

# Suave Succubus

a new comedy by  
Clint Jefferies

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## CAST OF CHARACTERS

- Betsy Taylor: An attractive woman of 35 or so. Rich and pampered. Not terribly nice.
- Mark Taylor: Her husband. 30's, good looking. Built. Easy going and pleasant. Loaded.
- Mr. Thomas: 40 - 60 Born and bred New England with the accent to match.
- Mrs. O'Riley: Salt of the earth Irish. Charmin' accent. A flair for the dramatic. 40-60.
- Howard: A broker, 30's or 40's. A bit chubby. Definitely slimy. An S & M M.
- Renard: A roue. A rogue. A rake. Devilish and charming. An 18th century swashbuckler with a taste for the cabin boys. Looks to die for, but then, he's dead. An English accent.

Act I  
Scene 1

*(The front room of a charming New England home, built in the early 1700's. R is a door to the outside. L is an archway leading to the kitchen and dining areas. Up of the outside door is an angled wall with a fire place sporting a large mantle. Center is a sofa, behind the sofa, a hall tree and table. In the UL corner of the stage can be seen the first few steps and landing of the stairs to the second floor. On the landing, hangs a large portrait of a sea captain. All the furniture is draped with sheets. Cobwebs are decoratively festooned here and there. The place is isn't a wreck, it is, in fact, quite charming, but it hasn't been lived in for a while...)*

*(Enter from R Betsy and Mark Taylor, Mark toting what seem to be about a zillion bags and bundles. Betsy carries a handkerchief. Betsy stops dead, leaving Mark struggling, half in, half out of the doorway.)*

**Mark**

Ta Da!

**Betsy**

Oh, my. Oh my, oh my - oh my - oh my.

**Mark**

*(Edges past her and drops baggage)*

Well, what do you think of...

**Betsy**

*(Cutting him off)*

Mark -- darling -- you're so cute. My little boy will have his little jokes. Now where are we really staying?

**Mark**

But honey, it's Maine! We're surrounded by romantic woods! You can almost hear the roar of the ocean.

*(coming around behind her to nibble her neck)*

What better place to spend our first cozy, relaxing, and very intimate, summer together?

**Betsy**

Don't nibble dear, it makes my skin all prickly.

*(She moves slightly away)*

**Mark**

Isn't it great!? Look at this hardwood! These banisters! God, even a beamed ceiling! I've always...

**Betsy**

Oh, my, I just knew I should never have let you come up here by yourself. You're so -- impulsive.

**Mark**

But we're going to love it here it's...

**Betsy**

Oh, I told mother before we left, Mark is such a dear, sweet little simpleton, I should have just taken a couple of days from my own hectic schedule and come up here to see about summer homes.

**Mark**

Betsy -- honey -- just think of the long summer nights -- think of the privacy -- think of  
*(He is nuzzling her again.)*

**Betsy**

Mmmmmm sex before noon is so declassé

*(She detaches herself.)*

Ooooooo! Look at the dust. Just like a MAN. Don't give you're pointy little head a thought about practical things.

**Mark**

Like?

**Betsy**

Like there's NO place to shop for miles, and Pierre, my masseur will have to travel for HOURS, and... Oh, Newport's so nice this time of year...

**Mark**

Come on, honey, don't you like it -- really?

**Betsy**

Oh... It's so... Quaint...

**Mark**

I knew you'd love it. Wait till you see the view from the Widow's walk.

**Betsy**

Widow's Walk? How Gothic...

**Mark**

Gothic! Mysterious! Romantic!

*(Dramatically)*

Just think of the generations of lonely women - standing hopelessly up on our widow's walk - waiting for their men to come home from the sea... Then, when all hope was gone, flinging themselves into the ocean below...

**Betsy**

Ocean? Let me see.

*(She exits out the arch) (off)*

Oh! Look at that cliff... Straight down into the water!

**Mark**

I knew you'd love the view.

**Betsy**

The view is precious dear, but I had no idea we were so close to the water. All that damp air blowing through this door.

*(she reappears)*

I'm sure there's not a bit of insulation... What else is out there?

**Mark**

Kitchen, breakfast nook, dining room, pantry...

**Betsy**

Mark, When you said, "a summer cottage", I thought you meant something a little - cozier.

**Mark**

*(Nuzzling her.)*

Cozy you want - cozy you get.

**Betsy**

*(Absently)*

Don't nibble dear. Oh, I knew I should have come with you to look for a place. I mean, you're terribly sweet to find something so - imposing - but really, Mark! It's the middle of nowhere!

**Mark**

Just ten miles out of town. Like I said, Distance enough for plenty of privacy.

*(He moves to her again.)*

**Betsy**

*(Evading him)*

Oooooo! And look at the dust! How on earth could anyone keep this mausoleum clean?

**Mark**

Fear not, fair one. As soon as I picked it out, I hunted up a maid so your pretty little hands wouldn't get all out of joint having to deal with house work. I just couldn't see you in a Dior gown and dust mop.

**Betsy**

YOU picked a maid? Really, Mark. I can just imagine! Some enormous black woman, I suppose who'll rob us out of house and home. I should never have let you out by yourself.

**Mark**

No darkies at Vassar?

**Betsy**

It was Radcliffe, and no. Now, you know I'm not prejudiced. I just don't want one around the house. It's so - Gone With the Wind.

**Mark**

Not to worry. Mammy is not going to appear at the door. At least I don't think so.

**Betsy**

What do you mean?

**Mark**

I just went to the Agency in town. They promised they'd send up someone very reliable. I think they said Irish, actually.

**Betsy**

You mean you haven't even met this woman???

**Mark**

No, but I'm sure...

**Betsy**

While you're off in the city, I'm going to be here alone with some crazed ne'er-do-well bent on rape and pillage and God knows what else?

**Mark**

I doubt rape. I did specify a woman.

**Betsy**

Unless it turns out to be one of those awful lesbians. I just can't bear all those flannel shirts.

**Mark**

At least then you wouldn't have to worry about my running off with the hired help.

**Betsy**

*(With a little laugh.)*

Oh, Mark, really. You? Run off with someone? What a thought.

**Mark**

I guess you're right. One look at those scintillating lips of your's and my loins turn to Jello.  
*(Approaches her for a kiss)*

**Betsy**

I know. Isn't it lovely.

*(allows a brief caress.)*

Now.

*(breaking away)*

When was this museum last inhabited, anyway?

**Mark**

The agent told me it had been vacant for quite a while. That's how we got such a good deal.

**Betsy**

And this furniture!

*(removing a dust cover)*

It can't have been cleaned in aeons. I hope you brought my allergy pills.

**Mark**

*(reaching in his jacket pocket)*

Right here, my dovelett.

**Betsy**

And my vitamins?

**Mark**

*(supplying same)*

Presto!

**Betsy**

Now you take one of yours too.

**Mark**

They taste like Kool-aid mixed with chalk!

**Betsy**

No argument. Here. Be a dear and get us some water. You're still not over your cold.

**Mark**

Betsy, I sneezed once in the car. One sneeze hardly a cold makes.

**Betsy**

Well take them anyway. Be a dear and get some water.

*(Mark shrugs and exits.)*

Now I talked to the doctor myself. He told me you were very run down and it could be VERY serious. Honestly! I have to take care of you every minute.

**Mark**

*(reentering)*

Betsy. I feel fine. I'm NEVER sick.

**Betsy**

Not another word. I'm here to take care of my little suggams.

**Mark**

Whatever you say.

*(Phone rings)*

Who could that be? I didn't even give the office this number.

**Betsy**

NO! I'll get it!

*(Sweetly)*

Hello-you-must-have-the-wrong-number.

*(hangs up)*

**Mark**

You didn't even ask who it was.

**Betsy**

Don't be silly, dear. No-one of our friends even has this number. So it had to be someone else, didn't it?

**Mark**

Whatever.

*(car door is heard)*

That must be the maid.

*(heads for the door to look)*

**Betsy**

Who's out there? The Crazed, black, Irish, lesbian, axe-murderer you hired?

**Mark**

I don't know, the drive's on the other side of the house.

**Betsy**

Then why are you looking out there?

**Mark**

*(reentering)*

I guess I got turned around.

**Betsy**

You're often a little turned around, dear. Never mind. You stay here and try not to hurt yourself and I'll go out and see who it is. I've just got to do everything for you.

*(She exits. Mark wanders around for a moment or two - removing dust covers, shaking out drapes... Finally he removes the cover from a portrait hanging from the wall over the landing. It is of a rather handsome, rakish looking young man in nineteenth century nautical garb.)*

**Mark**

Would you look at that!

*(Miss. O'Riley enters with bags followed by Betsy.)*

**Miss O'Riley**

...and I don't do windows and I get every Thursday off for my bridge club. Other than that I'm here for the duration. Of course, you'll have to get a room ready for me. I don't intend to take that drive into town every morning and every evening. Not many would come out here, you know

*(looks around)*

Good day to you. You must be Mark. That was the only name the agency gave. You can call me Miss. O'Riley. I don't hold with people flingin' around my Christian name unless it's a social event. I'll be wantin' the first two weeks in advance if you please.

**Mark**

Very pleased to meet you Miss O'Riley. And this is my wife, Betsy.

**Betsy**

Enchanted. Mrs. Taylor to you. We wouldn't want too many Christian names flying around, now would we?

**Miss O'Riley**

Pleased to meet you Betsy.

*(Turns to Mark)*

And when will you be going into town for things. I'm not keen on driving, so I'll do a list up of what I need for meals.

**Betsy**

How thoughtful. Actually, Why don't I get a list together of what we'd like for the week.

**Miss. O'Riley**

Because I don't do fancy stuff. Meat and potatoes, that's my cooking and you'll go far to find better. Now, which is my room?

**Mark**

Miss. O'Riley, I didn't know you would be -- well -- live-in.

**Miss O'Riley**

Oh, it's not that I like it -- not one bit -- what with the reputation this place has. But my knees are just too bad to make the drive every day.

**Betsy**

Well, I don't think every day will be necessary.

**Miss O'Riley**

You're paying for every day, so every day you get. I don't take anything less. I'll not be going house to house like a common maid.

**Betsy**

And here I thought that's what you were. How silly of me.

**Miss O'Riley**

I'm a household technician. And don't you forget it. Maid, humph. I'll settle for housekeeper if that's easier on the tongue, but nothin' less. Now, Mark, about those first two weeks???

**Mark**

*(fishing in his wallet)*

Oh, yes, of course.

**Betsy**

Why on earth should we give you two weeks pay in advance?

**Miss O'Riley**

Because otherwise I'm leavin' this minute, and I'm the only household technician available this week.

*(She slaps the sofa and a cloud of dust rises.)*

**Betsy**

Give her the money, Mark.

**Miss O'Riley**

Now don't be thinkin' I'm difficult. No indeed. I'm the sweetest person you'd ever want to meet about most things. But I've been out here seven different times now with seven different tenants. And what do you think? Poof! All of 'em gone within two nights, and me left holdin' the bag. Now that won't do, will it? Summer folk!

**Mark**

Two nights? What happened?

**Betsy**

Perhaps one of those door to door maids drove them off -- or maybe a bit of good sense...

**Miss O'Riley**

No, indeed no. It weren't any PERSON drove them off, I'll warrant.

*(a beat)*

**Betsy**

No?

**Mark**

Yes?

**Miss O'Riley**

No indeed.

*(a beat)*

**Betsy**

Well, wolves? Bats? Bigfoot? What?

**Miss O'Riley**

*(Turning dramatically to point to the portrait on the landing)*

Him!

**Betsy**

What on earth is that thing?

**Mark**

I uncovered it while you were outside. Isn't it great?

*(To O'Riley)*

Who is it?

**Betsy**

What is it?

**Miss O'Riley**

It's HIM.

**Betsy**

Him who.

**Miss O'Riley**

Speak respectfully of the Captain. There's many that say he's still here.

**Mark**

A ghost? God, that's wonderful

**Betsy**

Fabulous.

**Miss O'Riley**

Faith and Begorrah, 'tis a tale fraught with horror. The salty sea was a-pitchin' and the whaling winds was a-wailing.

**Betsy**

What was that?

**Mark**

*(to Betsy)*

What are whaling winds?

**Betsy**

No, what the hell did she say?

**Miss O'Riley**

Oh, he was wicked he was.

**Betsy**

*(Totally disinterested.)*

Do tell.

**Mark**

*(Missing it.)*

Yes, do. He looks so -- nautical.

**Miss O'Riley**

T'was on a dark and stormy night...

**Betsy**

Oh my God. I hate cliche.

**Miss O'Riley**

If you don't want to hear then...

**Mark**

No, go on, please.

**Miss O'Riley**

Well, then: Twas a dark and stormy night. The clouds were rollin' in. A nor-easter was blowin' up to a fury. An' the captain there, he was bringin' his load of ill-gotten gains in from the old country. Some say he was a trader, some say a pirate, others allow that he just come up from hell for a visit. They say he was half-witch even then.

**Mark**

Why, what did he do?

**Betsy**

*(Kicking him, sotto voce.)*

Do you have to encourage her?

**Mark**

Go on, why did they think he was a witch.

