beautiful than ours ever could be. I know that he is happy where he went after his body died; or rather, I hope that he is not too unhappy there, without me: not so unhappy, I mean, as I am here, without him...

Kenneth: But you are not without him, Marceline! Don't you sense that he is around? Don't you feel his touch? Don't you hear his whisper?

Marceline: (shaking her head, very sadly) I do not feel his touch nor do I hear his whisper. He is far away.

Kenneth: What you say is awful - and it's impossible too. He loves you: how could he leave you alone?

He came through Spiritual Union

Marceline: I want him to

I want his

twinkling... his fancy, his smile...

his promised me...

Miss McVesta ~~Miss DeVere~~

Why doesn't she see him...

I had an infinite longing to see him. Those

smears...

messages on my

they are so

moves; so many, I... come

~~Stars~~ so that at times they are playing

I doubt at times that they actually come from ~~stars~~!

And always during that night is

nobody's

of his

agonizing.

Kenneth: That's why you

with the stars, don't you...

Marceline...

Must be patient. Tomorrow...

Patience is a ~~fairly successful~~

~~I know has been...~~ Besides,

you know that at times...

what you understand the

importance of this particular

proof?

And isn't he right, after all?

Marceline: He doesn't think me alone, ~~I suppose~~ I have Father ~~& he thinks~~ - and Father's friends: Miss McUlster, and you...

Kenneth: (very warm and urgent) I am your friend too, Marceline! You know that!

Marceline: (caresses his hand, with ~~a devoted~~ absent-minded tenderness) almost a brother... You're a good boy, Kenneth, naturally you are - and a good friend too. But first of all, and more than ~~before~~ anything else, you're Father's famulus - is that correct? For him, you'd committ a murder; you'd even let me down, if it were for his sake... Don't talk back now, Kenneth! I know that is so. ~~Marceline~~ And I know what it means to love Father. He is such a ~~great~~ powerful personality, and at the time so strangely helpless after Mother's Death... For twenty-four years I've ~~done nothing but to love~~ Professor Van Leyden: A... It ~~has~~ made me so proud that he depended on me, ~~and he really did depend on me,~~ didn't he? When he got the Nobel Prize for Peace... and his mail assumed such terrific proportions... Do you remember the mess?

until Edouard came and liberated him. Often hands his spirit on on us during the last eight years.

Kenneth: And the trip to Oslo..... (They laugh.)

Marceline: (serious again) Of course, that was before he discovered Spiritualism and before Miss McUlster came to live here...

Kenneth: She is an excellent woman. The longer I know her, the more I respect her character ~~and her abilities~~ - not to speak of her stunning abilities as a medium.

Marceline: I often wonder why Father and she don't get married.

But you know that he

Kenneth: ~~He~~r control spirit is strictly against it - and so is your mother, incidentally.

His generosity is indifference

Marceline: It seems so strange...

Alice's

Kenneth: At any rate, it proves ~~the~~ unquestionable honesty and her admirable self-discipline. ~~She~~ It would be easy for her to pretend that the friends on the other side are all in favour of such a connection. She wouldn't even need lie: just under the influence of auto-suggestion.

My first hatred! Didn't like his influence on the Master... M. came all so suddenly... From his sober Nihilism, almost overnight into mystic visions!

I don't know

I know E.
Each time I look at my hand,
I remember the whole time I have.
My hands look still pretty fa
They were complet

48 ... quite n ... i ...
was ... to stand on
the ... sac ...
th. wrist of a

Poor ... ...
was ... when ...
even ... sharp ... of my
Then was about 25 ...
with ... at ...

Or maybe, it seems mysti
to me. Now I ... mundane
that it's ... more
realistic than the ... mystic
empirical knowledge they seek
reach in our ...

Marceline: And who produced that silvery little laughter?

Kenneth: A "poltergeist", I suppose. One of those malignant entities, you know, who amuse themselves with all kinds of bedevilment.

Marceline: I thought it was Fifi Larue who giggled. What a ludicrous creature, with his piping falsetto! I remember that he came once for dinner, years ago, when Mother was still with us. She disliked him intensely, right at the first look. "Quel petit monstre!" she said. It embarrassed her, I think, to have such a ridiculoud compatriot. You know, Mother was very proud of her French origin.

Kenneth: She changed her views since she passed over to the other side. Not that she is now less devoted to France; but the character of her love has altered, together with her own form of existence. Her feelings are now quite free of arrogance and of aggressiveness. The defeat of France, in 1940, ~~did~~ failed apparently to impress her. Messages came through from her, at the time, to the effect that France was deserving her fate and might greatly profit by it.

Marceline: (shaking her head:) It doesn't sound like Mother...

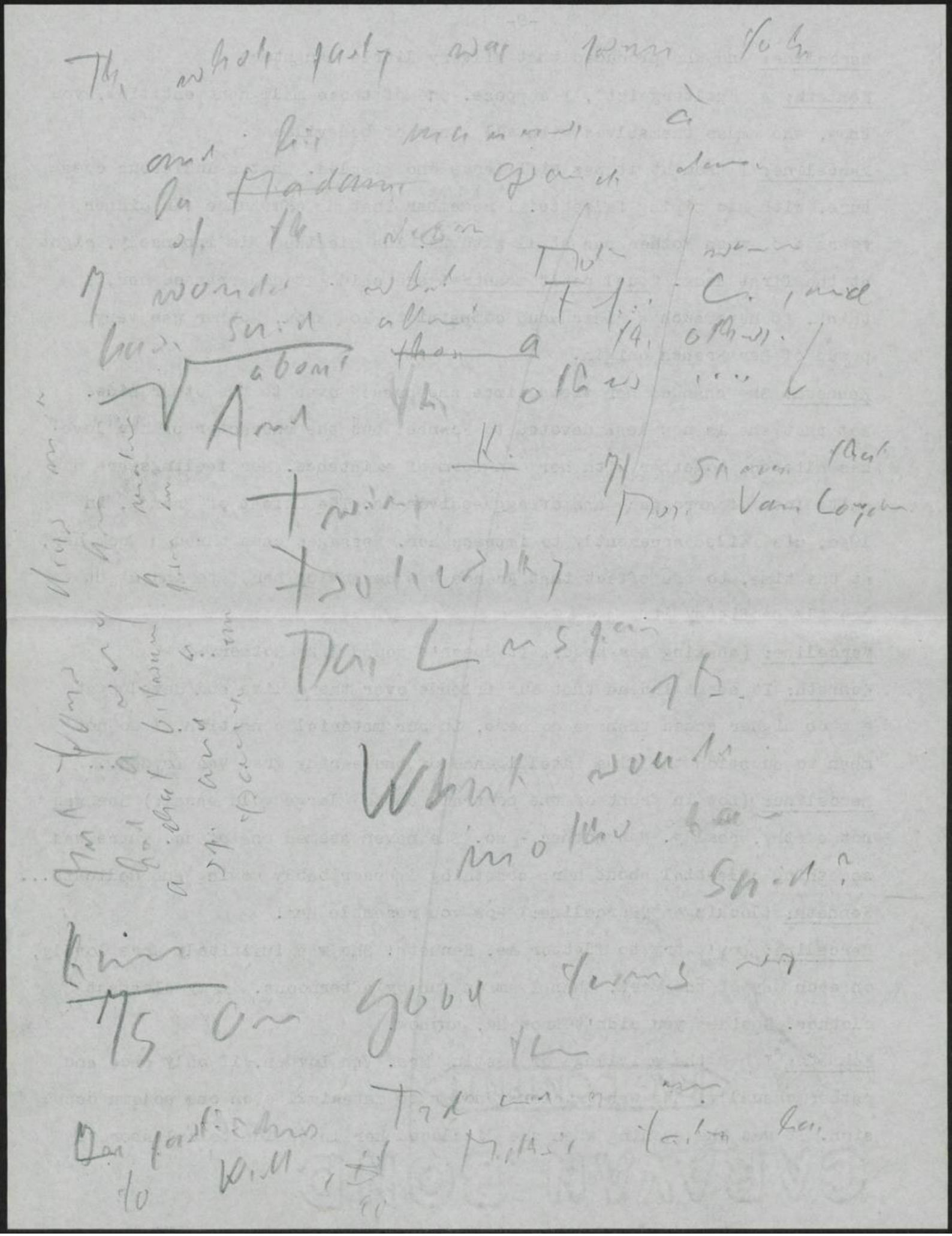
Kenneth: It seems indeed that our friends over there live and develop at a much higher speed than we do here, in our material condition. I do not mean to question the fine intelligence of the earthy Mrs. Van Loyden...

