

DARK ADVENTURE RADIO THEATRE:
BAD MEDICINE

Written by

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Based on "Cool Air" and "The Picture in the House"
by H.P. Lovecraft

And "The Facts in the Case of M. Valdemar"
by Edgar Allan Poe

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SFX: static, radio tuning, snippet of '30s song, more tuning, static dissolves to:

Dark Adventure Radio THEME MUSIC.

ANNOUNCER

Tales of intrigue, adventure, and
the mysterious occult that will
stir your imagination and make your
very blood run cold.

MUSIC CRESCENDO.

ANNOUNCER (CONT'D)

This is Dark Adventure Radio
Theatre, today featuring a special
anthology episode: Bad Medicine.

THEME MUSIC DIMINISHES AND EPISODE MUSIC BEGINS.

CREIGHTON COBB

The literature of the macabre and horrific traverses that shadowy landscape between life and death. From the first days of the primitive "medicine man", we have called on powers physical, pharmaceutical, and magical to heal, and to stave off death. Although the doctors of our modern age can work miracles, the healer's art is an imperfect one, and the consequences of medicine gone wrong can be positively ghastly. Today we bring you three tales of horrific healing and bad medicine, two by our listeners' favorite author, H.P. Lovecraft, and one by Lovecraft's favorite author, the incomparable Edgar Allan Poe. Can an aged physician keep death at bay in "Cool Air"? Will a determined mesmerist unlock the mystery of mortality in "The Facts in the Case of M. Valdemar"? And can an alienist free a young man crippled by horrifying memories in "The Picture in the House"?

MUSIC punctuation.

CREIGHTON COBB (CONT'D)
But first, a word from our sponsor.

A few piano notes from the BILE BEANS JINGLE.

CREIGHTON COBB (CONT'D)
Doctors and chemists dispense
medicines, salves and ointments
that purport to be good for you.
But are they? What goes into these
secret and expensive concoctions? I
don't know about you, but I prefer
to know exactly what I'm ingesting.
So when I feel dyspeptic, I reach
for a tin of Bile Beans. These
nutrient rich, health giving
supplements are made only with
natural ingredients, derived from a
vegetable source known to the
Australian Aboriginals. No
mysteries here - just healthful
plant extracts with a pleasant
licorice flavor. Not sure? Try a
Bile Bean and you'll briskly be
better!

ANNOUNCER
Healthy and handy, Bile Beans
harness wholesome happiness - have
a handful today!

MUSIC TRANSITION.

CREIGHTON COBB
And now for the first act of our
terrifying trilogy, Dark Adventure
Radio Theatre presents H.P.
Lovecraft's "Cool Air".

The HISS and KNOCKING of a steam radiator. The sounds of a New York TENEMENT building. DISTANT TRAFFIC. In other rooms, people FIGHTING, BABIES CRYING, A RADIO playing music. In this room, a young boy STRUGGLES TO BREATHE and hacks with a GOOPY, HORRIBLE COUGH. SONIA sings to him to the tune of "SLEEP MY BABY".

SONIA
(singing)
Sleep my darling babe in quiet,
Be, my darling, ever blessed.
(MORE)

SONIA (CONT'D)
There shall no one come to harm
thee,
Naught shall ever break thy rest.

Fear thou nothing, baby, slumber
Angels watching over you.
You will never--

A door CREAKS OPEN.

EDWIN
How is he--

SONIA
Shhh!

EDWIN
Sonia, my god, it's hot as blazes
in here! How can you--

SONIA
Be quiet, Edwin. He's sleeping.

FOOTSTEPS as Edwin enters.

EDWIN
Let me turn off the radiator.

SONIA
Don't touch it!

EDWIN
All right then I'll--

SONIA
What are you doing?

EDWIN
I'm going to open the window.

SONIA
No, Edwin, don't. Leave it closed!

EDWIN
But he's been burning up with
fever! At least let me take these
blankets off--

SONIA
(vehement)
No! Don't touch him!

EDWIN
(shocked)
Sonia!

The little boy GASPS and COUGHS.

EDWIN (CONT'D)
(near tears)
Our little Jack. I can't... I can't
bear to lose another one.

SONIA
We must have courage. I know what's
best for him. Warmth is what he
needs.

EDWIN
Sonia, please, you're only going to
make yourself sick, too. You both
need fresh air.

The RATTLE of the window as Edwin tries to open it.

SONIA
No! No more cold!

EDWIN
What is wrong with you? Why are you
so afraid of a little cool air?

SONIA
It's... I know what I'm doing.

EDWIN
Do you? How?

SONIA
I knew a doctor once. When I first
moved to the city.

BEGIN MUSIC TRANSITION.

EDWIN
(a glimmer of hope)
Really?

SONIA
Yes. The year before we met.

EDWIN
1923....

SONIA

I had finally secured some work writing for a sob story magazine. It wasn't much of a job, and the pay was meager, of course, so I had a very hard time finding a decent place to live.