**Miss O'Riley**

More than just a witch. A sodomite he was. He enchanted the handsome young lads from the village to go off to sea with him. And every time they come back, it was wilder and wilder goin's on here. Clear down at the mill they could hear them singin' their drunken sea-songs, and carousin' and fornicatin' and God-knows-what worse, whenever they was in port -- every night! The black eagle was his ship, and so fast she was, that no other clipper could touch her. She carried thirteen guns and he'd slip her in and out of port so quiet not even the devil himself could hear. But that very night...

**Betsy**

The dark and stormy one...

**Miss O'Riley**

The same! That night, everybody knew the ship was comin' in 'cause she'd been spotted rounding the southern point. The ladies, they were gettin' in their carriages to meet him at the dock. They were goin' to buy the laces and frills and fancies he always brought back. Half of them were just goin' to see him -- he cast a spell on the ladies too. But Jeremy, he was the pastor's son, he'd just turned seventeen, and he'd runned off --- and the pastor knew where. Jeremy'd runned off to join that unholy band of sailor men.

Well, the pastor, he'd got the town whipped up to a near fury. He knew his boy was in this house, just waitin' to take up with that lot. He raises a crowd, and all with torches, they come up here to rescue the lad from the sins of Sodom. The wind is howlin' and the rain is whippin' them as they get to the cliff just above the house. And there they see the Black Eagle comin' in. She's pitchin' and a-rollin' in the waves and the captain's at the bow, his black hair whippin' back off his handsome devil-face.

The captain, he hollars for the men to haul in the sails -- no one else would have even tried to come in in a storm like that --- and he might have made it too, with the help of Belzebub -- but the lines foul, way up the mainmast. The sails are billowing in the storm, and the ship's headed straight for the rocks just below this house!

The captain, he heads straight up the rat-lines, a saber in his teeth, trying to hack the sail free. The crew is trying to bring the Black Eagle about. But it's too late. The whole town's watching from the cliff as she hits the rocks with a great crash. And tangled in the webbing of the mast, the captain goes down with his ship to his doom! Then, the preacher, him and the men start up here to burn this house to the ground.

*(she stops)*

**Betsy**

Yes? So? Why didn't they?

**Mark**

And what happens to the preacher's boy?

**Miss O'Riley**

How should I know? That was 1710. It's not like I was there.

**Betsy**

Great. Half a ghost story.

**Miss O'Riley**

But there's them that say he's still here. Haunting his old den of sin. I've not seen him, but there's them that have. Ask any of 'em that have stayed here the night, and were gone by morning. And town's ten mile off. There's nobody to hear you -- not even if you scream.

**Mark**

Haven't I heard that somewhere before?

**Betsy**

Shirley Jackson, dear.

**Mark**

So why would you stay, Miss O'Riley?

**Miss O'Riley**

Me? Why in hell not? I'm not daft enough to believe in ghosts. Now, I'll be headed out to start in the kitchen. Here's the list for you, Mark. Mind you, get the lean bacon. I won't be eatin' that fatty slop.

*(To Betsy looking pointedly at her chest)*

Wouldn't hurt to fill you out some though. I'll think on it. Dinner is at eight sharp. Don't be late.

*(exit)*

**Mark**

Wow. When I get a maid, do I get a maid.

**Betsy**

Maybe I can get that nice fag boy who does our apartment in New York to come up here.

**Mark**

But I love Miss. O'Riley, my pet. She has such -- atmosphere.

**Betsy**

Rather like a storm at sea.

**Mark**

Besides, you're the only maid I want.

*(moving in close)*

**Betsy**

Mark, it's still light out. I haven't even seen the upstairs.

**Mark**

Couldn't we break in the living room first.

**Betsy**

All good things come to good boys who sit and wait. Sit. Wait.

**Mark**

Did I retire at thirty by letting things wait?

**Betsy**

No, but you didn't do it by my letting things lay either. Now, find something to putter about while I -

**Mark**

Betsy, let the whole place sink, but come here and bide on the captain's lap.

**Betsy**

Bite?

**Mark**

Bide was what I said, but have it your own way,

**Betsy**

Oh Mark I can't, not with that ugly portrait staring at us.

**Mark**

Ugly?

**Betsy**

Isn't it?

**Mark**

I don't know, he looks right dashing to me.

**Betsy**

Apparently he had an eye for the deck-hands.

**Mark**

We must place pansies in front of it regularly.

**Betsy**

No way am I going to have that sodomite sea dog leering at us in our own living room. He goes down right now.

**Mark**

Not for the first time, I suppose.

**Betsy**

Mark, your sexual obsession is getting too all-encompassing.

**Mark**

I meant his ship went down, with his ship he went down. Don't take your breasts away.

**Betsy**

Really, Mark, you've got to learn to enjoy leisure.

**Mark**

I was trying.

**Betsy**

Well, don't be. Help me remove this eyesore.

**Mark**

No. I like it. He looks like he never took "No" for an answer. Or gave it, for that matter.

**Betsy**

Well, I'm giving it -- no that is. Now get your gym-toned buns out to the store. If I have to live here, I don't want to have to starve here.

**Mark**

Don't you want to go with me?

**Betsy**

No, I'll just stay here and clean up a little.

**Mark**

Clean? You, my pet? You mean with a mop and sponge and bucket, and dirty rags???

**Betsy**

Don't be disgusting. Of course not. I meant I'll take a bubble bath. Besides, I haven't even seen upstairs yet.

**Mark**

There's a big bedroom up there, with a big bed, and ...

**Betsy**

Get your mind out of the gutter and your body into the car. Now.

**Mark**

But baby...

**Betsy**

March, sailor.

*(He exits. She checks her watch)*

God, I thought I'd never get rid of him.

*(She stands and takes stock of the room.)*

First, that thing goes...

*(She takes picture down, and places it face against the wall. She brushes the dust from her hands.)*

Oh, the bags. I should have had him take those up for me.

*(She heads for the bags by the door, bends over and retrieves a cosmetic kit.)*

Just great. No lipstick. Stuck a hundred miles from nowhere, no lipstick, in a house with an antique faggot ghost.

*(There is a gust of wind as she bends for her purse. The front door whooshes open and whacks her in the ass.)*

Ouch!

*(The phone rings.)*

Hello! Hello!

*(suddenly all sweetness)*

Oh, Hello, Howie... Kissie, kissie. ... No, it's fine. He just left. So how's my Howie-bear? ... Ooooooo! When will you get here? ... I can't wait. ... No, he still thinks you're in California playing golf. ... Well, you're his broker aren't you? Where else would a broker be? You can't wait for me to do what to you? ... Ooooooo! With neckties! .... But, sugar-touche, If you're, all tied up, how can I do the... Hello!

*(Behind her, the portrait is slowly levitating, rehangng itself.)*

Hello! Oh, there you are sweetie... No, it's this fucking phone line... Well, hurry. As soon as Mark's out of my life, we can do that all the time... Mmmmmmm that too. ... no, wait... call me angel-tits just once before we hang up. I love it when you call me that. ... OOoooooo I just melt. I'll be waiting for you -- python! What was that? There's all this static... Hello? Hello???

*(slams down phone)*

Shit! Now, for that bath.

*(she grabs the cosmetic bag and purse and heads for the stairs -- then stops dead.)*

I could have sworn I took that down...

*(She shrugs and exits. A knock at the door)*

### **Miss O'Riley**

Faith and begorrah, I'm coming.

*(Another knock)*

Mother Mary! Hold your blasted horses!

*(She opens the door.)*

Why, Mr. Thomas!

### **Mr. Thomas**

Miss. O'Riley!

### **Betsy**

*(reentering)*

Who is it?

### **Miss O'Riley**

It's Mr. Thomas, it is.

### **Betsy**

Mr. Thomas?

*(noting his hat)*

You're the sheriff?

**Mr. Thomas**

I am this minute.

*(whips a painter's cap out of his back pocket  
and switches)*

Now I'm the handy man. Your Mister called last week and asked me to come over for a look at the roof.

**Betsy.**

That's one of the sheriff's duties here? How quaint.

**Mr. Thomas**

No, I'm only the sheriff on Tuesdays and Fridays, the rest of the time I'm Mr. Thomas' fix-it-all.

**Betsy**

Oh. It's Wednesday. Just a workman. Well, do what you need to do. I don't wish to be disturbed. Oh, and Miss. O'Riley, could you please see that this portrait is out of my sight before I come back down?

*(she sweeps off)*

**Miss O'Riley**

Well, Mr. Thomas...

**Mr. Thomas**

Miss O'Riley...

**Miss O'Riley**

*(messing with her hair)*

Well, it's quite the surprise to see you here. I'm such a mess.

**Mr. Thomas**

But Miss. O'Riley, you always look just charming.

**Miss O'Riley**

But aren't you the flatterer.

**Mr. Thomas**

Not at all, Miss.

**Miss O'Riley**

Well...

**Mr. Thomas**

Well...

**Miss O'Riley**

I saw you at the cover dish supper. You looked quite dapper in your new overalls.

**Mr. Thomas**

Well, I've just got these old things today. I save the new ones for special occasions.

**Miss O'Riley**

And well you should. You wouldn't want the new ones getting mussed.

**Mr. Thomas**

Oh, no, that I wouldn't. So... You're helping them out here at Widow's Walk House?

**Miss. O'Riley**

That I am.

**Mr. Thomas**

Well, they couldn't do no better than you, I've tasted your pot roast.

**Miss. O'Riley**

Have you now!

**Mr. Thomas**

Oh, yes! After Homer Winchell passed on. Your roast was the talk of the wake!

**Miss. O'Riley**

How kind of you to say so...

**Mr. Thomas**

I would'a liked to have visited with you more then. But with old Mrs. Chalmers spilling the widow's baked beans in the coffin and all... Well, it didn't seem like the proper time at all...

**Miss. O'Riley**

Oh, no indeed.

**Mr. Thomas**

But I have been wantin' to, well, perhaps, see a bit more of you. We've known each other quite a spell now.

**Miss O'Riley**

Faith! It must be onto twenty-five years! My, how the years fly, Mr. Thomas.

**Mr. Thomas**

I know you don't think it's proper me callin' at your house, you bein' a single lady alone and all. But...

**Miss. O'Riley**

Yes?

**Mr. Thomas**

Well, Miss O'Riley, couldn't you see your way clear to going to the Easter service with me on Sunday. I'd consider it quite the honor.

**Miss O'Riley**

Now, Mr. Thomas, I... But, no... I couldn't possibly....

**Mr. Thomas**

But just the service, Miss O'Riley. Nothing more. I'll bring you right back here.

**Miss O'Riley**

Mr. Thomas, you make my heart flutter. Well, maybe Sunday, we'll see...

**Mr. Thomas**

Oh, thank you, Miss O'Riley.

**Miss O'Riley**

You're so welcome

**Mr. Thomas**

Well...

**Miss O'Riley**

Well...

**Mr. Thomas**

Well, I better get out to get my tools.

**Miss O'Riley**

And I better get back to work.

**Mr. Thomas**

Well, good-bye Miss O'Riley.

**Miss O'Riley**

Good-bye Mr. Thomas.

**Mr. Thomas**

Till Sunday?

**Miss O'Riley**

Till Sunday.

*(Thomas exits.)*

**Miss O'Riley**

Oh my. Oh my. Be still my Irish heart.

*(She heads for the kitchen, then sees the stairs.)*

**Miss O'Riley**

Oh, I better take care of that picture, or the missis will have a hissy fit.

*(She takes down the picture.)*

**Renard**

*(Entering from top of stairs.)*

I wouldn't do that if I were you...

**Miss O'Riley***(Backing down stairs.)*

Who said that... Who's there...

*(Renard snaps his fingers... A tinkling sound is heard... Suddenly, O'Riley sees him)***Miss O'Riley**

AAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAA!!!!!! Help! Mr. Thomas! It's the ghost, the sodomite, the pervert the...

*(O'Riley runs screaming. To the rescue, comes Mr. Thomas through the front door. O'Riley mows him down on her way rolling out the door. Renard comes down the stairs.)***Renard***(Snapping his fingers again.)*

Poof!

*(There is that strange tinkling of chimes again. Renard points to the picture which levitates back into place. He laughs. Blackout.)*

## Scene 2

*(The same. The next morning. Little has changed except that all the covers are now off the furniture. At rise, Renard is lounging, unseen, on the mantle. Mr. Thomas, his arm now in a cast, is talking on the phone.)*

### Mr. Thomas

It was darn nice of you to call, Miss O'Riley, excuse my French... No, the mister took me right to the hospital and they fixed the arm right up... Now, don't take on so. You'd had a bit of a fright. It wasn't your fault my old bones got in your way. I should 'a watched where I was goin'...

*(Betsy is coming down the stairs.)*

I hope I'll be seeing you again soon. I don't mind confessing I was looking forward to us... well... working in the same house for a spell...

### Betsy

Mr. Thomas, who are you on the phone with? I am not paying you to carry on your social life.

### Mr. Thomas

Just a second, Miss O'Riley, the misses just came down.

*(to Betsy)*

It's Miss. O'Riley, ma'am, calling to say she won't be coming back.