Marceline: (now in front of the portrait on the large gold easel:) She was not earthy, really. Not Mother - no. She never seemed one of us. There was something celestial about her; something indescribably moving and delicate...

Kenneth: (looking at Marceline:) How you resemble her!

Marceline: Don't try to flatter me, Kenneth! She was infinitely more lovely, on each day of the week, than I am on Sunday afternoons, in my cleanest clothes. Besides you didn't know Ma, anyhow.

Kenneth: I had the privilege of meeting Mrs. Van Loyden, if only once and rather casually. She was gracious enough to materialize on one solemn occasion. It was the evening when she disclosed her intention to collaborate



with the Master on his new philosophic work, The Cosmos of Tomorrow.

Marceline: I wonder how this collaboration is possible - technically, I mean.

Kenneth: It proceeds most smoothly, without any disturbances - thanks to Alice McUlster. She is a remarkable medium, as you may have noticed. Absolutely detached, neutral, conscientious - the ideal receiving station for otherwordly messages of such a unique importance.

Marceline: Do you know Father's script? I mean, Mother's dictation? I mean, the messages Miss McUlster received when he was in trance?

Kenneth: The Master kindly showed me the two opening chapters.

Marceline: And how is it?

Kenneth: Extraordinary. Most unusual, indeed. Rather disconcerting, in a sense. Rather controversial, I might be inclined to say, if the Master's views were not backed, or rather, inspired, by a highly developed spirit. Some people may deem The Cosmos of Tomorrow an unpatriotic, even treacherous book.

Marceline: Treacherous? Dear me! Why?

Kenneth: Because of the august aloofness it manifests as regards current events. The issues at stake in the present War are dismissed with a few mordant words. The matter of Hitler's defeat or victory is of no actual relevance, according to the Master's metaphysical sources of information.

Marceline: What a preposterous thing to say!

Kenneth: (raising his hand with a solemn, almost sacerdotal motion; very gravely:) Marceline! Please! Don't forget who it is you dare to criticize! Not only is your father the greatest mind this century has produced; the wisdom he communicates in his forthcoming work came to him from the most authoritative side.

Marceline: But I've seen in France what unspeakable humiliation and misery the triumph of those devils involves. And in London I witnessed how the resistance to this obnoxious plague ennobles and purifies the heart and face

Marceline: No actual relevance? The French disaster? Britain's heroism? The vast developments in Russia and in China? I wonder...

Kenneth: I've been wondering too. There are moments when I am haunted by doubts. Is it right - I keep asking myself - is it pardonable to disregard the imperative requirements and realities of this time? But, again and again, my conclusion is that it would be wrong, or even sacrilegious, to demur to the Master's order. He does not make mistakes - especially when he is guided by the friends on the other side. So if the Master decides that Fascism, War, Democracy - in short, politics are of secondary importance, then it is as he says, and all our qualms are futile.

Marceline: How much you admire him!

Kenneth: Don't you, Marceline?

Marceline: I always did - you know that. Of course, I don't know him as intimately as you do: I've been living abroad too long. How many years ago died my mother?

Kenneth: Just ten years ago. She was graduated to the higher plane in September, 1932 - one month before the Master's book, Blueprint of a World Federation came out: the book, you know, for which the Peace Nobel Prize was awarded to him.

Marceline: And you became his secretary two years afterwards - isn't that correct? I try to keep track of dates and want to recollect the sequence of events. But things reel in my mind... It seems ages ago that I made Edward's acquaintance. I lived with him for hundreds and hundreds of years. When was it that I first heard about Father's interest in spiritualism? In the beginning, I didn't want Edward to know. Probably thought he'd laugh, and that I couldn't have taken - not even from him... But when I mentioned Father's new hobby at last, Edward remained surprisingly serious. "Your father is a very courageous man, to venture on such a dark, unexplored region." That was all he said. And then, a few days later, he referred to spiritualism again, in a half bantering manner.

"In case you'll have to survive me, poor child," he said, "I'll certainly watch you closely, from the other side. In fact, I am determined to materialize, once in a while - just to remind you of the basic fact that your husband, even as a ghost, is infinitely more handsome than any of your living lovers could be." That was a regular promise: I knew he meant what he said. Why does he let me down?

Kenneth: Don't say such things, Marceline! He's probably listening to you.

Marceline: (looks around; timidly:) Do you really think so? Well, in case you hear me, my beloved one, I may as well tell you, once more, that I love you - love you beyond words. Listen, dear, listen! I'm longing for you! Father is right, as usual. The so-called great realities are fundamentally unreal. Only my love for you matters: there is no other reality as far as I am concerned. I forget the air raids of London. The fall of France fades away. Victory or defeat - what's the difference? If only you appear! If you permit me one glimpse - just one fleeting glimpse, dear! - of your beloved face.

Kenneth: (stares at her - fascinated:) You're very attractive, Marceline. You'll surely attract him. Wait and see! He'll come.

Marceline: (sighs, relieved for the moment:) Thanks. That's much better. Yes. It's the sea that gets on my nerves, day and night... The sound of the sea and the sight of the sea. I can't bear it.

Kenneth: No wonder, Marceline - after you've passed through. Forty-eight hours in an open boat - a tiny nut-shell shaken by the colossal waves... It's too dreadful to think of. I can't tell you, Marceline, how deeply I admire your heroism.