EDWIN

Not much has changed. My job is--

SONIA

No, everything has. I finally found a boarding house on west 14th Street that was less disgusting than others I could afford. It was quiet, but owned by a rather difficult Spanish woman. Mrs. Herrero....

3

LANDLADY

3

There's a loud BANGING at the door. Sonia opens it. Her landlady, MRS. HERRERO, speaks with a pronounced Spanish dialect.

MRS. HERRERO

Miss Moore! You make me come all the way up here. I come for the rent.

SONIA

My apologies. I had meant to drop it by your--

MRS. HERRERO

I take it now.

SONIA

Yes, and here's the thing, I have the rent through this week, but I don't have the rest of the month's just yet. Here you are.

MRS. HERRERO

You pay the rest Monday. One dollar extra.

SONIA

A dollar?

MRS. HERRERO

Interest.

SONIA

Um, yes, all right. Very well.
Thank you, Mrs. Herrero.

MRS. HERRERO

I go.

SONIA

Oh, before you go, I wanted to ask
you... there's something dripping
from the ceiling.

MRS. HERRERO

Heh? Show.

SONIA

There, you see the mark on the
ceiling? It's dripping. And if you
smell it..

MRS. HERRERO

(sniffing)

Ay, Dios mio! Amoníaco.

SONIA

It's rather unpleasant.

MRS. HERRERO

Dr. Muñoz. He spill his chemicals.
He is too sick for doctor himself.
Sicker and sicker all the time, but
he, he no see no doctor.

SONIA

He's the one just above me? I've
never seen him.

MRS. HERRERO

He stay all the times in his room.
My boy, Esteban, bring him food,
laundry, medicines, and this -

SONIA

Ammonia. What's wrong with him?

MRS. HERRERO

How do I know? My father, God rest
his soul, in Barcelona, say he was
great doctor, famous. Three month
ago he fix arm for plumber when he
is hurt. He--

SONIA

What did you say his name was?

MRS. HERRERO
Doctor Muñoz.

MUSIC transition.

4 HELL'S KITCHEN CONT'D

4

EDWIN

This doctor was living in a cheap boarding house? What kind of doctor was he?

SONIA

Yes, I wondered that too, at first. But there's a certain amount of pathos in the state of an eminent person who has come down in the world.

EDWIN

Oh please. Sonia, we--

SONIA

No, listen. He saved my life.

EDWIN

What? How?

MUSIC transition. The sound of a TYPEWRITER.

SONIA

One night I was working frantically on an impossible deadline. A heat wave. I hadn't slept. Coffee and cigarettes and coffee.

WEIRD DISCORDANT MUSIC hit and Sonia GASPS.

SONIA (CONT'D)

I felt this sudden pain in my chest. You know my parents both died of heart failure, and doctors had warned me my heart was weak. I remembered what the landlady had said about Dr. Muñoz helping that plumber, so I staggered up the stairs to his door.

5 THE HEART OF THE MATTER

5

Feeble KNOCK. A gentle and elegant Spanish-accented voice responds through the door.

DR. MUÑOZ

Hello?

SONIA

Doctor Muñoz?

DR. MUÑOZ

Yes. Who is it?

SONIA

(with difficulty)

My name is Sonia Moore. I live
downstairs. And I think I'm having
a heart--

THUD and MUSICAL STING as she collapses against the door. The
DOOR GENTLY OPENS.

DR. MUÑOZ

Miss, here. Take my hand. Come in,
let me help you.

FOOTSTEPS. MUSIC. THE CONSTANT PUTTER OF THE COOLING MACHINE.

DR. MUÑOZ (CONT'D)

There we are. Yes, sit here. Easy
now.

SONIA

(delirious)

Thank--

DR. MUÑOZ

No need for that just now, young
lady. Let me see here. Be still. I
touch your wrist, yes?

SONIA

Yes.

The RUSTLE of a sleeve and the TICK of a pocket watch.

DR. MUÑOZ

I see. Yes. You are having trouble
breathing?

SONIA

Yes, a little. I feel dizzy.

DR. MUÑOZ

And you have pain? Where is it
please?

SONIA
Here.

DR. MUÑOZ
Not in your arms?

SONIA
No.

DR. MUÑOZ
In your neck or jaw?

SONIA
No.

DR. MUÑOZ
Good. I see what's happened here,
young friend.

SONIA
I feel so cold. Am I dying?

DR. MUÑOZ
Not just yet. I think we can stave
that off for a few more decades.
Maybe more. But for today, let us
calm your heart, yes?

SONIA
My heart - my doctor said--

DR. MUÑOZ
I am your doctor now.

SONIA
But my heart-

DR. MUÑOZ
Yes, it is under a great strain,
but you've come to the right place.

SONIA
I... don't want to die.

DR. MUÑOZ
You're not going to die here. Death
knows he's not welcome in my home.
Lift up your arm, like that. I
listen with my stethoscope, yes?

SONIA
All right.

DR. MUÑOZ

Death, he knows we are the bitterest of sworn enemies. Breathe in. I have spent my fortunes in a lifetime of experiment devoted to Death's bafflement and extirpation. It has cost me many friends, also. Now cough.