### Betsy

Won't be back! Servants just aren't what they used to be. How on earth am I supposed to take care of all of this?

### Mr. Thomas

*(into phone)*

The missis says you've been such a help she just doesn't know how she'll get along without you...

### Betsy

I said what!?

### Mr. Thomas

*(into phone)*

Well, yes. I see... Yes, I'll tell her.

*(to himself)*

Sort'a.

*(to Betsy)*

She said it's more pleasure than she's had in years, working for a lady with such a rare combination of charm and beauty. But after what happened yesterday, she's had to go to the doctor for her nerves. And there's the bills you know, and dear Miss O'Riley's income isn't what it was...

**Betsy**

Well you can tell "dear Miss O'Riley" that she's not extorting another cent out of me...

**Mr. Thomas**

Hmmmm. Well... Yes.

*(into phone)*

The missis says... Oh, you heard... Oh, you've already called the agency to send up a replacement.

**Betsy**

That's the best news I've heard all day.

**Mr. Thomas**

There's no one at all available...

**Betsy**

What? I can't possibly...

**Mr. Thomas**

The missis is asking if a little raise wouldn't be a help to you? Yes... Yes...

**Betsy**

OK. How much?

**Mr. Thomas**

An extra hundred a week.

**Betsy**

Twenty-Five.

**Mr. Thomas**

Eighty.

**Betsy**

Thirty.

**Mr. Thomas**

Seventy-Five. Think of it as hazard pay.

**Betsy**

I think I'm getting screwed. All right. Seventy five. But I expect her here and working within twenty minutes. We may be having guests.

*(She sweeps off to the kitchen.)*

**Mr. Thomas**

*(into phone)*

The missis says the fifty you asked for isn't near enough for what you've been through. She insists on seventy-five... Yes... Oh, that's just her manner, I'm sure she's really a fine lady... Yes. Whenever you can get here will be fine with her... Oh! Miss O'Riley, I'm still looking forward to Sunday... Good... Well, I'll be here. Good-bye.

**Mark**

*(Entering down the stairs in pajamas.)*

Good morning, Mr. Thomas! How's the arm?

**Mr. Thomas**

Doin' fine, thank you sir. It takes more than a little compound fracture to stop an old Yankee like me. I'll be headed up for that roof.

**Mark**

You're kidding. You can't work up there with your arm in a cast. It's steep. It's dangerous.

**Mr. Thomas**

Oh, it's no problem at all, son... I'll just use my south paw. I've got the new shingles in the pickup.

**Mark**

You're worried about money, right? Well, it's no problem. Of course, we'll keep you on salary

until you're mended. The roof will wait. Just think of it as sick leave.

**Mr. Thomas**

No, indeed. A Thomas don't take money for work he ain't doing. Now just don't worry about me any. I'm just as good with one of these as I am with two. Now, I'll just be getting me some coffee, then I'll go topside.

**Mark**

You're great. Coffee! Betsy made coffee? Just what I need.

**Mr. Thomas**

*(Snorts)*

I made coffee. She drank it. I'm just going out to make some more.

**Mark**

Well, never mind for me. I should get my jogging in before breakfast anyway.

**Mr. Thomas**

Suit yourself. I'll just go out the back way. I left my ladder out there yesterday. You mind your knees now. That jogging business can be hell on the knees.

**Mark**

Thanks. I will.

**Betsy**

*(Entering from kitchen.)*

Well, you're up!

**Mr. Thomas**

Humph.

*(Exits to kitchen.)*

**Mark**

Do you know where my jogging suit is?

**Betsy**

Well, I'm sure I don't know. I assume it's still packed. Now Mark, I have to go into town to get some... things. While I'm gone, would you PLEASE get all those bags upstairs? And Miss.

O'Riley isn't here yet. You can start lunch. I'm sure you can find something.

**Mark**

You're wish is my command, hon. But why don't you relax? I got plenty of food yesterday, and I can go into town later for you...

**Betsy**

No! I mean, why should you bother yourself? I haven't anything special to do this morning.

*(Renard, still on mantle, begins to do an impression of Betsy as she speaks.)*

It's my wifely duty to take care of you and see you have everything you need. I just love taking care of you.

**Mark**

*(moving in)*

Mmmmmm. Why don't you take care of me right now? I just love being taken care of...

**Betsy**

That particular wifely duty will have to wait. You're going jogging?

**Mark**

Uh-huh

**Betsy**

About how long will you be?

**Mark**

Oh, I don't know. I usually do three miles. Why?

**Betsy**

Oh, no reason. No reason at all. Just curious. I wouldn't want you to overexert. I have to take care of you.

**Mark**

Everyone's so concerned about me this morning.

**Betsy**

Now the suitcases are all right here. I just took what I HAD to have upstairs.

**Mark**

*(As Peter Lorre.)*

I'll see everything gets put in it's proper place, mistress.

**Betsy**

Ooooo. I don't like mistress. It's so lower class.

**Mark**

Mistress and slave might be fun.

**Betsy**

Hmmmmm. We'll think on it.

*(Gives him a peck on the cheek.)*

I'll see you later.

**Mark**

Bye, hon.

*(She exits. Mark chooses a suitcase from beside door and opens it. He rifles about for a moment, then pulls out jogging suit, towel, and jock, tossing each over his shoulder. Most land behind the sofa. As Mark starts to unbutton his pajama top, Renard (who has been bored stiff) starts to perk up.)*

*(Renard, catlike, springs down from mantle and circles DS of the couch, enjoying the show. Mark pulls off the pajama top. Renard appraises for a moment, grins, and gives a silent whistle. Mark drops the pajama pants, and stands in his briefs for a moment, stretching. Renard stops, checks out the basket, shrugs, and makes a so-so motion with his hand. Renard lounges back against the table L as Mark goes in search of his jock, which has landed behind the couch.)*

*(Behind the sofa, his back to Renard, Mark bends over to pull off his underwear. Renard checks out the butt, gives a pleased, evil little leer, and then makes a motion for Mark to turn around. Mark folds the underwear and*

*stretches again. Renard taps his foot with impatience. The ghost gets an idea. Marks back is still turned. With a big grin, Renard points his finger, and levitates the jock. It floats from behind the sofa to a spot where Renard will have an unobstructed view of Mark's -- assets.)*

*(Mark turns around, hidden from the waist down by the sofa, and searches for the suddenly-missing item of clothing.)*

Hell, it was right here.

*(He shakes out the jogging pants and top. Nothing. Then he spots the jock sitting DC.)*

How the hell did it get over there? I could have sworn...

*(He walks in front of the sofa -- revealing all. Renard is delighted with his trick. The ghost checks out Mark, up and down, shrugs and gives a little sigh as if to say, "Well, size isn't everything." Mark puts on the jock.)*

OK. Warm-ups.

*(Mark puts a leg up on a chair and starts doing stretches. Renard comes up behind him. Every time mark bends over, Renard makes it clear what he'd like to be doing. The ghost starts to put his arms around Mark's chest from behind. Considers, stops himself, and saunters away, frustrated. Mark finishes stretching and gets down for some push-ups. Renard stands over him -- looks down -- looks up "Lord give me strength not to rape him this second." Renard pops down beside him, leaning up on an elbow. He makes as if to grab Mark's ass as it bobs up and down with each push-up. He stops himself. Finally, the ghost can't stand it any longer and gives Mark's bare butt a little pinch. Mark reaches back...)*

Ouch! Hell, what was that!?

*(He stands and rubs his butt.)*

We have bugs?

*(Renard is insulted, makes as if to swat Mark, thinks better of it. Mark shrugs.)*

I guess that's enough.

*(Mark goes back behind sofa, slips on jogging pants, ties them, zips himself into jogging top,*

Well, I'm off and running.

*and jogs toward door.)*

*(Mark opens door, exits, and closes door behind him, jogging all the while. Renard wanders for a second, frustrated and bored, then spots Mark's discarded briefs. He picks them up, swirls them around as if doing a wine tasting, then gives them a delicate little sniff. He gives a big grin and sighs, leaning back against the sofa. Heaven.)*

**Renard**

It has been centuries...

*(The door swings open. Betsy and Howard, a chubby man in his 40's, enter quickly. Renard drops the briefs on the spot. Betsy and Howard stop dead, looking at a pair of underwear dropping out of nowhere.)*

**Betsy**

Mark?

*(calling)*

*(Betsy moves to stairs. Renard, unseen, sidesteps so as not to be run over.)*

Mark? Are you up there?

**Howard**

I thought you said he was out jogging.

**Betsy**

I'm sure he is.

*(Calling.)*

Miss. O'Riley?

*(Nothing.)*

I'm sure she can't be here yet...

**Howard**

*(Whispering.)*

Well, somebody had to throw those things from somewhere.

**Betsy**

They must have dropped from the couch.

**Howard**

By themselves?

**Betsy**

The vibrations as we opened the door... You know these old houses...

**Howard**

No, and I don't want to either. God, look at this dump.

**Betsy**

I know. Isn't it awful.

**Howard**

Once everything's settled, we can tear down this heap, and put in a nice high-rise.

*(Renard reacts.)*

Maybe a health club, or lodge or something.

**Betsy**

Lovely! Mark would never think of anything CREATIVE like that. He's so -- middle class.

**Howard**

People who don't really know how to use money shouldn't have it.

**Betsy**

And he has soooo much!

**Howard**

It was just luck.

**Betsy**

And all that WORK! My God, he put in twenty hour days. Money acquired that way seems so dirty some how. It's only really proper to inherit it.

**Howard**

Like your daddy?

**Betsy**

Of course! If only there hadn't been that silly congressional investigation.

**Howard**

And then the tax evasion trial...

**Betsy**

Let's talk about more pleasant things: like putting Mark out of his plebeian misery.

**Howard**

There's always divorce...

**Betsy**

We've discussed that, silly. I'd only get half that way!

**Howard**

True. And this property will make lovely condos.

**Betsy**

I don't care what we do with it, as long as I don't have to come out here with the peasants again.

**Howard**

*(moving in close)*

Don't worry honey-buns, nothing but big city, caviar and champagne for you once this is over.

*(he reaches around and squeezes her buns.)*

**Betsy**

Ooooo Do that again. I love it when you do that.

**Howard**

*(squeezing again)*

Better?

**Betsy**

No, not that,

*(removing his hands)*

Tell me about our life of luxury.

**Howard**

Caviar for breakfast, hors d'oeuvres for lunch, perhaps broiled falcon for a light supper.

**Betsy**

Ooooooo! I love endangered species, Howie.

**Howard**

Oh, my sweet, you're so... so... Park Avenue.

**Betsy**

No, Sutton Place.

**Howard**

A brownstone... with huge rooms

**Betsy**

And a huge bed...

**Howard**

With silk sheets...

**Betsy**

Satin!

**Howard**

And sturdy bed posts...

**Betsy**

Oh Howie! We'll buy yards and yards of soft, sturdy ropes for you!

**Howard**

*(grabbing her)*

You make my knees weak, you vixen!

**Betsy**

Oh Howard! I can't wait

*(They kiss, passionately.)*

**Howard**

*(Throwing his head back as she bites his neck.)*

Take me! Ravish me, you she-devil!

*(Renard looks like he might be ill. They back up, still kissing and groping, till Howard is lying on the sofa, Betsy on top of him.)*

**Betsy**

*(sitting up and using his jacket collar like reins)*

Oh, what is that cologne? It turns me into a beast! Grrrrr! Grrrrr!

**Howard**

*(throwing his arms up, wrists crossed, as if to be hog-tied)*

Quick! The neckties! Please...

**Betsy**

*(Standing, one spike heel in his stomach, she pulls off a long scarf and lashes him with it.)*

Are you going to do everything mommy asks for? Take that...

*(lash)*

and that...

*(lash)*

**Howard**

Oh! Use me, you tigress, I'm at your mercy!

**Betsy**

*(coily wrapping the scarf around his wrists)*

All in good time, sweet lips, all in good time. We've got something to do first...

**Howard**

Anything! Anything!

*(His hands now tied, she starts to remove his*

*belt -- Howard looks up, breathless.)*

Do you think we could use the clothes pins?

**Betsy**

Maybe...

**Howard**

Or even the safety pins!

**Betsy**

*(slapping his belt against her palm)*

All in good time. What do you have to do first???

**Howard**

Or the cigarette, just one little cigarette burn, please, sugar tits?

**Betsy**

But I'm a married woman! We have to do something about that!

**Howard**

Yes, yes! We will. I brought the axle grease!

*(She stands up, Howard turns over)*

Now, just a little of the belt???

**Betsy**

I guess that's good for one.

*(She swats him playfully with the belt.)*

**Howard**

Oh, yes, mommy. And when I spread the axle grease on the stairs?

**Betsy**

Then you get two.

*(another little swat)*

**Howard**

Oh god I love discipline!

**Betsy**

And when he slips and breaks his neck, mommy will chain smoke on the soles of your feet if you want her to!

**Howard**

*(sitting up and nuzzling her cleavage)*

I can't wait. The pills you're feeding him are just too slow.

**Betsy**

*(running her fingers through his hair)*

I checked it all out. These stairs are perfect: Steep and treacherous.