Marceline: What's heroic about it? I just wanted to live, curiously enough. Wanted to live, even without Edouard; even after I'd witnessed his agony, his desperate struggle with the terrible, merciless water... Oh! (Overwhelmed by the memory, she bursts into tears, covering her face with her hands again.) I am so ashamed, Kenneth... I am so ashamed of myself...

Kenneth: Ashamed? There is nothing you'd have to be ashamed of, Marceline. You, of all people! You are so pure, so perfect: there is nothing evil in you. You are the Master's daughter - every thought in your mind, every fibre of your substance...

Marceline: (with a certain violence) No, I am not! He is a great man, but I weak and corrupt and stupid. Why did I save my life? I should have gone down, with Edouard. I hear his voice all the time He called me before he sank: "Marceline... Marceline..." ...Oh, Kenneth! I loved him so!

Kenneth: (with gentle gravity) I know you loved him, Marceline.

Marceline: I'm afraid, at times, that I did love him more than one ought to love mortal being ought to love another. I actually worshipped him - not only because he That is why you must not be too sad about his your seeming bereavement. You couldn't have forgotten, Marceline, what your father taught us about death: that it is just a minor change, a dropping away of the physical body; we put it off, as we put off a suit of clothes...

Marceline: (whimpers) I know, Kenneth, I know... Death is nothing, really - just a change of appearance... But why, then, is it so painful? I've seen how bitterly painful it is...

Almost running me to the ship-
ping boat ... There was still a
seat for him ... Then, that
young sailor [illegible] him away ...
He could have [illegible] But he didn't ...
And I clung to the boat ...

This was the Edmund was heroic ...
the same, always alive in
my mind: Edmund pressing,
the only person in the
small drawing room, [illegible] down in the
boat, other down [illegible] Edmund, at
dinner talk ... this time he
the piano: at his first N.Y. recital
(Mastered to play it at his [illegible] recital
Chopin ... Then, the
shock of the Yorgidis,
declamation ... The same
moment. Ship sailed
sideways! water now
the dark ... the diamond
so calm: you know the
way he is ... Smiling ... Oh,
in his white, flared
the smile face ...

Marceline:(still sobbing:)
I don't give a dam...

Kenneth: You shouldn't talk to yourself, anyhow. Or is there somebody around? (He looks around, shyly and respectfully.) Did your dear one come through, after all? I mean, did he materialize at last?

Marceline:(painfully irritated:) No, he certainly didn't. Miss McUlster promised me he would, but he didn't. Father promised me too. They all either. lied to me. There was no materialization. And there never will be one,

Kenneth: (with a certain gravity:) Don't say such ugly things, Marceline You know better. Don't you remember the magnificent materialization that Indian medium managed to bring about? It took him weeks, even months. One has to be very patient if one wants to do, or to witness, a good job in this particular field. And when I say, "a good job", I don't mean just some floating smoke in which you may, or may not, recognize the features of your dear one on the other side. I mean an adequate, neat performance when all the sitters present recognize presently the ~~voice and the appearance~~ identity of the apparition. I recall one glorious séance in Boston, with old Murphy as medium and Pythago= ras acting as his control spirit...

Marceline: (still exceedingly nervous:) Yes, I've heard the story. You went there with Dad to attend a Congress of the Psychic Society. The séance took place after the opening ceremonies. Alexander the Great came through, and Pastor Saur from New Haven, Connecticut. It must have been a truly great experience. Unfortunately, we were less successful tonight.

Kenneth: (despondent:) Well, you know what a lot of preparation is needed on the inner plane before one can ~~venture on~~ expect even the most familiar and most docile spirit to materialize. Of course, every real medium is in a position to produce the ectoplasm necessary for

GHOSTS

I

Ruth's arrival in California. Met at the station by Madame Julia van Nessroff, whom she knew in London. Describing of both ladies and their respective backgrounds: Ruth's tragedy (flash back: the torpedoed boat; her young husband - Peter Perutz: a Czech pianist; his death; the unspeakable hours on the bottomless bark; why did she cling to life??) - The ~~slow~~ shadows in Julia's life: her affair with MynheerTer Bragge, who is not in a position to marry her, because of Mevrouw Ter Bragge... However, there are consolations.... First hint at the "experiments."

Ruth moves into the Santa Monica house - picked out and furnished by Madame van Nessroff.

Diary. (Memories of Peter. Longing. Loneliness. Landscape. War.)

II

First dinner with Mr. & Mrs. Ter Brugge and Julia van Nessroff. They explain the ghost ~~situation~~ situation. [Frau von Baalen]
Ruth, irritated, has harmless car accident.
Entrance, Jim. Offers services as chauffeur.

Diary. (Jim. Ghosts. Reminiscences of own forebodings, sensitivities.)

III

Jim. His draft situation. (Marriage. "Dependence." His mother cult.)

First seance with the Ter Brugges. Peter fails to answer. Other unwished-for dead interfere (Aunt Lula, etc.)

The Hungarian admirer - Kobes. Ridicules spiritualism. His Marxism and martyrdom. (Concentration camp tales etc.)

Jim attacks Ruth. She refuses, scolds him, but does not fire him.

Diary.

IV

Mrs. Ter Brugge establishs contact with Peter.
Following, family scene between Mdame Van Nessroff and her.

Kobes tries to unmask Mrs. Ter Brugge. Fails.

Diary. (Increasingly involved in ghost sphere. At the same time, Jim attraction. (Contrast.) Quarrels. Discussions.

V

Peter's invisible visits. Yet unsatisfactory.
Embarrassing situation at the Ter Brugges. Julia begins to flirt with Jim, which irritates Ruth.
Arrival of Signor Cecconi, who promises to "materialize" the dead.
His medium - paralyzed.(Miss Nathan.)

Diary.

"5th Columnist" by Ter Bragge. Unmasked as (Suicide!)

Mevrouw Ter Brugge ~~[illegible]~~ Julia
de Valentina Medium.

Johnny's mother dies:
he goes "home" to natural
necrophiliac
incestuous life.
Cops go back with him:
condition, that
"collaborate" with her.

Th. attempts of
Peter, Mother. He
wrath: "Sin."
Andreas Johnny to
kill Eva.

THE DESERTERS

Three Acts.

* * *

Characters:

Professor Van Loyden
Marceline Krofta, his daughter (widow of a Czech pianist)
Miss Alice McUlster, his housekeeper and secretary
Max, his butler
Polly, his Negro cook
Princess Frolevska, from St. Petersburg
~~Kodernath Das Lepta, from Calcutta~~
Fifi Larue, an aesthete, from Paris
Peter Brack, a novelist, from London
Jo O'Matty, a poet, from Dublin
Toy and Ted, the twin children of an industrialist, from Los Angeles
~~Kenneth Jackson, a young man, from the Middle West~~
Two FBI Men
Johnny

*

The Time: 1942
The Place: Professor Van Loyden's Country House in Southern California

Scenery: A large living room ~~simply but~~ elegantly furnished. There is a pianoforte, an open fire place, a phonograph built into the wall, ~~fine carpets~~, etc. No touch of cheapness or eccentricity. Flowers, two antique busts in the corners.
To the left ~~there is~~ a broad glass door to the garden, of which a few palm trees are visible. To the left, a smaller door to the lobby and to the staircase. The background is dominated by a big folding door, which leads to a smaller room full of books - the Professor's library.

~~The Dead don't Care~~

* * *

Three Acts

* *

Persons

Characters:

Professor James Van Loyden, Philosopher and Sociologist, Winner of the Nobel Prize for Peace
Marceline Krofta, his Daughter, Widow of a Czech Pianist
Kenneth Jackson, his Disciple and Secretary
~~Max, his Butler and Housekeeper~~ Miss Alice McUlster
Prince Igor Frolevsko, from St. Peterburg
Princess Anna Frolevsko, his Wife, from Budapest
Peter Brack, a Novelist, from London
Fifi Larue, an Aesthete, from Paris
Jo O'Matty, ~~a Poet~~, from Dublin
Kodornath Das Lopta, a Teacher in Yogi Gymnastics, ~~from Calcutta~~
Toy and Ted, the Twin Children of a wealthy Industrialist, from Pitts=burgh
Mr. Miller, from the FBI
A Policeman
Polly, a Negro Cook
~~Peggy and Porgi, her little girl and her little boy~~
~~Miss Alice McUlster, a Medium~~
Johnny

**

Time: 1942

Place: Professor Van Loyden's Country House in Southern California

Scene: (for the whole play): A large room of dignified, somewhat austere character - resembling a solemn meeting hall rather than a drawing room. The foreground and the middle of the scene are empty, except for a few chairs and a tall, shaded lamp. In the background, there is a pianoforte, a large phonograph built into the wall, and another group of chairs arranged around a round table. ~~Both piano and table are lavishly adorned~~ adorned with roses beautifully presented in flat, open crystal bowls. Another small table is covered with voluminous books.
In the middle of the background, a large folding door flanked by two portly bronxe statues representing Plato and Dante. To the left, there is a broad glass door to the garden. The door can be covered with a heavy curtain of dark velvet. When the curtain is drawn back, however, one sees through the door a picturesque, park-like landscape, with palm trees in the foreground and a blue stripe in the background - the Pacific Ocean.
To the right, a smaller door to the lobby and to the staircase.
Over the middle door, there is a conspicuous inscription in scarlet letters framed by sumptuous ornaments of flowers and little angels. The inscription reads: GOD IS LOVE.

Das Lopta : (motion(11) sit-1.)

Say something!

Johnny!

Hi! Tom! Bomb Tom!
Hi! Louis! .... Ar
ue! mark ou something?
Don't you feel anything?
.... Hi! Tom! (Hi
slap him face (it's about
at him:) I'll make
you talk, I'll make
you talk ....

Act one: (Evening)

1.) Marceline enter from background. Stops phonograph. Weeps. Kenneth Jackson foolows her. Dialogue about Father, Alice, the Farm, etc. ~~Towards end, Max visible; opens door.~~ They discuss Alicen's failure in evoking husband's ghost. Kenneth about his military status. His qualms. - ~~Max~~ Lola opens the door from inside. Children left by.

2.) Rest of the party enter in little groups: the Twins, Prince and Princess Frolevsko, Peter Prack, Fifi Larue, Jo O'Matty, Das Lopta.) General conversation - later joined by Alice and the Professor. Alice explains her failure; accuses Marceline. Professor, mildly reproachful to Marceline. She leaves. Party dissolves.

3.) Professor and Kenneth. He discloses his intention to join Army. Dialogue. Professor refers to Gospel dictated to him by his late wife. to nurse Alice

4.) Marceline returns; reports, Alice is better. Kenneth leaves, to pack his things.

5.) Marceline - Professor. Philosophic dialogue. - Persuades her to play husband's record again. Withdraws as she sits listening.

6.) Music. Johnny's entrance. Sailors uniform. ~~Bleeding; bitten by dogs.~~ Marceline: "So you come from down there..." (Submarine.) Tells about ~~death~~ of his mother. His wandering about. Furlough almost over. Hungry. Max brings food. Waiter.

Attitude ~~II A.~~ Served by Negro kids.

7.) Johnny ~~eating~~. Visited, first by the Frolevskos and Fifi Larue. Then by the Twins. Then by Peter Brack. (Conversations with each individually revealing his respective interests, background etc.) Then with O'Matty, who offers him liquor. Both drinking; joined by Kenneth, who is ready to leave.

8.) ~~Drinking~~ scene. Johnny discloses his mediumistic abilities. Overheard by Marceline. Short dialogue between them.

(under a row of saloons)

***

Act Two: (Next noon)

1.) Alice and ~~Polly~~ (with her five children). Alice scolding her for failure. Polly, fresh. Can find better job. Leaves with kids.

2.) Alice - Das Lopta. She begs him to give her free. Worried because of cook, ~~etc.~~ her inabbility to produce husband's ghost, etc. Das Lopta, brutally intransigent.

3.) Both joined by Princess Frolevsko. Political conspiracy.

4.) ~~The ensemble; have to cook lunch themselves; excitement....~~

5.) Alice, Das Lopas ~~Marceline~~-Johnny. She wants him to evoke ghost; he wants to sleep with her. Now. She: "There is no time...."

Darkness... :time passes:...Johnny bewtiched...

Marceline, in the background...

X

He has corrupted her mediumship: formerly she did not deprave on tricks.

Alina, behind Johnny, with
Das Lasagas next to her, looking
her shoulder.

11 Days will pass ... more,
moon, dusk / evening ... [The
light changes as she talks. I
You will not realize it.
There is always Marcelina,
The bride of the window, gazing at the sea
Marcelina sitting at the window / Your dress
Marcelina / ... The will stances, and
You will last: a: part. You
You will / Johnny / You
are enchanted / You are in
hell and you / You are under a spell
Your You forget your duty.
You ~~do~~ Sink into apathy ...

6.) The Séance... Trumpets, etc.
The ghost, ~~invisible~~ hands, plays piano...
Police. (Polly's denunciation.)

Act Three (Twins)

1.) The FBI Examination of the Princess, Das Lopta (alias Baron von Hardenberg), Alice, the Professor, etc. Searching vocab.

2.) Johnny and Marceline. She forces him to continue materialization. He refuses; yields. Warns her not to touch apparition. She does it all the same. He kills her.

3.) ~~Meanwhile~~, Detonation of a pistol shot; uproar in the building: ~~Alice has shot herself~~. Voices, police, etc. - Simultaneously, Johnny's monologue and prayer.

4.) Professor ~~discovers dead~~ enters to tell Marceline about Alice's suicide. Johnny: "You're fooling yourself again, old man. She doesn't hear you...." Or maybe she hears you, but she doesn't care. The dead don't care."

VOCABULARY: [Dr. Edwin F. Bowers.]

.... supernormal communication...

.... those who have graduated from our plane...