**Howard**

*(slipping his hands out of the scarf)*

We've worked it all out. I've already got most of his bonds in your name.

*(They are side by side on the sofa now -- toying playfully with each other as they conspire -- Renard is leaning on the sofa behind them...)*

**Betsy**

And then it's Rio!

**Howard**

The Riviera

**Betsy**

Nice

**Howard**

Nice is nice.

**Betsy**

An apartment in Rome and another in LA

**Howard**

A Villa in Capri

**Betsy**

Him insisting on this drafty old rat trap worked out perfectly! Even a fag-ghost story -- a legend about some dusty old queer to scare away the help.

*(Renard makes as if to hit them with a lamp.)*

**Howard**

My office thinks I'm in Chicago

**Betsy**

And I'll make sure one of those old fools is with me when he takes the big dive.

**Howard**

I'll wipe the axle grease off the top stair, and make a getaway.

**Betsy**

While I keep everyone busy calling for the ambulance.

**Howard**

And if the fall hasn't gotten him?

**Betsy**

*(Pulls a syringe from her cleavage)*

There's enough in this to stop an elephant! I'll get him while he's helpless, and everyone will think it's the fall! And with that fool of a sheriff, there won't even be an inquest.

**Howard**

Perfect! It's brilliant!

**Betsy**

Yes, aren't I.

*(They embrace. Then, a knock at the door.)*

**Betsy**

Quick, out the back!

**Howard**

Where?

**Betsy**

There! Through the kitchen! Hurry!

*(Howard exits, Betsy goes to the door. It is Miss. O'Riley & Mr. Thomas.)*

Well, it's about time!

**Mr. Thomas**

Well, hello ma'am, I just passed the mister, he said you were going into town.

**Betsy**

*(flustered)*

Oh. Yes... I was... I just forgot my... purse. Yes. I forgot my purse. I can't find it anywhere.

**Miss. O'Riley**

It's sittin' right there on the table, miss.

**Betsy**

Oh. Well. Yes it is. Silly me!

**Mr. Thomas**

You sure you're all right, ma'am? I thought I heard voices in here. That ol' ghost ain't givin' you no trouble is he?

*(He chuckles.)*

**Betsy**

Oh... Ghost... Yes -- I mean, no. The phone. Rang. Yes, just a wrong number on the phone. Well, I must be going now that I've found my purse.

*(Renard makes a choking gesture at her neck and, still unseen, follows her out.)*

I'll be back shortly...

*(Betsy and Renard exit. Miss. O'Riley & Mr. Thomas, suddenly alone, just stand for a moment.)*

**Mr. Thomas**

Well...

**Miss. O'Riley**

Well... I guess I better get to my job.

**Mr. Thomas**

I s'pose I should too.

*(neither moves)*

**Mr. Thomas**

Miss O'Riley, I'd like to...

**Miss O'Riley**

Faith, Mr. Thomas, I wanted to...

*(Both stop)*

**Miss O'Riley**

Oh, I'm sorry, I...

**Mr. Thomas**

No, go on... I interrupted...

**Miss O'Riley**

Well, thank you. I just wanted to tell you what a blessin' it was, I mean you gettin' me that raise and all. The poor bit of money my sainted mother left me don't stretch too far. The extra will truly be a help.

**Mr. Thomas**

Don't speak of it. It was nothin'. I just hate to see you have to struggle so.

**Miss O'Riley**

No, it was too kind of you. And after I, well, broke up your arm. I am SO sorry. Lord knows I'll never forgive myself.

**Mr. Thomas**

No, now don't go on about it. It wasn't your fault a bit. I just got myself in the way.

**Miss. O'Riley**

It must be my nerves. I could have sworn I saw that old captain -- standin' right there.

*(she points)*

Clear as I see you now.

**Mr. Thomas**

Well, if anything else should happen, you just call on sheriff Thomas.

*(He whips a badge out of his pocket.)*

I'll be more than happy to take care of you.

**Miss O'Riley**

I do admire so the way you be holdin' such an important job. And you still find the time to do your handy-work. It's a marvel, Mr. Thomas.

**Mr. Thomas**

Oh, now it ain't nothin'.

**Miss O'Riley**

But it must be so dangerous for you!

**Mr. Thomas**

It's just all in a day's work, ma'am.

*(almost blushes)*

Aw, it really ain't much. There was a murder back in thirty-six. But that was before my time. The road through town's too curvy to speed on, anyhow. I just check up on the summer places -- make sure nobody's bothering them.

**Miss O'Riley**

But there was that armed robbery last year. I heard about it!

**Mr. Thomas**

Well, that was a bit of a scare. But Jimmy was only nine. And it turned out to be a water pistol. I probably shouldn't have bothered calling in the state troopers...

**Miss O'Riley**

No, you did exactly right. You never can tell about young people these days. I do know I feel much safer with you here.

**Mr. Thomas**

You know Miss O'Riley, I'd like to take care of you all the time

**Miss O'Riley**

*(coy)*

Why, whatever could you be meanin' Mr. Thomas?

**Mr. Thomas**

Well, you must have noticed, miss, that -- well -- I think you're quite a woman.

**Miss O'Riley**

Oh, Mr. Thomas!

**Mr. Thomas**

And -- uh -- this is what I've been wantin' to say all mornin'. That fall I took, well, it got me to thinkin' how short life is. Well, and what I wanted to say is, if you'd ever have me... Aw, heck, I ain't no good at this...

**Miss O'Riley**

*(encouraging)*

You were saying, Mr. Thomas.

**Mr. Thomas**

Could you sit down right here, Miss. O'Riley. I'd sort'a like to do this proper.

**Miss O'Riley**

*(sits)*

Of course. Whatever you'd like.

**Mr. Thomas**

*(getting down on one knee)*

Miss. O'Riley. Someday... If you ever think it'd be proper... could you consider... well... Sometime, could you just think about marryin' me, Miss O'Riley?

**Miss. O'Riley.**

Why, Mr. Thomas! What a beautiful proposal! You're such a kind gentleman. There's nothin' in God's world I'd like more than to become your missis.

**Mr. Thomas**

You would?

**Miss. O'Riley**

But, I'm afraid there's some things that were never meant to be. You see, Mr. Thomas, there's somethin' I've been keeping from you.

**Mr. Thomas**

You don't have to tell me nothin' you don't want to now...

**Miss O'Riley**

You see, dear Mr. Thomas, I'm already married!

**Mr. Thomas**

What?

**Miss O'Riley**

It was years and years ago... Well, maybe not that many... I was just a wee lass of seventeen. I was back in the green country of Ireland. I married a sailor boy -- the sweetest lad you ever set two eyes on. But then come my shame!

**Mr. Thomas**

What on earth happened, Miss O'Riley

**Miss O'Riley**

The lad was a sailor boy, in the American navy. He left with his ship, promisn' to send for his blushin' bride the second he got back into port. I waited a year for that call -- but he never called. He never sent any word at all. Finally, my mum gave me some money, and I came here to look for him. But it was like he took and vanished from the face of this earth. I'll never know if he was killed, or lost at sea, or if he -- well -- just didn't want the young Irish girl he took as a bride.

*(She dabs at her eyes with a hanky.)*

But you see -- he's my husband.

**Mr. Thomas**

But after all this time! Surely you could have a divorce...

**Miss. O'Riley**

You just stop right there. Johnny and I were married before God. I'm a good catholic girl. When I got married, I got married for good and always... for better or worse... Of course there's been precious little better, and a whole lot of worse, but that's just a woman's lot in this world. Yes, that's the whole truth of it, Mr. Thomas. I'm really Mrs. Johnny Jones. And I'll be Mrs. Johnny Jones till the day I die. So, I'm afraid that as much as I may feel toward you, and despite your kind feelings toward me, we can never be but friends. I've got'a wait for my Johnny.

**Mr. Thomas**

Oh, Miss O'Riley -- or Mrs. Jones -- I certainly admire a woman who sticks to her principles. You're a fine lady.

*(He takes her hands.)*

I'll be proud to have you as my friend.

**Miss. O'Riley**

Mr. Thomas. You're a dear man.

*(They move in closer -- about to kiss. A beat. Then, at the last moment there is a sound from the front porch. They both jump up. Mr. Thomas goes to the window.)*

Who is it?

**Mr. Thomas**

It's the mister. He's stretching himself out on the front porch.

**Miss. O'Riley**

Oh...

**Mr. Thomas**

Well now... ahem... I guess I better be gettin' on to some work.

**Miss. O'Riley**

Yes indeed. And I've got lunch to work on.

*(They start to leave in opposite directions, Thomas R, O'Riley, L. They both stop at their respective door.)*

**Mr. Thomas**

Miss O'Riley?

**Miss O'Riley**

Yes!

**Mr. Thomas**

Are we still a date for Sunday?

**Miss O'Riley**

Of course, Mr. Thomas. I'm looking forward to it.

*(They both smile shyly at each other. O'Riley exits.)*

**Mr. Thomas**

What a woman!

*(Mr. Thomas opens door to exit. As he does so, Renard slips in, unseen. Thomas gives one last look to where O'Riley just left, sighs, and exits. Renard plops on the sofa. Mark enters, breathing hard from his jog. He wipes his face with towel. He tosses it. It lands on Renard. Mark goes to suitcase to get fresh clothes, back to sofa. Renard snaps his fingers. Those strange tinkling chimes are heard. Renard deftly rolls the towel, and gives Mark a snap on the ass.)*

**Renard**

Did we loose this?

**Mark**

*(wheels around and stares, stunned)*

What the... Where the hell did you come from?

**Renard**

Plymouth -- England -- originally. Why?

**Mark**

Don't be cute...

**Renard**

*(posing)*

You think I am? I prefer debonair... rakish...

**Mark**

Listen, cut the shit. What the hell are you doing in my house?

**Renard**

I'd be a wee bit careful about your use of possessive pronouns.

**Mark**

What? And why are you dressed like that?

**Renard**

*(standing)*

You like it? I always thought the tailor could have made the sleeves a little puffier...

**Mark**

Either you tell me who you are this second, or I go for the cops.

**Renard**

*(Springs to the stairs, pops a pipe in his mouth and poses next to the portrait. He waits. No response. He pulls out the pipe)*

Well? I'd offer to paint you a picture, but it's been done...

*(Pops pipe back in and poses again.)*

**Mark**

Oh... Oh! I get it. You're the one who's been cooking up this ghost business. I won't call the cops, I'll call the funny farm. Now get out.

**Renard**

I can't. Oh, I can leave the house, but not the grounds. I never could figure out why...

**Mark**

OK. That's it. You're probably dangerous.

*(a light-bulb)*

You're the one Miss. O'Riley saw! You're the reason old Mr. Thomas has a broken arm! You're a sick man, you know? Trying to make people believe there's a ghost here.

**Renard**

Why would anyone believe that?

**Mark**

If you're not out by the count of five, I'm getting the police.

**Renard**

I love a man of action.

**Mark**

OK. 1... 2...

*(Renard lounges back on the sofa and lights his pipe)*

3... 4... Well?

**Renard**

Modern education! Five! Five comes next.

**Mark**

Oh. Are you asking for it...

*(heading for phone)*

**Renard**

Asking for it! I'd beg for it. You know how long it's been since I've had any?

**Mark**

*(dialing)*

Probably a rapist too.

**Renard**

*(eyeing Mark)*

Rape? Hmmmm... Well, it's a thought if you insist...

**Mark**

Hello.... Operator? Get me the...

*(Suddenly, Renard points his finger. There is a small puff of smoke and a pop from the phone. Mark jumps back.)*

What the fuck... Hello? Hello?

*(he turns to Renard)*

It's dead!

**Renard**

I prefer "passed-on."

**Mark**

OK. Fine.

*(He spins and heads for the door. Renard*

*points again. The door slams shut. There is the sound of a lock snapping home. Mark wheels around.)*

Did you...

**Renard**

*(gives an innocent shrug)*

I've been sitting right here. You're the one running about like you were touched.

**Mark**

Oh... Oh, I see. I don't know what your game is, but you've got the place rigged, don't you? Little wires here, little buttons there...

**Renard**

Just be calm lad.

*(pats the sofa)*

Sit yourself down. We need to talk.

**Mark**

I have no intention of talking.

*(heads for kitchen arch)*

**Renard**

I've done the back door too...

*(Mark heads for stairs.)*

The windows are too high up there.

**Mark**

*(pulling himself together)*

OK. I can't leave. Not this second anyway. What do you want?

**Renard**

*(Putting his feet up)*

Well, you looked awfully fetching in that little white strap affair. We might start there?

**Mark**

What? Would you get to the point?

**Renard**

All right. Care to copulate?

**Mark**

What! I mean, NO! Of course not. I don't even know you. You're a housebreaker -- a male housebreaker.

**Renard**

Oh, come now.

*(He cocks his sailor hat rakishly.)*

I'm not that bad am I?

**Mark**

Listen. Even if I was into that -- which I'm not-- I don't go to bed with people who break into my house... lock me in... scare my maid to death... dynamite my phone...

**Renard**

All right! All right. Just asking. You're so tense.