..... the study of p s y c h i c p h e n o m e n a .....

TRANCE...: cataleptic sleep...
(catalepsy = "a condition of peculiar muscular rigidity in which the body and limbs keep any position in which they are placed)

breathing stertorously...
(characterized by a deep snoring, as in apoplexy...)

rendered anaesthetic...
(anesthesia = entire or partial loss of feeling and sesation; a state of paralysis of the sensory apparatus produced by dis= ease, hyphotism, etc....)

D e d i c a t i o n , "To those Dear Spirits..."

***

....an experience unique in the history of psychic annals...;

unknown in psychiatrical symptomatology...

.....

((X was thunderstruck...))

....

" Y's little familiar spirit"

....

B.'s seances

....

.... he saw a w h i t e s h a p e....

the medium's guides

.... a female form floated out....

TELEPLASM

..... the face not fully materialized...

Pytagoras, a frequent "visitor" at B.'s seances...

→ ""Then RR, who in life had been a....., "came through"..."" ←

.....

experience in materialization, independent voice, and telekinesis

....

..... B. was e n t r a n c e d..... *

(((("By my developed friend, Sir XYZ")))

...."How will the spirit-baiters explain this?"...

....

"under conditions of strictest control"

.....

regarded as Münchausen yarns...
(a lot of hot air, hooey, etc.)

....

"under the influence of auto-suggestion".....

********** psychic research

....: "guided by enormous hands"......

"...one that had materialized out of something less than thin air and went back into the same nothingness."

The observer is... lifted toward the ceiling... levitated by ghosts

((The ghost i d e n t i f i e d himself as Aunt Carla...))

TWO TRUMPETS began to move around the room.....
....his knees were struck alternately with a steady rhythm of taps.....

A steady banter was kept up between the ghost and the sitters.....

soft rubbery and boneless hands

((an old alchemist, dead these two hundred years...))

((((***"scoffing at results does not explain them..."***))))

.....an illuminated TELEPATHIC IMAGE.....

..... the APPARITION then disappeared, after being visible for about a minute....

"MEDIUM", (W. H. Evans):

The purpose of Death:... The practice of mediumship brings to those to exercise its powers new views of life and death....

→ close co-operation of spirit-guides ←

(Death regarded by many - obtuse and foolish Babbits - as cessation of existence...)

------many planes of life------:

Life tends to increase its number of forms and expressions....

A X I O M :
It is only forms which perish; life never dies.

.... Death...: an aspect of eternal change...

The whole process, not wanton, but orderly (!!), serving some great purpose.

A X I O M:
behind Nature is Living Spirit: everything is an expression of IT.

Hierarchy..:

I died to the mineral and became a plant; I died to the plant and became an animal; I died to the animal and became a man. Wherefore should I fear death? When did I become less by dying?"
((But how about the question of individuality? Does man remember his identity as a cat? And if not, what is identity? What survival??))

The Process of Death:
.... things observed by those possessing the clairvoyant faculty...

Certain spirits whose duty it is to help the soul in its passing - trained for their work...(Metaphysical midwives...)

((T h o s e w h o w a t c h o v e r u s...))
He will, if his life has been evil, be in self-created darkness. If too close to material things, he won't realize the change which has taken place, and may think he is still on earth..... (????)

Detailed description:
The formation of another head - indescribably compact and intensely brilliant...
.... the entire spiritual organization...
.... the defects and deformities of the physical ALMOST completely removed in the spiritual body...

DEATH = BIRTH....(("a bright stream of current of vital electricity = the umbilical cord...)

The next stage of existence is one that is as real as our own.
(Friends on the other side insist it's even more intense...)

The environment "over there", more responsive to our wills than here.. But by no means completely. "Think of the confusion if there were no stability! Suppose everyone's would outer world were different from every other?"

***

SPIRITUALISM as form of idealism:
"Behind the phenomena of the universe is One Reality. All that exists is an expression of it, form being its presentation in time."

((M o r a l implications. GOOD & EVIL...: "Evil" is a problem set for our solution..."))

A X I O M :
GOD IS LOVE

.... In the age we have entered we shall witness the mastery of mind over matter....

***

P r e - E x i s t e n c e
....(Materialist regards body the SOUL as the sum total of our bodily functioning...)

....
Free choice??? ("We cannot, at present, know the degree of en= lightenment which souls have before making their choice.")

((----- We may persist as conscious individuals only at last to become absorbed in God ------))

"One feels the need of a view of life which makes effort worth while."
(Metaphysical career....)

U n i v e r s a l S u b s t a n c e...:
existing prior to its manifestations as suns, planets, etc.
L i f e & M i n d being omnipresent are inherent in universal substance, as the principles of organization...

A X I O M :
It is the impulsion of the Divine Thought, which is creative.

.... Throughout the universe we find its rhythm is based on the m u s i c a l o c t a v e.....

S E V E N P L A N E S:

.....he experimented with a great many luminescent compounds...

***

The nasty Magicians...:

JOSEPH DUNNINGER - the Wizard of the Bronx... HARRY HOUDINI .....

says: "any child of three can do it - after thirty years of practice"

((To the Editor of THE PSYCHIC WORLD MONTHLY))

...."a marvelous performance of juggling a trumpet with luminous bands at superhuman speed all over the room"....

.... Medium released from a closed, locked, and doubly-sealed mail sack...

"Jim Riley - Master Materializing Medium"

"I want my medium to sit for materialization..." (Ghost requires...)

((SIR WILLIAM CROOKS, greatest among physicists of the last century...))
(His wife sees ghosts...)

....

"For he was protected by spirit guides who saw to it that he was never molested....."

MALIGNANT SPIRITS ("Poltergeists"):

"We'll hurt this man if you don't stop your sittings..."

.... throwing things .....
..... bedeviling the place....
.... malignant entities...
(get rid of them by turning a brilliant flash light directly upon them)

that dear life to come...: -
the life that only spiritists can know anything about, while on this earth plane....

DEATH is just a change, a dropping away of the physical body; we put it off, as we put off a suit of clothes...

.... there is abundant happiness for all; there is immeasurable forgiveness....

...."There is no h e l l but that which lies within the spirit itself. One does not make amends, or receives forgiveness in a moment, in a day, or in two days.....
"The spirits who follow evil are not punished as we understand punishment, but they are not happy"....

(THE UNOBSTRUCTED UNIVERSE) :::

"The message is what is important...the message and the fact that we are able to give it: not you."

((Ghosts around...

: the cozy, intimate feeling of companionship...))

In this life: individuals more or less muffled from each other by the barriers of encasement in the body...

..... more than compensated for the little fact (!!) that she stepped across...

Our friends on the other side

.... where Betty went after her body died...

X [.... All evening I had a sense of Betty...] X

.....:

"...we 'dead are changed; glorified with our own immortality."

"..... Oh, my dear, my dear! Earth-life would have no point, would be too much to ask of man, without immortality!"

Formerly: man conceived the thereness of immortality; now:

the h e r e n e s s of immortality, entirely and triumphantly real....