*(one last try)*

Sex is marvelous relaxation... You look a little... frustrated... shall we say, and I certainly have nothing better to do at the moment...

**Mark**

Read my lips

**Renard**

Hmmmm

**Mark**

I don't do that. OK? Never. You want to go now? This is insane.

**Renard**

*(with a sly wink)*

Never's a long time. Never had the nerve to try it, Hmmmm?

**Mark**

What!

**Renard**

Not back in your impetuous youth... a little fling perhaps.

**Mark**

How did you know about... Look that was years ago. I was drunk. Why am I telling you this? Listen, If you're not out of here in three seconds, I'm starting to tie bed sheets together and climb out one of the windows.

**Renard**

All right. All right. I've just become a wee bit fond of you lad, so I thought I should warn you...

**Mark**

Warn me! No, I'm warning you. My wife will be home soon. Or the maid. Or the roof man -- he's a sheriff. You'd better get out of here.

**Renard**

Your wife. Yes. She is the problem.

**Mark**

You leave my wife out of this.

**Renard**

I'm afraid she's going to leave you out of -- everything...

**Mark**

Would you just say what you have to say and get out?

**Renard**

All right. Sit down

**Mark**

I'd rather stand.

**Renard**

Have it your way. You have a broker?

**Mark**

Yes.

**Renard**

By the name of Howard?

**Mark**

Yes. So?

**Renard**

He's having an affair with your wife.

**Mark**

Be serious.

**Renard**

I'm seldom serious. It's so tiresome. But I assure you, they are.

**Mark**

OK. All right. My wife and my broker are having an affair. I don't believe it for a minute, but you've told me. You can go now.

**Renard**

I'm afraid there's just a wee bit more.

**Mark**

Yes? Well?

**Renard**

You've more than a bit of money I take it?

**Mark**

Ah Ha! Now we get to it! Bribery... extortion? Blackmail? What?

**Renard**

Try murder.

**Mark**

*(backing up nervously, looking for a weapon)*

Murder? Hmmm Well... I think I liked it better when you were talking rape.

**Renard**

*(rolling his eyes to heaven)*

Not me, you mare's behind... Her! Your wife and Howard are going to murder you.

**Mark**

That is the most ridiculous...

**Renard**

And while having some company about for a few centuries wouldn't really bother me, I really thought I should do the unselfish thing and...

**Mark**

Company, for centuries... Boy you are a real whacko.

**Renard**

If you weren't so cute, I'd find you a damned boor. I'd better keep you alive. Who would want to spend eternity with the sexually stagnant -- not to mention brain-dead...

**Mark**

Brain-dead! Now look here you...

**Renard**

*(Commanding, his voice suddenly reverberating through the house.)*

Enough! It will be axle grease. On the upper stairs. You stand warned. I think I'll float off to someplace more pleasant.

**Mark**

Float off? Oh... the ghost bit again. OK, ghost, why don't you just walk through a wall. Or disappear. That would be perfect. Just disappear why don't you?

**Renard**

Why are the pretty ones always so dense? Very well. I'll go.

*(He rises, then gives a wicked little grin.)*

But if you should change your mind about the other... Oh never mind. Take care lad.

### Mark

Would you stop calling me... (lad)

*(But Renard snaps his fingers. The tinkling of tiny bells is heard. Mark gapes. Renard, now unseen, sidesteps just as Mark takes a couple of swipes in the empty air where Renard disappeared.)*

What... The... Fuck... Gone! He's totally gone! I'm loosing it. It must be overwork. Or the sun... I haven't been drinking have I? Dreaming? That's it. I'm not here. I'm upstairs. Asleep. She told the gay ghost story, and I'm having gay ghost dreams. Wake up.

*(He slaps himself.)*

Wake up!

*(again)*

OK. I'm not asleep. There was a burglar here. I must have looked away for a second. There's a trap door or something.

*(Halfheartedly he looks around for a trap door - he know's there's not one. He sits on the floor with a thud.)*

I'm bonkers. I've got to call somebody...

*(He springs up and jumps for the phone.)*

It works! But...

*(Suddenly he heads for the door. It opens easily. He swings it shut, then open, a couple of more times.)*

Maybe I should stop jogging... the exertion... Or maybe... NO! There are no such things as ghosts... Stupid...

*(Suddenly, the door swings shut again...)*

Oh shit....!! Betsy! Miss. O'Riley... Mr. Thomas...

*(no answer)*

I've got to get out of here.

*(Mark starts for the front door, decides not to touch it, turns and heads out the kitchen door.)*

A little walk. By the beach. Something to clear my head. Yeah. I'm not really crazy... Just a little crazy...

*(He exits mumbling. Renard follows. Miss. O'Riley enters down the stair.)*

### Miss O'Riley

Hello! Now I could have sworn I heard that nice boy a-callin'! Hmmm.

*(She shrugs.)*

I'll just go see if he's in the kitchen...

*(Betsy pokes her head in the front door, checks*

*that the coast is clear, then motions Howard in.)*

**Betsy**

*(whispering)*

I just saw Mark heading down for the beach. I don't see the maid.

*(Off we hear the clink of dishes and Miss O'Riley's voice... "When Irish Eyes are Smilin"...)*

Quick, upstairs! She's doing dishes.

**Howard**

I've got the stuff right here!

*(He pulls a can of axle grease from under his jacket.)*

**Betsy**

Good! You take care of the stairs. I'll get Mark up there. Hurry! Wait! When you're done, go down the servants stairs and let me know...

*(Howard sneaks up the stairs as Miss. O'Riley enters.)*

**Miss. O'Riley**

Oh, There you are now...

**Betsy**

*(in front of stairs)*

Yes indeed! Here I am! Don't you need to finish lunch or something?

**Miss. O'Riley**

Oh, heavens no. The pot's on the stove. I'll just go up and make up the beds.

**Betsy**

No! I mean, I hate made beds. Unmade beds are so much more... casual... don't you think?

**Mrs., O' Riley.**

Whatever you fancy, miss. I can do some dustin' then! The upstairs hall is just caked with it.

**Betsy**

Dusting... Well yes... Dusting is... good... But I really think you should start down here.

**Miss. O'Riley**

But I just did down here yesterday

**Betsy**

Well more dust just settled. Do it again. I'm going upstairs, and I don't want to be disturbed.

**Miss. O'Riley**

Well, whatever you like, miss.

*(Howard's face appears at the window O'Riley's back is to it, but Betsy sees.)*

I suppose I could do the windows.

**Betsy**

Windows! No!

*(taking Miss. O'Riley by the shoulders and holding her so she can't turn around)*

I mean, you've been working much too hard. Just sit down! Relax.

*(Howard gives the high sign through the window. Behind O'Riley's back, Betsy signals back.)*

Oh! I feel like some fresh air! When Mark comes in, be sure to tell him that I'm upstairs on the widow's walk. He's to come right up. OK?

**O'Riley**

Of course, Miss. I'll give the mister the message. Would you like me to bring lunch up.

**Betsy**

NO!

**O'Riley**

Well it was just a suggestion! You're so jumpy.

**Betsy**

I need to speak to Mark privately. Now you stay right here so you can tell him the moment he comes in.

**O'Riley**

As you wish, ma'am.

*(noises off)*

But I think that's him now. You can tell him yourself...

**Betsy**

*(nearly shoving O'Riley toward the kitchen)*

No, you send him up. I've got a little... surprise for him.

**O'Riley**

Well! Isn't that sweet.

*(Patting her on the shoulder and whispering)*

I'll give you just a wee moment, then send him right up.

*(She hustles off to kitchen)*

**Betsy**

I'll be damned if I'm going up any greased stairs.

*(Betsy, being careful to make not a sound, lets herself out the front door. Mark enters agitated. O'Riley follows.)*

**Mark**

I tried to walk. I can't concentrate. Do I look sick, Miss. O'Riley?

**Miss. O'Riley**

Well, you do look a mite flushed, dear.

**Mark**

Where's Betsy? I really need to talk to somebody.

**Miss. O'Riley**

She told me to tell you she's waiting up on the widow's walk for you.

**Mark**

Widows walk. Right. Betsy!

*(Calling, he heads up the stairs. O'Riley shakes her head, signals (crazy) and exits to kitchen. The door opens a crack, and Betsy and Howard's heads peer around the door, listening...)*

**Betsy**

*(whispering)*

He'll be up one flight now...

*(a couple of beats)*

**Howard**

Now two. I slicked up the bad step at the top of the third.

*(a couple of beats)*

**Betsy**

Any second now...

*(another beat, then offstage, there is a long, male scream followed by a series of thuds.)*

**Betsy**

We're rich!!!

*(Betsy and Howard kiss passionately. Blackout)*

## ACT II

### Scene 1

*(The following evening. The stage is empty at rise but voices are heard off R.)*

#### Miss. O'Riley

*(off)*

Now take care there. Mind the steps... You know, it's a wonder your neck wasn't busted in twain!

*(Enter Miss O'Riley and Mr. Thomas. Mr. Thomas now sports a second cast, this one on his leg. He walks with a crutch on one side, Miss O'Riley on the other.)*

#### Mr. Thomas

Well, it might'a' been if the mister hadn't been comin' up and broke my fall. I thank you, Miss O'Riley. You've been awful kind, waiting with me at the hospital like that.

#### Miss. O'Riley

Oh, 'twas nothing really. And you're not to worry about a thing. The mister -- he's such a nice young man -- he said he'd take care of all the bills!

#### Mr. Thomas

I just can't figure how I could'a fell like that. That top step seemed slick as a greased pig.

#### Miss. O'Riley

The mister and me, we checked it all out after we came back from the hospital last night. It wasn't slick a bit. In fact, it looked clean as a whistle, it did!

#### Mr. Thomas

Well, I'll take more care with them stairs in the future, believe me! Where's the missis? Never caught sight of HER at the hospital.

#### Miss. O'Riley

Oh, she looked awfully upset! She was running about like a wild thing! She said her nerves were gone up the spout. She had to stay here and lay herself down. If you were to ask me, she didn't look all that frail. She could have come and at least checked in on you.

**Mr. Thomas**

Now, it wasn't all that bad. I can still get around fine. I'll be all mended up in no time.

**Miss. O'Riley**

But ever since then, the mister has been actin' so strangely!

**Mr. Thomas**

How do you mean?

**Miss. O'Riley**

Well, he...

*(looks around, whispers)*

Well, he never came home last night!

**Mr. Thomas**

No! Not -- another woman?

**Miss. O'Riley**

Not a bit! Oh, he drive home with me all right, but he wouldn't even come inside. And the car never left! I saw him now ant then out my window, just walking up and down, back and forth, he was, along that roc ky shore! Not a wink of sleep!

**Mr. Thomas**

You don't say.

**Miss. O'Riley**

But that's not the half of it. Early this mornin' while I'm gettin' breakfast, he comes in, all done in he was... and mumblin'! Somethin' about ghost and car axles... Turrible strange he looked, too!

**Mr. Thomas**

Well, even the nicest city folk can be a mite peculiar.

**Miss. O'Riley**

Then, he heads straight up for his room and locks himself in! All day long he was there -- at least till I left to get you! And I think -- I think he's been...

*(whispers)*

Drinkin' up there!

**Mr. Thomas**

No!

**Miss. O'Riley**

But, Lord knows, it's none of my business. It's you needs taking care of.

**Mr. Thomas**

Oh, posh.

**Miss. O'Riley**

That's why I want you right here. I'll just get you on upstairs and into bed! Someone's got'a look out for you, Mr. Thomas!

**Mr. Thomas**

Aw, I'm all right. But I'm awful grateful for your helping me out.  
*(They start for stairs.)*

**Miss O'Riley**

Now, come along. Just lean on me. That's right. We'll get you all comfy up in the guest room.  
*(As they head up, Mark is coming down, a glass in hand. He is about 2 out of 3 sheets to the wind.)*

Faith! Sir! You startled me!

**Mark**

Ah! My dear Miss O'Riley... My dear, dear, dear Miss. O'Riley.  
*(He plants a kiss on both her cheeks, and then a big smack on her lips.)*

**Miss. O'Riley**

Mr. Taylor! You forget yourself!

**Mark**

*(draping an arm around Miss. O'Riley)*  
Ah! You know what we have here Mr. Thomas? A virtuous woman! Do you know the value of a virtuous woman, Mr. Thomas?

**Mr. Thomas**

I'm not entirely sure, sir...

**Mark**

Her weight in gold! Yes sir, worth her weight in gold. Now our little Irish blossom here... at that rate she's worth a good deal, I'd say.

*(gives Miss. O'Riley a tweak on the chin)*

**Miss. O'Riley**

*(giggling)*

Mr. Taylor! Behave yourself. Faith and begorrah!

**Mark**

Faith... Hmmmmm Begorrah. I never new what that meant... Faith and Begorrah!

**Miss O'Riley**

It means...

**Mark**

*(breaking into song)*

My Wild Irish Rose!  
The sweetest flower that grows...

*(forgetting the rest)*

Uh... Toora Looa Looa, Toora Looa Lie!!!