***

INFINITY we do not, cannot, understand, for the supreme degree is beyond our comprehension...

..... to overcome the Newtonian physics...

No "absolute". (("Consciousness, the reality of the entire universe, is in e v o l u t i o n; what is in evolution can NOT be an 'absolute.' "))

TIME - SPACE - MOTION: the co-existent trilogy of the obstructed universe (Earth).

The co-existent trilogia of the unobstructed universe:
Receptivity (= essence of Time)
Conductivity (= essence of Space) (=power of transmitting, as heat, electricity, etc)
Frequency (=the essence of Motion) (= in harmonic motions, the number of vibrations or cycles in a unit of time.)

3 Aspects:
Ordinary Time:
Psychological Time:
"Third Time":

The Fourth Dimension

The higher frequence of the ghosts: like electric sparks...:

"Your obstacles are not obstacles to me..."
(That's why they can rush around the world so rapidly...)

.... Outmoded empirical knowledge.....

(("How's the cosmos?" he asked lazily.
"Gathering no moss," flashed Betty.))

[Ruth is rather disgusting. Doesn't want her Pitrow to be so snarky and apodictic. A ghost that talks like a flippant governess ....]

the medium as the r e c e i v i n g s t a t i o n .....

.... the earthly a r r e s t m e n t...:
sometimes we are being lifted out of ourselves by great music...
Under the spell of art we escape our encirclement:...
"urged as we are by our deepest nature to break through whatever it is that confines us....."

The human race has come to a point in evolution where

"consciousness must be ploughed."

The British College for Psychic Science

...."you are potentially a t r a n c e m e d i u m of great power"...

(TRANce, a condition dependent on an extreme passivity of mind...)

The controlling entity...: uses the medium's mechanism whilst he is apparently asleep
(His C O N T R O L was.....)

(((The control "came through"...)))

poltergeist phenomena....

A poltergeist manifestation is known to take place....

the s i t t e r s

The medium receives VISIONS - difficult to translate into words...
(trance communications)

GHOST STORY (First Version)

The room was almost completely dark. Nobody moved - except Miss Alice, the medium, who writhed in her chair as in throes. The "sitters" - 12 or 14 of them, mostly elderly women - seemed petrified by suspense. ~~It happened~~ This was an exceptional ~~and most exciting~~ event - most exciting indeed to the West Los Angeles Psychic Circle. For it happened but rarely that Miss Alice - one of the more successful trance mediums in this neighbourhood - agreed to venture on a ~~materialization~~ séance experiment. In general she flatly refused to do so - ~~not so much in order to avoid the terrific efforts~~ mostly in order to spare the feelings of "her" friends on the other side." "My spirits ~~just~~ don't like it - that's all," Miss Alice would say. ~~- gently but positively. They~~ It seems useless to them to materialize, - just to satisfy a childish whim of ours. My developed Teacher, Cicero, told me the other day that he suffers ~~indescribably~~ horribly when he has to appear. ~~Of course, they are spoiled over there.~~ They are so light, so free... ~~no body, no weight, no pain...~~"

Miss Alice got along without ~~materializations, and other~~ more spectacular devices, such as "direct voice communications" ~~through phosphorescent trumpets~~ during a séance.... Her séances were ~~fairly successful~~, thanks to her dignified, ~~impressive~~ engaging personality. She was tall and slender - a well-preserved woman in ~~her~~ the middle of her forties, not really pretty with her long ~~and~~ bony face, but elegant and attractive.

She contented herself, as a rule, with communicating the messages she received from the spirit world.

~~No apparatus~~

Sitting behind an ~~table~~ arrangement of flowers,
she made conversations
with "the dead ones who
have passed across". There
was nothing dramatic, only
normal about it. Yet ...

Watching her in the street, one might have taken her for a smart, resilient business woman - say, the manager of a publishing house or local chain of movie theaters. At home, however, when she received her customers - "my little flock," as she was wont to say - she appeared transformed into a priestess dressed in fancy garment of heavy green satin, lavishly adorned with Oriental bracelets, rings, chains, and shawls. embroidered, She remained Even her gait and smile became solemn and sacerdotal to remain in keeping with her pompous outfit. But her conduct and speech were all the more unassuming, even humble. ...."I am just a receiving station," she would say - apologetically. And, all conscientious accuracy, she conveyed the messages reaching her from the other side spirit world. higher planes.

Page 1, front and back

Tonight, however,

For this particular séance, however, materializations were scheduled - mainly for the sake of

A Sorrow, made possible thanks to Tranter on the other side ...

She enjoyed doing it
Mozart and Haydn like
to admonish the listener
flock to hear a good
simple life ... : Clean
"Does dress mess on the other
side, wear your clean!
side wear disgusted
See this as fleshly desires —
with one this woman be
or wanted "I it was not
disgusted Christian Carnality for and
for Yhrist's Compassion
man stands ... Let's be
clean with friends!
clean my heart by ...
she s-gusted
As for his, woman on his
to be Especially be for she
life. to bear about sat for

She underwent a complicated
~~[illegible]~~ symptoms of Asiatic
HYSTERIA.

Everybody in the room —
all experiment ~~[illegible]~~
knows — was familiar
with the character of these
phenomena .... The terrific effort
necessary to produce ...

play, 29.

Also, everybody knows now,
for whose sake, Miss Alice
~~[illegible]~~ gave this performance
My was at
performance .....
for The Savoie .....
there she was — a delicate
silhouette in the dark
darkness ..... ~~[illegible]~~ sinister, all
reflected in mirrors, all
life focussed in eyes ....

early sixties - some of them even older. Professor Van Loyden, for one, in whose house the séance took place, was at least seventy - a brisk and bright-eyed little gentleman with a pink, clever face effectively framed by a mane of white, feathery hair.

"That's perfectly all right, my dear child," said Professor Van L. - his penetrating blue eyes wandering swiftly to and fro between his old friend and collaborator, Miss Alice McUlster, and his restive guest, Mrs. Marceline Sartre, née Pilliver. "Per= fectly all right," he repeated, in a soft, soothing voice - fixing his steely eyes, for one tense moment, on Miss Alice's sightless, motionless brow.

"Thanks, Professor," Mrs. Sartre said, with a sweet, weary smile. She was extremely attractive - at once fragil and regal in her mourning dress, with the delicate and haughty profile of an antique gem. Hers was the nonchalant self-assurance of a woman used to be spoiled because of her looks and wealth (M. was the heiress of an impressive American fortune); but her tragic eyes and the weariness of her smile told a different story. No doubt, this superbly fastidious creature was versed in suffering, she had loved, and had been deprived of the one she was in love with.

He was a French pianist, world-famous, two years younger than she. They got married a few months before the outbreak of the War, in 1939. In October, they embarked from England to Canada. The liner on which they crossed the Atlantic was torpedoed by a German U-Boat. Marceline saved her life with astounding courage & energy; Sartre was drowned - she witnessed his agony.