*(On the high note, he raises his glass, falls backwards down the stairs and lands on his butt on the floor.)*

**Miss O'Riley**

*(Trying to grab Mark, she lets go of Mr. Thomas. O'Riley tries to help Mark up.)*

Sweet Jesus! Mr. Taylor!

*(Thomas is trying to keep his balance on the steps. His arms flail once, twice, but on the third, he goes down with a thud. O'Riley has Mark half way up when she sees Thomas go.)*

Mr. Thomas!!!

*(She unceremoniously drops Mark (splat) and goes for Thomas. She tries to help up Thomas but half way up she loses her leverage and*

*goes down on top of him. Both roll down the stairs and land on Mark. At this point, Betsy enters from kitchen.)*

**Betsy**

Well! Are we all having fun?  
Mark

*(muffled from beneath Thomas and O'Riley)*

And we're climbing a stairway to heaven...

**Betsy**

*(as Thomas and O'Riley help each other up)*

You children can play these games upstairs.

**Miss O'Riley**

Miss! I was just helpin'...

**Betsy**

And as for you...

**Mark**

*(from the floor)*

Do you think you could bring me another little nightcap?

**Betsy**

Up! Now. I have to drive all the way into the city tonight and I don't have time for this nonsense!

**Mark**

*(Crawling up to her like a puppy)*

Are you worth your weight in gold, sugar???

**Betsy**

Considerably more. Now, up we go...

*(dragging him to his feet)*

**Mr. Thomas**

Oooooo! My thumb!

**Miss O'Riley**

Let me see... Oh dear me! I think it's sprained!

*(Indeed, the thumb is sticking up at an odd angle.)*

**Mr. Thomas**

Oh, now... Don't fret. It's nothing... Good night ma'am... sir...

*(O'Riley helps him up stairs and off.)*

**O'Riley**

*(as they exit)*

Nothing you say! It could be broken! We'll get some ice right on that...

*(She frets as the sound fades up the stairs.)*

**Betsy**

Now you! Off to bed too!

**Mark**

A little nookie before bedie???

**Betsy**

Maybe tomorrow. Now. I'm just going to check on the apartment, pick up a few things I forgot, and I'll be back around noon tomorrow.

**Mark**

The sun'll come out tomorrow,  
bet your bottom dollar...

*(slaps her ass on "bottom")*

**Betsy**

Mark! What's gotten into you? I've never even seen you tipsy! You lock yourself in your room all day and then come out like this! Now go upstairs and get in bed. Sleep it off.

**Mark**

Goin' where?

**Betsy**

*(over innocent)*

Oh, just to the city. I DO have responsibilities, you know.

**Mark**

Wouldn't you rather...

*(winks)*

Let's bungle in the jungle...

*(Betsy stares him down. Mark droops his head and heads for the landing. He stops and turns...)*

**Betsy**

Go!

**Mark**

OK. OK.

*(He turns and starts up.)*

You can't hide those lyin' eyes...

*(etc. and off)  
(Betsy doesn't move until Mark is completely out of sight. Renard, unseen, enters from arch and leans, watching. When Mark is safely gone, Betsy switches out lights, rushes to the door, quietly opens it, and looks out"...)*

**Betsy**

Pssst Pssst.... Where are you?

**Howard**

*(poking his head around kitchen arch)*

Pssst! Pssst! Betsy?

**Renard**

*(moves center grinning. He puts a handkerchief to his mouth -- muffled...)*

Over here...

**Betsy**

Howard? Is that you?

*(moving C)*

**Howard**

Betsy?

*(moving C)*  
*(Quietly, Renard moves back, away from where they are converging. When they are almost to meet, he suddenly clicks on light switch. Howard and Betsy jump out of their skin and grab each other.)*

**Miss. O'Riley**

Everything all right down there?

*(off)*

**Betsy**

Yes! Yes, fine. Go back to bed.

*(rushing to stairs)*

*(While Betsy and Howard are turned toward stairs, Renard swipes Betsy's purse from where she dropped it, and slides it under sofa. Betsy whispers...)*

Where the hell were you?

**Howard**

I came in the back way... Come on. We'd better get out of here before somebody comes down.

**Betsy**

Wait... I can't find my purse....

**Howard**

I've got keys. Come on...

*(Hurriedly, they start for door. As Howard passes Renard, the ghost deftly lifts a set of keys from Howard's coat pocket. Exeunt Howard and Betsy.)*

**Mark**

How dry I am... How dry I am... Nobody knows...

*(coming down stairs)*

*(Renard places himself directly in Mark's path to the kitchen. He snaps his fingers. A tinkling*

Oh. It's you.

*of bells. Mark stops dead in front of him.)*

*(Unconcerned, Mark detours around Renard and heads for kitchen)*

**Renard**

Oh, it's you??? I do my best trick and all I get is "Oh, it's you?"

*(at arch, talking to Mark off)*

Aren't you just a wee bit interested in what's going on around here?

**Mark**

*(reentering with full glass)*

No.

**Renard**

I'm a Ghost! That, at least, should elicit some reaction.

**Mark**

You're a ghost. I'm getting drunk.

**Renard**

A paltry little correction. You are drunk.

**Mark**

Not drunk enough.

**Renard**

*(a grin)*

For what?

**Mark**

*(dirty look)*

Never mind.

*(starts for stairs)*

**Renard**

Your wife just left with your broker. Not two minutes ago.

**Mark**

*(turning)*

I don't believe you.

**Renard**

Why would I lie?

**Mark**

How should I know? You're a ghost! A fiend! A sex fiend. Get rid of the skirt, make way for the boys!

**Renard**

I told you what they were going to do. I even told you about the axle grease on the stairs. You're lucky to be alive.

**Mark**

I'm not so sure.

*(takes a swallow)*

Betsy would never... You must have done it. Yeah. Right. It was you. Not them... her... you.

**Renard**

Drink enough and maybe you'll even believe it.

**Mark**

I DO believe it. Just go home -- or blip off -- or do whatever you spirits do at night...

**Renard**

I think not, laddie. We're going to stay here.

*(Reaching for Mark)*

**Mark**

*(as Renard pilots him back down stairs and behind sofa)*

No we're not. I'm staying right here.

*(They make a circle.)*

**Renard**

Shhhh! They're coming back!

**Mark**

*(stopping the weak struggle)*

Who?

**Renard**

You know who...

**Mark**

Why?

**Renard**

*(dangling keys)*

They can't leave...

*(a sound is heard at the door)*

**Mark**

Bets...

**Renard**

*(clamping a hand over Mark's mouth)*

Hide, you idiot!

*(Renard pulls him down behind the sofa. Betsy and Howard enter stealthily from front door.)*

**Howard**

This is ridiculous! I know the keys were right here.

**Betsy**

Well, obviously they weren't.

**Harold**

Darling, you can't find your purse either.

**Betsy**

Hell.

**Harold**

They've got to be here.

**Betsy**

Maybe I just shouldn't go...

**Harold**

But poopsie! I've got the motel... I've got my snuggle bunny... I even bought some pomegranate joy jelly...

**Betsy**

Ooooo. Well then, maybe...

**Harold**

And soon it'll be just my little snookims and me!

**Betsy**

All we need now is the saw.

**Harold**

And a little shove...

**Betsy**

That widow's walk was made to order!

**Harold**

Why mess with stairs when we can watch him tumble all the way down a cliff!

**Betsy**

He'll go SPLAT!

**Harold**

Squish!

**Betsy**

There'll be nothing left...

**Harold**

Except the Swiss Accounts!

**Betsy**

And the Trump Towers Condo!

*(They are feeling up each other, getting hotter by the dollar.)*

**Harold**

And the speed boat...

**Betsy**

And the Porshe!

**Harold**

And the parties...

**Betsy**

And the Pearls...

**Harold**

And the stocks...

**Betsy**

*(reaching ecstasy)*

And the smooth, sleek, slutty silk stockings!

*(They kiss passionately. Mark appears from behind the sofa, ready to go for the throat. Renard's arm appears and pulls him down.)*

**Betsy**

*(breaking embrace)*

But first the keys.

**Harold**

Right

**Betsy**

Let's try the kitchen.

*(They exit. Renard and Mark pop up behind sofa.)*

**Renard**

Seen enough?

*(Incoherent growling sounds come from Mark's throat as he makes choking gestures toward the kitchen.)*

Believe me now, cute stuff?

**Mark**

I'll kill them. Now. with my bare hands.

**Renard**

Bad idea. Bad.

**Mark**

Why?

**Renard**

Read Blithe Spirit.

**Howard**

*(off)*

Well, they're not in here.

*(Mark would head for them, but Renard quickly clamps a hand over his mouth again and drags him down. Then, Renard's hand appears, and drops keys on sofa. Howard appears at the arch with Betsy.)*

**Howard**

Where else could they be?

**Betsy**

Did you look behind the sofa?

**Howard**

No. I'll try there.

**Betsy**

*(Plopping on sofa)*

Ouch!

**Howard**

*(about to discover Mark, turns)*

What?

**Betsy**

*(standing, rubbing her butt)*

I sat on them.

**Howard**

They weren't there a second ago. I looked!

**Betsy**

Well, never mind. Let's just get out of here. This place spooks me.

**Howard**

Right.

*(They head for the door, but just as they get there Renard's hand appears above the sofa, gesturing. The front door swings open.)*

**Betsy**

The... Wind! It was just the wind...

**Harold**

Right. Big... wind...

*(They look at each other, look at the door, look at each other again...)*

**Howard and Betsy**

Let's go out the back!

*(They do. Slowly, Mark and Renard rise from*

*behind the sofa.)*

**Mark**

They're planning to kill me. They really are.

**Renard**

I noticed that right off.

**Mark**

My wife and Howard.

**Renard**

Same ones I saw, matey.

**Mark**

They're lovers or something.

**Renard**

Or something... Poor boy! You'll have to look elsewhere for affection.

*(Sigh. Gives Mark's butt a little pinch.)*

**Mark**

Stay away from me.

**Renard**

Not a chance. And that's gratitude for you! I put you on to their plot!

**Mark**

You really are a ghost.

**Renard**

You're so quick.

**Mark**

And my wife is trying to kill me

**Renard**

Alex Trebec would be so proud...!

**Mark**

And she's having an affair with my best friend.

**Renard**

Did I hear that somewhere before?

**Mark**

I thought if I drank enough it would all become an alcoholic hallucination.

**Renard**

I'm not going to try to think that through.

**Mark**

Oh shit.

*(He sits. Renard begins to rub his shoulders.)*

My wife's a would-be murderess, she's laying my broker -- with joy jelly no less... there's a gay ghost rubbing my shoulders. I'm drunk... What the hell am I goin to do?

**Renard**

Nothing like a little romp in the hay to make a man forget his troubles!

**Mark**

You're impossible. Besides, I'm straight.

**Renard**

Well, there was that once in college...

**Mark**

Allen.

**Renard**

Allen?

**Mark**

He was a gymnast. We were drunk. I didn't enjoy it. Well, I mean I guess I enjoyed it, but since I'm straight I couldn't really enjoy it. Isn't that right?

**Renard**

Your wife is cheating on you, you're about to be murdered, and you're worried about your manly image???

**Mark**

She doesn't love me.

**Renard**

*(Renard is unbuttoning Mark's shirt.)*

It would seem unlikely.

**Mark**

She doesn't even like me.

**Renard**

Did Allen?

**Mark**

Well, he didn't try to kill me...

**Renard**

Then stick to men, mate. Women aboard ship are bad luck...

**Mark**

She wants my money for herself.

**Renard**

*(to heaven)*

He is so quick!

**Mark**

Don't be cute - my life is over.

**Renard**

Now there's an idea.

**Mark**

I might as well be dead

**Renard**

*(Renard massages his chest)*

That would solve things for everybody, wouldn't it?

**Mark**

*(Jumps up)*

My god, you're dead - I'm letting a corpse play with my pecs.

**Renard**

Corpse is so -- ghoulish. I think I prefer... Succubus?

**Mark**

But you're a man... And you ARE dead.

**Renard**

*(glancing at Mark's crotch)*

Looks like something else is quite alive though.

**Mark**

NO!

*(checks)*

Well, yes... I mean, it's just that I'm drunk... Listen, just stay back for a second... Back! I've got to think things through.

**Renard**

*(Sits)*

So think.

**Mark**

I can't.

**Renard**

Try.

**Mark**

Help me.

**Renard**

I thought I was.

**Mark**

I could call the Police.

**Renard**

With what evidence?

**Mark**

I could kill them.

**Renard**

And have all three of us popping in and out?

**Mark**

I could set them up.

**Renard**

How?

**Mark**

By getting a witness when they try to do it.

**Renard**

Who?

**Mark**

You could hide and listen... watch...

**Renard**

Oh, I'd be great before the dock.

**Mark**

Oh... Right.

**Mark**

If I could just let them go through with it without getting killed.

**Renard**

It's not as bad as all that.

**Mark**

*(getting excited)*

It could work!

**Renard**

What?

**Mark**

They're going to push me off the widow's walk, right?

**Renard**

Right.

**Mark**

*(Grabbing Renard's hands)*

So you'll be there.

**RENARD**

*(a grin)*

I'm right here, lubber.