- clinging to a battered rafting life boat for almost 48 hours;

She had seen him die but she refused to believe that he was dead. "He can't be dead," she insisted, with disarming obstinacy. "I am alive - they say. But how could I live without him? He is my soul, my life. I love him. I don't believe he is dead."

She had several nervous breakdowns and paid fabulous fees to a number of distinguished psychiatrists. The doctors suggested that Mrs. S. was possessed by a fixed idea, in consequence of the terrific ~~shock she had pa~~ experience she had passed through. They sent her to expensive sanatoriums; she was psychoanalyzed and underwent an electric shock cure. It was all in vain. ~~She abided by her belief that~~ Finally she discovered spiritualism.

~~The spiritualists were more helpful and more understanding than those tiresome and greedy psychiatrists.~~ The young widow was overjoyed to ~~meet people who agreed with her that the dead were not really dead. She found~~ her daring dreams surprisingly confirmed and systematized. How reassuring ~~and agreeable~~ it sounded ~~to~~ Marceline when the initiated members of the spiritua. Church told her, in a patronizing, matter-of-fact ~~way~~ manner: "But there is no such thing as death - naturally not. What the ignorant are wont to call death is just a change of our physical condition. A simple transformation - that's what it is; a dropping away our material body. We put it off, as we putt off a suit of clothes. It is only forms that perish; life never dies."

She liked to think of her beloved Bernard floating about on elevated planes - disembodied but essentially unchanged, with sensitive hands, white tie, spectacles, and everything, ~~He was more handsome than ever~~, always surrounded by waves of super= natural harmonies. ~~A thoughtful husband, even in the spirit world,~~ Sometimes he was very close to her! 4

he composed messages for his little wife. The messages, at times solemnly obscure, at other times almost merry - were conveyed through the transmission of professional mediums who went into trance in order to communicate with the late pianist.

M. was grateful to Spiritualism but she disliked mediums. They were such pretentious bores, most of them - and she had tried out quite a few of them, between Brooklyn and Beverly Hills. It irritated Marceline beyond words - indeed, it offended her pride - that he should depend on a third person to communicate with the man she loved. If he was able to talk to anyone in the world - why didn't he talk to her? Of course, logically she was able to grasp , from a purely logical point of view, the indispensable function of those human "receiving stations." After all, you couldn't communicate directly, even on our earthly plane, with those you wish to address but who happen to be away. You need the medium of a telephone to reach them, orsome other intrument of transmission - mail, radio, telegraph. It was the same thing, apparently, with the spirit world. Bernard, since he passed over, needed a medium, alas, to come in contact with her.

Sometimes she would sense his presence in her drawing room, there he was, his beloved vibrations caressed her delicate skin. But he seemed unable to speak to her nor did he ever become visible. His silent, invisible visits were very sweet but at the time utterly distressing.

-4-

She believed in Alice. Alice could do it,
if anyone ...
So this was the great
moment. Commanded ... gloaming ...
..... Swaying to and fro ... into the
Act of your life. pleasant
A melancholy Shadow :
Mrs. Rosenberg's light
daughter — Lily light - weight or
gracious heavy - weight
Slavonic-Nata Alexandrian in
a music-hall program ...
presented before great
attraction ...

" What is your face ... ?
weight Mrs. Rosenberg.
Lilith Mary dissolved ...
..... " Music from the depth of
whispers Moonshine
by Yeats ... "
Sonata ...

One medium them – like
telephone, etc.
They know all the
topics to come in contact
with the spirit world ...
trained viewers stations.

Employ. skilfully
transmits ("direct voice
communications") i.e. com-
spirit with " (w.-
trained statements ...).

And then, of course,
the was always the
way, although that
a materialization would
finally come through.

If Miss Alice had writhed and groaned when producing the ectoplastic spectre of Mrs. Rosenberg's deceased little daughter, she became ~~uncannily peaceful~~ strangely calm as she tried to evoke the dis=embodied entity that used to be called Bernard Sartre. Her face - motionless and sightless - appeared transfigured in a kind of supernatural peace. She smiled; the upper part of her body swayed slightly according to the rhythm of the music.

Only sign of stress = perspiration on the forehead.

~~Breathless~~ The audience - breathless with expectation... Music stopped... One could hear Marceline's whisper...: "Chéri.. my love, mon choux, darling darling darling... Please, materialize! Just a little bit! Please, please, please... It may be inconvenient, but you don't know what it means to me... It means <u>everything</u> to me..."

~~Music began again.~~

Mrs. Potter - with a little scream: "There... ~~near~~ at the piano... his hands..."

And, indeed - there it was again - the nebulous formation - even more blurred than before - shapeless, floating...

Marceline - surprisingly: "No!..." Then she covered her mouth like a school girl who uttered something rash and dangerous...

The hazy apparition presently faded away... Marceline whimpered, "Come back! Let me see your face..." while Miss Alice moved her arms in a peculiar fashion - executing swinging circles as though swimming...

From the depth... from the ground of the sea...

Another sitter - the English writer - : "There it comes again... Most extraordinary..."

At this moment - noise from the door... Not a knocking: rather sounded as if somebody were falling against the door...

"What's that?" - Scream rose from the audience...

Mrs. Potter: "A 'Poltergeist'..."

Door flung open... Young man stumbled into the room... Almost fell; regained his equilibrium... (DESCRIPTION, P. 35)

Said, with a heavy tongue: "Hello, folks..." He was terribly drunk, no doubt...

Miss Alice opened wide, innocent eyes. "Who are you?" she asked - all dignity and disapproval.

He guffawed. "Who I am? That's a good one..."

"Why, if you don't recognize me, honey, let's have some light..."

Turned electric light on - glaring, after the darkness.

Alice - in an ominously lowered voice: "Get out of here!"

"Nope," he said. "Want to meet your friends. Most of them are pretty elderly, though..."

"He's evidently insane," somebody suggested.

"If you try to say I'm nuts," the boy said, "No Sirie, I ain't. Now, come, old girl," he addressed himself to Miss Alice, "why don't you introduce me to your ~~party~~? They'll want to know who I am... Ladies and gents," he announced, ~~with a jaunty motion of~~ his arm - bowing jauntily to the party. I'm Johnny... the boy friend of that gorgeous creature there... or rather, one of her boy friends...

"Johnny! You are really mad!" .... Alice - shaking, white with horror, lost all her poise...

"Do you think I am, handsome?" He addressed himself ~~suddenly~~ to Marceline.

"No...," she said. "I don't know..." She had stared at him since he had entered the room... flabbergasted, bewitched...

"What's that?" - Scream rose from the audience...

Mrs. Potter: "A 'Poltergeist'..."

Door flung open... Young man stumbled into the room... Almost fell; regained his equilibrium... [illegible]

(DESCRIPTION, p. [illegible])

Said, with a heavy tongue: "Hello, folks..." He was terribly drunk, no doubt...

Miss Alice opened wide, innocent eyes. "Who are you?" she asked [illegible]

[illegible] and disapprovingly.