**Mark**

*(Grabbing RENARD'S upper arms)*

As I fall...

**Renard**

I think you're falling fast...

**Mark**

you appear under me...

**Renard**

What an idea...

**Mark**

And then you catch me in your arms

**Renard**

*(Obliging)*

Like this.

**Mark**

Like that!

**Renard**

And I kiss you...

*(He does.)*

**Mark**

No... You'll have saved me. Then we go to the police...

**Renard**

No. I Liked the kissing you business better.

*(He does again.)*

**Mark**

God I'm drunk ...

**Renard**

And nibble your neck...

**Mark**

...probably I'm just dreaming...

**Renard**

...and work my way down your stomach...

**Mark**

Anything can happen when you're under a great strain...

**Renard**

*(At zipper)*

Looks like a great strain to me.

**Mark**

Besides, it's not like this is really happening.

**Renard**

*(Mark's shirt falls to the floor.)*

Of course not -- just a drunken delirium.

**Mark**

So there's nothing to feel guilty about...

**Renard**

*(Renard places Mark's hands on his derriere)*

You can feel anything you like, matey...

**Mark**

Wait... What if I like it?

**Renard**

What if you do?

**Mark**

I'm straight. I couldn't like it that much...

**Renard**

*(Kissing Mark's nipple as he unzips Mark's pants.)*

*(kiss)*

How much?

*(kiss)*

This much?

*(kiss)*

That much?

*(kiss)*

More?

**Mark**

More... No! I mean... It's just that I'm too drunk to fight you...

**Renard**

*(loosening Mark's belt)*

And you're putting up a valiant struggle...

*(Mark's pants drop.)*

**Mark**

I can't wait... No! I mean: I can't! Wait! I'm married! What would it do to Betsy if she found out? My wife? It'd kill her!

**Renard**

*(steps back)*

Think on that a moment

**Mark**

*(He does, then very deliberately steps out of his pants.)*

I see what you mean.

*(He kisses RENARD passionately. They are falling back on the sofa as the lights fade to black.)*

**Scene 4**

*(Early the next morning. Mark lies naked on the mantle, lazy, half asleep, with a big grin on his face. )*

**Mark**

*(He is just waking up. He stretches, yawns, then sings lightly...)*

And up he rose and donned his clothes,  
and dupped the chamber door.  
Let in a maid that out a maid  
never departed more...

*(He giggles. He stretches with another big grin and a purr.)*

**Renard**

*(entering with a cup of coffee, wearing only his trousers and eye-patch.)*

Good morning.

**Mark**

*(nearly jumps out of his skin. He snatches Renard's shirt to cover himself... He is a bit confused.)*

Oh my God.

**Renard**

No, just dead, not deified. Though it is a thought.

**Mark**

Then you're real??? I thought...

**Renard**

Seems I was real enough for you.

**Mark**

God! Then it's all real. You -- Betsy -- Howard -- Last night...

**Renard**

Especially last night.

**Mark**

Oh, Jesus, what a hangover...

**Renard**

Coffee?

**Mark**

For me?

**Renard**

Well, I hardly need it.

**Mark**

Did we really...?

**Renard**

Indeed we did.

**Mark**

No... We...

*(rises to take coffee cup)*

*(He suddenly winces, then rubs his ass gingerly.)*

**Mark**

Oh, God. Was I drunk last night.

**Renard**

Not that drunk.

**Mark**

*(turning his back to drop the shirt and slip on underwear)*

Oh, come on, I must have been.

**Renard**

Which time?

**Mark**

How many were there?

**Renard**

Count.

**Mark**

Three?

**Renard**

Four.

**Mark**

No...

*(counts on fingers)*

One, two...

*(Smiles)*

three.

**Renard**

No. That was four. Three was the time I smile thinking about.

**Mark**

*(blush)*

Oh. Right.

*(He stops and looks at Renard fencing with the air.)*

My god. You're really a pirate. You've been hanging around here for three hundred and fifty years!

**Renard**

Nonsense. I'm not a day over three hundred - eleven.

**Mark**

But a pirate! Jesus... Like "Batten the hatches... bring her about... walk the plank... run 'em

through... !

*(realizing the implications.)*

Oh... That sword isn't just for... un... show, is it?

**Renard**

'Fraid not, mate.

**Mark**

Right. Board the ship. Rum 'em through... Cut their throats... Scuttle the ship... Rape the women...

**Renard**

Well, perhaps not the women...

**Mark**

*(turning on him)*

Jesus Christ! You're a murderer, a cutthroat...

**Renard**

Avast there! I don't entirely mind pirate, but I take serious umbrage at cutthroat.

**Mark**

But isn't that what you did?

**Renard**

I NEVER cut a throat.

*(shruggs)*

I ran a few blokes through. What of it?

**Mark**

*(incredulous)*

What of it???

**Renard**

Odd's Bodkin's, man, we were at war! When you saw a ship with a fleur de lis, you fired on her! My abject apologies that we didn't have your fancy cruise missiles to do 'er in with, but once the shot was out of your flintlock, you best be damned handy with one of these or you'd find your milky-white neck swingin' off a French yardarm.

**Mark**

I'm sorry. But I thought she said pirate... Like Blackbeard... Long John Silver...

**Renard**

No, no... Not pirate Privateer.

**Mark**

There's a difference?

**Renard**

*(to a very dense child)*

Listen now. And try to pay attention. In Calais they would have stretched my neck for a buccaneer quick enough. But in London? Hell, I might have been up for a bloody knighthood if I'd lasted a bit longer. My ship was my own. My men were my own. We traded for England, but if we saw a French Barque? Well, we'd take her quick enough or she'd take us. That's just how the game was played. Why, for a grand enough take, I'd be handed a tidy sum from James' own coffers by Marlborough himself.

**Mark**

You knew the Duke of Marlborough?

**Renard**

Biblically?

**Mark**

Never mind. Then how come you have a French name?

**Renard**

My mother was French. My father was English. I was just a bit too -- intemperate shall we say -- for Oxford. So midway into my first term there was a bit of a row over a cockney boy, and my dear old father turned me out without a tuppence. So I went to sea. Four years up and down the Barbary coast.

**Mark**

Gee. Makes real estate sound a little dull.

**Renard**

By the time I was twenty-six I had my own brig. God, a beauty she was! Square-rigged on the

foremast with a fore an' aft on the main...

**Mark**

You miss her, don't you.

**Renard**

*(shrugs)*

Aye. But in three hundred odd years you learn a bit.

**Mark**

Like?

**Renard**

Like: You don't look back. You look forward. You watch the ships come and go. You watch the radio come in -- then the television. Nothin' lasts forever, mate. Nothin'. You find that nothin' much really matters in the whole great scheme of things. So you just learn to enjoy whatever's there. You, for instance, were quite enjoyable.

**Mark**

Uh... Thanks. I guess it had been a long time, huh? You were pretty... wild.

**Renard**

Time is relative. It all depends on how much of it you have left.

**Mark**

Maybe not much.

**Renard**

All right by me, lad.

**Mark**

Listen, I don't want to hurt your feelings... I mean last night was a little... spectacular... But I'm just not ready to go yet.

**Renard**

Sigh. Then it seems you have plot to thwart.

**Mark**

Right. You'll help?

**Renard**

Could I refuse such a delectable little colonial morsel?

**Mark**

Haul in your jib, Renard. Wait! Quiet... I hear something...

**Betsy**

*(Off)*

I wonder if Mark is up yet?

**Howard**

*(Off)*

I'll check out here, you go upstairs.

**Mark**

They're back!

**Renard**

So it would seem. Gotta go!

*(He snaps his fingers and blips out. Bells. Frantically, Mark shoves the rest of Renard's clothes under sofa.)*

**Mark**

But...

**Betsy**

*(entering)*

Oh Mark!

**Howard**

*(off, calling)*

Betsy!

**Betsy**

In here - with MARK. Mark, darling, look who came to see us.

**Mark**

Why Howard. What a surprise.

**Harold**

Mark! How are ya old chum?

**Mark**

Fine. Old chum.

**Betsy**

Mark, be polite. Get up and shake hands.

**Mark**

Oh, sorry, it was a... uh... rough night.

**Renard**

I'll say.

**Betsy**

Mark, what's wrong? You're walking so strangely.

**Mark**

Oh, just a kink - in my leg.

**Renard**

Something in somewhere anyway.

**Mark**

I don't know how it happened...

**Renard**

Try number four.

**Mark**

Now I remember.

**Renard**

I thought you might.

**Mark**

*(trying not to grin)*

Oh, shut up.

**Betsy**

Mark!

**Mark**

No not you. Shut up - in the door - I shut my leg - up - in the car door.

**Betsy**

Oh, poor baby, I hope it feels better soon.

**Mark**

I'm sure it will.

**Betsy**

But why on earth were you sleeping on the sofa?

**Mark**

Oh, I just sort of fell asleep here...

**Renard**

Eventually...

**Mark**

Would you be quiet?

**Betsy**

You're so excitable today, dear. It must be the hangover. Well, we'll go into the kitchen and have some coffee while you dress.

**Howard**

Really good to see you buddy.

**Mark**

I'm sure it is.

**Betsy**

Come along Howard.

*(They exit.)*

**Mark**

I'll kill them.

**Renard**

*(snaps his fingers and pops in. Bells.)*

Don't be too hasty.

**Mark**

The letter opener, that's it. I'll sneak up behind them...

**Renard**

No, definitely not.

**Mark**

Why?

**Renard**

I can't leave this house. If you think I'm spending eternity with the two of them, you've got another thing coming.

**Mark**

Oh. So what do we do?

**Renard**

I have some suggestions.

**Mark**

No not that again. Not now anyway.

**Renard**

Then it's you at the helm, mate.

**Mark**

Wait. You remember what we talked about last night?

**Renard**

Talking is not what I remember about last night.

**Mark**

Be serious. Remember, As they push me off the widows walk, you'll be hovering around out there and catch me before I can get hurt.

**Renard**

And then what?

**Mark**

Then? ...Wait! I know! We'll get the maid up to watch -- or Mr. Thomas... He's the sheriff. We'll have a witness to their murder attempt.

**Renard**

You're so cute when you're scheming. Wouldn't you rather just float around here with me.  
*(nuzzles)*

**Mark**

Cut it out. By the time I'm on your plane forever, I'll probably be a bald old blimp.

**Renard**

How unattractive.

**Mark**

Unless we fail to foil my fickle wife.

**Renard**

That's very true...

**Mark**

So is everything set?

**Renard**

No, wait.

**Mark**

For what?

**Renard**

You can't make me responsible for your life.

**Mark**

Why not?

**Renard**

The temptation would be too great.

**Mark**

What temptation?

**Renard**

To just let you go.

**Mark**

WHAT?!

**Renard**

Don't you see? Then you could be here with me forever. Still young. Still with those pillow wrinkles on your face.

**Mark**

Just a minute...

**Renard**

If you just happened to slip through my fingers - you'd never grow old. Last night could go on through the centuries.

**Mark**

Listen, I don't know about last night - I mean I don't know if that's even what I really want.

**Renard**

It seemed quite enough for you at the time.

**Mark**

Last night I was confused - and angry - and... well... Don't you see I'm not ready to die yet?

**Renard**

So you see? We want different things - you can't leave it in my hands, I don't want to decide. I might let you fall.

**Mark**

You wouldn't.

**Renard**

Wouldn't I?

**Mark**

Not after last night.

**Renard**

What?

**Mark**

After what we did last night - the way you looked at me - oh hell - what we had together. I trust you.

**Renard**

Oh bloody hell.

**Mark**

You wouldn't do anything to hurt me. You couldn't.

**Renard**

This is too much. I'm popping out.

*(snapps fingers. Bells.)*

**Mark**

I know you couldn't... Where did you go? Don't take off now. I'm sure you couldn't. I hope he couldn't...

*(flails a couple of times through the air)*

Damnit, where are you?

*(But Renard has taken off up the stairs.)*

**Howard**

*(entering)*

Dressed yet?

**Betsy**

Howard thought we could have a nice morning out on the widow's walk.

**Mark**

Could we?

**Betsy**

I'll have Miss. O'Riley bring up breakfast.

**Mark**

Wouldn't be nicer out on the porch.

**Howard**

Oh no, Mark. You've got to see the view up there. I hear it's wonderful.

**Mark**

I've seen the view.

**Betsy**

But it's so nice out.

**Mark**

No... No I heard the weather report. It's going to rain, in fact it's going to storm - badly - soon.

**Betsy**

Nonsense, there's not a cloud in the sky.

**Howard**

Yes Mark. The three of us get so little time to chat together.

**Mark**

Together... Yes Well, listen, Howard and I get to chat all the time. And you and I - well - we chat constantly don't we? And I'm sure you two would love a chance to catch up. Let's do this: You go up, and I'll join you later...

**Howard**

No. We wouldn't hear of it.

*(taking Mark's arm)*

Would we, Betsy?

**Betsy**

*(Taking Mark's other arm, they start to motor him up the stairs.)*

No indeed. A lovely breakfast with three best friends. What could be nicer?

**Mark**

*(Looking frantically for Renard)*

Nicer? Oh, there's lots of things could be nicer... Uh... I'll get the coffee! Or better yet, why cook? Just makes such a mess...

*(passing the picture)*

Oh! There's the

*(calling)*

SEA CAPTAIN! His name was

*(calling again)*

RENARD!

**Betsy**

You're acting so strangley. A little food will fix you right up!

**Mark**

I don't need fixing. Thanks. I'm fine

**Howard**

*(They're at the top of the stairs by now...)*

But we insist...

*(All three are gone. There is a moment of silence. Then Renard enters, peeved from kitchen arch.)*

**Renard**

Oh, all right, I'll do it. But we'll need a witness. Get Mr.... Mark? Mark, where are you.

*(He realizes...)*

Oh my God... Mr. Thomas! Miss O'Riley... Quickly...

*(He rushes out but Miss. O'Riley is coming down the stairs.)*

**Miss O'Riley**

All right! All right! Stop raising such a thunderous noise...

**Renard**

*(hearing her dashes back into the room)*

Quick, upstairs... To the widow's walk!

**Miss O'Riley**

And who in creation might you....

*(looks at him... at picture... at him again...)*

Sweet Jesus! Not the ghost!!!

*(She starts to take off, but Renard grabs her.)*

**Renard**

Listen to me! There's about to be a murder!

**Miss O'Riley**

No! Help! Help!

**Renard**

*(covering her mouth)*

Not you, you twit! Mark! Mr. Taylor! You've got to hurry!

**Miss O'Riley**

What...?

**Renard**

On the widow's walk, they're going to push him off...

*(shoving her for the stairs)*

Run, woman! Run!

*(Miss O'Riley is confused but obedient, she rushes up. Renard just makes it to the kitchen door when a long scream is heard.)*

**Renard**

Oh, my God... Mark! But I didn't know... Maybe it's not too late...

*(He rushes off through arch. Betsy and Howard are running downstairs.)*

**Betsy**

What are we going to do? The old man saw us!

**Howard**

I thought you said he was laid up in bed!

**Betsy**

How the hell did I know he'd be up fixing a roof with a broken leg, a broken arm and a bent thumb?

**Howard**

We've got to get him too...

**Betsy**

He was going down the back way, we'll cut him off outside.

*(They rush through the front door.)*

**Miss. O'Riley**

*(enters through arch, panting)*

Mr. Thomas! Mr. Taylor! What's happened? Where is everyone? I've been up the front and down the back... There's nobody!

**Mark**

*(Entering through front door)*

Miss O'Riley!

**Miss. O'Riley**

Mr. Taylor! Thank God you're all right! There was someone here. He told me...

**Mark**

I'm fine... But they're after Mr. Thomas!

**Miss. O'Riley**

Oh, my God! I heard a scream!

**Mark**

Stay here! I'll go!

*(He rushes upstairs)*

**Mr. Thomas**

*(hobbling through at a dead run from outside to up the stairs)*

Miss O'Riley! They're after me! I got one with my crutch! Call the State Police!

*(He is gone. O'Riley heads for the phone. Betsy enters from arch, Howard from door. O'Riley ducks behind couch.)*

**Betsy**

He's not out this way

**Howard**

*(limping)*

He just came in here. The old geezer decked me with a crutch

**Betsy**

Quick! You take the back stairs, I'll take the front! We'll get him!

*(Betsy exits up stairs, Howard out arch. O'Riley pops up with phone.)*

**Miss O'Riley**

Hello? State Police?

*(Renard rushes down stairs)*

**Renard**

He's nowhere! Where did they go?

**Miss O'Riley**

Oh God! The Ghost... No, I'm not some nitwit... Now listen...

*(to Renard)*

They hung up!

**Renard**

Who? Where is every...

**Miss O'Riley**

There going to get Mr. Thomas. I've got to stop them.

*(She rushes up stairs. Thomas enters from arch Renard snaps his fingers and blips out. Mark enters behind Thomas.)*

**Mr. Thomas**

Great idea you had, me doubling back like that.

**Mark**

You head for your truck. I'll keep them here while you get the police!

**Mr. Thomas**

*(switching hats)*

Wait! I am the police! Just let me get my gun. It's in the pickup.

**Mark**

Well, hurry!

**Renard**

*(snaps his fingers and blips in)*

Thank God, you're all right!

**Mark**

No thanks to you! Where the hell were you?

**Renard**

I'll explain later. We've got to...

*(a noise upstairs)*

Oh hell, here they come...

*(Snaps his fingers, bells, blips out)*

**Mark**

Betsy... Oh shit.

*(He snaps his fingers... Bells are heard. Betsy enters down the stairs and sees neither of them.)*

**Betsy**

Howard? Where are you...

*(Renard looks at Mark in amazement. Mark shrugs.)*

**Mark**

*(to Renard)*

Come on,

*(He grabs Renard and pulls him out the arch.)*

**Betsy**

*(spinning around)*

Who said that???

**Thomas**

*(entering front with gun)*

All right, you murderin' hussy! I got you now!

**Betsy**

No! It wasn't me... It was Howard... He made me!

**Thomas**

Bull Pucky. You just sit right there you... you... woman.

*(Keeping her covered, he edges over to phone and dials.)*

I'm gettin' the state troopers. They'll be here in just a few minutes. Then we'll see what's what!

*(Unseen by Thomas, who's back is to stairs, Howard is creeping down.)*

Hello, hello... Art? Is that you? Well this here's Sheriff Thomas. Yes indeed. Oh, the arm's mendin' up nice, thank you kindly. Listen, we've got us a murder down here.... Yup... It's out at the old...

*(But it's too late. Howard has reached for a candlestick from the table, and bashes Mr. Thomas in the back of the head. Betsy jumps up. Howard runs to her.)*

**Betsy**

We did it!

**Howard**

Now to get rid of the body...

**Miss. O'Riley**

*(Entering from stairs)*

Stop your murderin' butts right there, you sons of Orangemen! What have you done to Mr. Thomas??? Why you rotten Protestants!

*(Howard goes for her with Thomas' gun, but in the most amazing display of Kung Foo since Bruce Lee, O'Riley whirls and kicks the gun from his hand.)*

**Miss. O'Riley**

Hie Ya! Take that! And That!

*(A few more twirls, a jump, a kick and a karate chop, and O'Riley has both the lovers on the floor, and is tying them up with her apron strings.)*

There!

*(dusts her hands together)*

My sainted mama didn't tell me to learn some self defense for nothing! You two should be ashamed of yourselves.

*(She spots Mr. Thomas)*

Faith! Mr. Thomas!

*(She runs to him and cradles his head in her lap.)*

Mr. Thomas! Mr. Thomas! Speak to me!

*(She pulls smelling salts from her bosom and holds them under his nose)*

Mr. Thomas... Please...

*(She starts to cry.)*

Oh, Mr. Thomas, please don't be dead on me now...

**Mr. Thomas**

*(coming around)*

What... Where... Miss O'Riley, Katie! What's happenin'? I don't remember a thing!

**Miss. O'Riley**

Oh, my brave Mr. Thomas... Just keep still. You'll be all right. I'll get the ambulance for you!

**Mr. Thomas**

Thomas? Why do you keep callin' me that, Katie? Everything's so fuzzy! I can't remember... Wait!

**Miss. O'Riley**

What on earth is it?

**Mr. Thomas**

*(rising dramatically)*

No, Wait! I remember...

*(grand pause)*

EVERYTHING!

*(He takes her hands)*

Katie... Don't you even recognize me? I loved you so, but my ship was wrecked on the crossing back to America. I would have sent for you darlin', but during my rescue, a sailor, altogether by accident, hit me on the back of the head with an oar! It was amnesia, it was. I couldn't remember a thing! Not till now. I recon that thug clobbering me brought it all back.

**Miss. O'Riley**

You mean.... You mean...

**Mr. Thomas**

Yes, my dear! My name's, not Thomas, though that's what I've been goin' by for all these long years. Now I remember it all. I'm Johnny Jones. And you're my blushing bride.

**Miss. O'Riley**

Oh, Johnny. You looked so familiar, but I never dreamed... Oh, you came back for me!

*(They embrace. Renard and Mark enter from arch.)*

Now come into the kitchen. Come on now. I'll get an ice pack for your poor head...

*(They exit to kitchen.)*

**Mark**

I'm afraid that's all that's left of me washing up there on the rocks.

**Renard**

There's plenty of you left as far as I'm concerned.

**Mark**

They didn't see Mr. Thomas until they'd thrown me over and I was halfway down.

**Renard**

So I guess it's ... eternity.

**Mark**

*(Equivocal)*

Eternity. Yeah.

**Renard**

I'm sorry, Marcus. I truly am. I was too late.

**Mark**

I think I maybe could have stopped them, but...

**Renard**

*(pinching his cheek)*

You did it for me???

**Mark**

No. Well, I guess I...

**Renard**

Yes?

**Mark**

Well I was shouting and yelling, and they were pushing and shoving, and then, -- for one split second -- I flashed on what it might be like hanging out on the mantle with you for the next millennium... And that's all it took: One second of hesitation and there I was, going over the cliff like a fucking lemming.

*(pulling a feather out of his hair)*

I nearly wiped out some poor sea gull on the way down. But then, of course, I thought that a certain antique just might see fit to break my fall before I became fish food...

**Renard**

Marcus, I...

**Mark**

*(a little laugh)*

It's OK. Really. I know you tried. A little late maybe, but you tried. Besides, if I have anyone to thank for my current incorporeal status, it's my loving widow.

**Renard**

*(fishing)*

In all justice, if you were going to cast in with me, it should have been because you'd a mind to, not because they made the choice for you -- or me even...

**Mark**

Can't argue with that.

*(beat)*

**Renard**

*(finally the admission)*

Bloody hell, do I have to lay it all out for you? I want you to bloody be with me because you bloody-well want to be with me, not because of what somebody did to you. -- all right?

**Mark**

*(amused)*

Captain, are you blushing?

**Renard**

Of course not. It's brisk out, that's all.

**Mark**

Look at me. OK, granted, dying was not exactly what I had in mind for today, but it's done. I mean maybe I didn't take hemlock for you, but I'm here. Hell, maybe Betsy and Howie did me a favor.

**Renard**

Just maybe, though...

**Mark**

Would you bloody well shut up!

*(grabs Renard by the shirt and plants a decisive kiss on his lips.)*

**Renard**

*(a whoop)*

Yes, by God!!

*(shouts)*

There's gonna be a fire below decks tonight!

*(Thomas and O'Riley reenter)*

**Miss. O'Riley**

So we're really married, for good and all --- all this time.

**Mr. Thomas**

You're my Mrs. Jones -- and you always will be!

**Miss. O'Riley**

Well, I guess we better get them to the State Troopers.

**Mr. Thomas**

I'm going to hate to leave this old place, it's where we found each other again.

**Renard**

And I hate having to scare off a whole new slew of tenants...

**Mark**

*(to Renard)*

Wait, I've got an Idea...

*(He picks up a pen and wafts it through the air. O'Riley and Thomas, stare in shock.)*

**O'Riley**

Sweet Jesus!

*(crosses herself)*

**Thomas**

*(putting a protective arm around her)*

Ghosts!!!

*(Mark scoops up a piece of paper with a flourish. Thomas & O'Riley jump. Mark sets down the paper and slowly lowers the pen to it. Cautiously, O'Riley and Thomas approach the table and read together as he writes.)*

**O'Riley and Thomas**

I hereby bequeath my entire estate, stocks, bonds, and all I own -- including Widow's Walk House, to Mr. and Mrs. Johnny Jones.

**O'Riley**

Oh, faith, I don't know what to say.

**Betsy**

I do: Shit.

**Howard**

Well you got us into this.

**Betsy**

Oh shut up, thimble-dick.

**O'Riley**

You think it will be all right to stay here -- with the ghost and all?

**Thomas**

Maybe he'll calm down a bit -- now he's got the mister with him...

**O'Riley**

Well, I'm a good catholic girl... and they're... well...

**Thomas**

The church wouldn't approve... but...

**O'Riley**

But nothing. I guess Cardinal O'Connor can place it where the son don't shine! The old poop!  
We'll stay here with those two boys.

**Thomas**

Katie! We'll all be so happy!

**Mark**

*(grinning at Renard)*

You bet we will!

**Thomas**

Mrs. Jones?

*(He offers his arm.)*

**O'Riley**

*(She takes it.)*

Mr. Jones...

**Betsy**

I may be ill.

**Mark**

*(offering his arm)*

Captain?

**Renard**

Mate?

*(Takes it.)*

**Thomas**

Breakfast while we wait for the troopers?

**Miss. O'Riley**

I'd be honored sir!

*(They head for the door, O'Riley turns.)*

Coming boys, wherever you are?

*(She beckons, they exit. Arms about shoulders, Renard and Mark start for kitchen. Renard stops, and whispers in Mark's ear.)*

**Renard**

1... 2... 3...

*(Together, Renard and Mark snap their fingers... Lots of bells...)*

**Renard and Mark**

BOO!

**Howard and Betsy**

Ahhhhhhh!

*(Blackout)*