He frowned. "Who am I and? That's a good one...

"Why, if you don't recognize me, honey, let's have some light..."

Turned electric light on - glaring, after the darkness.

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"Johnny! You are really mad!" ... Alice's shaking, white with horror, lost all her poise...

"Do you think I am, handsome? He addressed himself exclusively to Marcelline.

"No...," she said. "I don't know..." She had stared at him since he had entered the room... flabbergasted, bewitched...

Marceline Sartre, née Pilliver - heiress of one of America's

"Perfectly all right," he repeated - fixing his eyes, for one tense moment, on Miss Alice's sightless, brow.

"Thank you ever so much, Professor," Mrs. Sartre said, with a smile that was at once sweet and weary. She looked strikingly beautiful - fragile and delicate —

"You're mighty pretty," he said, very softly - sobered, as it were, by her cool, perfect beauty. "What are you doing here?"

She ~~kept looking at him - very hard~~... her eyes fixed on him... "It's incredible," she said at last. "He looks exactly as he.... The sailor whose life I saved..."

Miss Alice, who had regained her dignity: "Have to beg your pardon for this incredible incident... Young man used to attend my séances... Had to throw him out because of his bad behaviour... You can see, he is heavily intoxicated..."

Johnny, without looking at her, all absorbed in Marceline: "Bunch of lies..."

Miss Alice:..." I am particularly sorry because of dear Marceline. Materialization was on the point of coming through..."

The young man, to Marceline: "Was you waiting for some spook, too?"

Did not answer.

"Mustn't do such things. It's sin, you know. And then, why should you fool around with them ghosts? What have they got I haven't got. A dead guy ain't good for nothing... You just waste your time..."

Marceline groand as if in pain. Closed her eyes, seemed on the point of fainting...

He propped her with his big, heavy end. She shuddered. "Don't touch me..."

He grinned... "Why, my hand has more weight than them ghost hands..."

"Please, don't!" Marceline repeated - helpless under ~~the~~ grip. And Miss Alice - standing erect behind the flower table, in suppressed, woeful voice: "Johnny! Please!"

He did not look at her as he said - unsmilingly: "You shut up. very gallantly!
You have your ghosts..." Then, turning to Marceline again: "This young lady don't feel so good. I'd better take her home."

Alice - a statue of sorrow and frustration - petrified .... She looked very old - as she ~~stared after Johnny and Marceline...~~ watched Johnny leading M. towards the open door.

Marceline shook her head in a despairing, silent protest. But she did not resist when Johnny got hold of her arm

— hypnotized, as if

(Second Version)

The room was almost completely dark. Nobody moved - except Miss Alice, who writhed in her chair as in throes. The "sitters" - twelve or fourteen of them, mostly elderly women - seemed petrified by suspense. Everybody was slightly shocked when Mrs. Potter whispered: "Do you sense the vibrations? That's Ectoplasm, all right. I can smell it; can't you?" Whereupon Mrs. Rosenberg, rather crossly: "Of course not. Ectoplasm is an odourless energy. Stop talking. My little daughter on the other side is so easily hurt by any tactless remark."At this point, a louder, more tor= mented groan came from Miss Alice. Evidently, she was on the point of bringing about a veritable materialization.

This was an exceptional event - most exciting indeed to the West Los Angeles Intimate Psychic Circle. For it happened but rarely that Miss Alice McUlster - one of the most successful trance mediums in this neighbourhood - agreed to venture on such an experiment. In general she flatly refused to do so - mainly in order to spare the feelings of her "friends on the other side." "My spirits just don't <u>like</u> to materialize - that's all," Miss Alice would explain - gently but positively. "The ectoplastic masquerade is a nuisance to them. And isn't it natural, once you come to think of it? They're perfectly happy the way they are, over there, on their ethereal plane - weightless, ~~pure~~, disembodied. Why should they bother to materialize when they can communicate with us as pure spirits?"

It was Miss Alice's mission and profession to receive, and to transmit her customers, messages from the other world. As a rule, she did not even need to go into a deep trance for that purpose;

she just concentrated - sitting with closed eyes and, if possible, in physical contact with an object that used to belong to the expected ghost when he (or she) still sojurned on our material plane. It did not take long, in most cases, until Miss Alice could smilingly and noddingly acknowledge the whisper of supernatural voices - audible only to her sensitive, well-trained ears. "Yes, Mr. Potter... Hello...," she would say, in a light, conversational tone; and, turning her sightless face to Mr. Potter's widow: "Julia dear, it's your husband... yes... he blesses you..." Then, with a sudden giggle: "Oh, dear me! Mr. Potter! How very naughty of you!" And, one minute later, very serious again: "Yes, Mr. Potter... of course... I'll tell her... Quite right..." Mrs. Potter would listen avidly as Miss Alice delivered a little message from the late Mr. Potter (he had died seventeen years ago), to the effect that he didn't think much of the wallpaper his wife had chosen for the bath room in her new flat in Pasadena. "I'm sorry for you," Miss Alice would add when the fastidious ghost had withdrawn at last. "But that's the way he feels about it. It's not my fault, you know. I am just the receiving station..."

The messages from the spirit world were usually of a practical, simple kind. Far from being haughty and aloof, the "dear ones on the other side" sent their bit of sensible advice as regards financial investments, medical treatment and the choice of furni= ture. Miss Alice - a reliably efficient secretary - conveyed clever tips and reasonable warnings from beyond the grave. "There is no= thing to it," she would say - all serene modesty. "Anybody can be a medium, if he has the neccessary moral integrity and the right kind of vibrations..."

No doubt, there were mediums in Los Angeles who performed more spectacular feats. As for Miss Alice's séances, their success was primarily due to certain engaging and impressive features of her personality. The whole Intimate Psychic Circle worshipped her. She was more than just a gifted medium: she was a confessor, a spiritual leader. "She is such a clean human being - isn't she?" the elderly ladies said. And the celebrated English novelist who attended occasionally her Tuesday-evening séances, confirmed their enthusiasm by murmumring - vaguely but suggestively -: "Most extraordinary, indeed..."

She was tall and slender - a well-preserved woman in the middle of her forties; not pretty, with her long, bony face, but elegant and attractive. Seeing her in the street, one might have taken her for a smart, efficient business woman - say, the editor of a fashionable magazine or the manager of a chain of local movie theaters. At home, however, when she received her friends and customers - "my little flock," as she liked to call them - she appeared transformed into an exotic priestess - racy and regal in a fancy garment of heavy gold-brown satin, lavishly adorned with Oriental bracelets and embroidered shawls. Even her gait and smile became solemn and sacerdotal to be in keeping with her pompously whimsical outfit.

After the séance, there would be a buffet with iced tea and sandwiches (included in the $ 3 admission) and the hostess would make conversation. Queen-like and affable, she strode through the modest drawing room - honoring her guests with cordial, motherly questions and bits of inspired advice. The spinsters and widows nodded respectfully when Miss Alice - all lofty poise and serenety - repeated to them what she had learned, in her turn,