SONIA

(COUGHS FEEBLY)

DR. MUÑOZ

Your heart is weak, Miss, it must be said. But do not be afraid. It's not the most important thing that keeps us alive.

SONIA

It's not?

DR. MUÑOZ

The heart? Heavens, no. A brilliant mechanical pump, yes, it is that. But the will, and consciousness, these are stronger than organic life.

SONIA

What do you mean?

The MACHINE PUTTERS and HICCUPS.

DR. MUÑOZ

If a bodily frame is healthy and carefully preserved, one may enact scientific enhancement upon these qualities so as to retain a kind of nervous animation despite the most serious impairments, defects, or even the absence of organs.

SONIA

I'm not sure I understand.

DR. MUÑOZ

(with humor)

Don't worry too much about your heart, my young friend. Some day I might teach you to live without any heart at all! But that's for another day. Today, you need rest. You work too hard, I think.

(MORE)

DR. MUÑOZ (CONT'D)
I hear your typewriter late into
the night. You rest here now while
I step into my laboratory and
prepare a compound for you.

FOOTSTEPS and the CLINKING of laboratory glassware.

SONIA
I still feel so cold.

DR. MUÑOZ
Forgive me. That's not you, it is
my absorption cooler - a machine of
my own design. I fear I am myself
afflicted with a complication of
maladies requiring a very exact
regimen which includes constant
cold. Any marked rise in
temperature might, if prolonged,
affect me fatally.

THE ENGINE OF THE COOLING MACHINE SPUTTERS FOR A MOMENT.

SONIA
I'm sorry to hear that. It's that
apparatus there? Is the ammonia
part of it somehow?

DR. MUÑOZ
Just so. You see, ammonia has a
very low boiling point, which makes
it an effective refrigerant. This
machine keep my rooms between 55
and 56 degrees Fahrenheit.

SONIA
Amazing. I hear the engine in my
room sometimes.

DR. MUÑOZ
I hope it's not a bother.

SONIA
No more than my typewriter.

FOOTSTEPS as Muñoz crosses back.

DR. MUÑOZ
(bemused)
What a pleasure to find a refined
and sensitive soul in this squalid
domicile. Your presence reminds me
of happier days. Here. Take this
and then sip the tea slowly.

CLINKING and SIPPING.

DR. MUÑOZ (CONT'D)
How are you feeling, young lady?

SONIA
Much better. I don't know how to
thank you. I think you saved my
life.

DR. MUÑOZ
It is good you came when you did.
Your heart needs discipline. You'll
want to take some of this powder in
warm water every eight hours. And
come see me tomorrow evening. You
smoke?

SONIA
Hardly. No more than a pack a day.

DR. MUÑOZ
Hmm. No more cigarettes.

SONIA
But my doctor says Fleurs de Lys
are good for my--

DR. MUÑOZ
Ah, ah!

SONIA
Right, you're my doctor now.

DR. MUÑOZ
Soon we will bring you permanent
improvement. Can you stand? Yes?
Good. Head down stairs and get some
sleep.

MUSIC transition.

SONIA
He saved me, Edwin.

EDWIN
Geez, Sonia. How come you've never
told me any of this before?

SONIA

He... He was a remarkable man. An elegant face with a short iron-grey beard, and an old-fashioned pince-nez. Always impeccably dressed. He was the picture of striking intelligence and superior breeding.

EDWIN

Wait a minute. Were you, like, sweet on this guy? Is that what--

SONIA

No. Oh, god no. I mean, he was kind to me - but he was old, and there was something about him that...

(shudders)

Maybe it was the coldness of his touch.

EDWIN

Probably that cold room.

SONIA

No, it was more than that... I can't quite describe it. Whatever his affliction was, he trembled slightly and his touch was... sort of ghastly.

EDWIN

But he helped you get better?

SONIA

He did. He compounded medicines, gave me exercises, and soon I felt better than I had in years. I was so grateful, I rather became his devotee.

EDWIN

(laden with innuendo)

I see.

SONIA

I don't think you do. I'd pay him frequent visits, in my winter coat.

TRANSITION MUSIC

DR. MUÑOZ

...were sadly sold to the highest bidder back in Spain, but there were some volumes that I simply could not bear to part with. Thus this small sampling of my old library has remained with me.

SONIA

This book looks ancient. May I touch it?

DR. MUÑOZ

Yes, of course. The book of the Arab.

Sonia delicately LEAFS THROUGH THE PAGES.

SONIA

This is Latin right?

DR. MUÑOZ

Yes - De Gradibus. Translated by Gerard of Cremona in the 12th century from the original by the Arab Al-Kindi in the 9th century. He's the first physician we know who applied mathematics to pharmacology by quantifying the strength of drugs.

SONIA

Amazing. Look at these tables and charts.

DR. MUÑOZ

A remarkable work. Roger Bacon, a medieval scholar, thought that Al-Kindi's method of computing the strength of a drug was extremely difficult to use, but I would say once you get used to it, it's indispensable.

SONIA

Wait, you use a medieval book to make your medicines?

DR. MUÑOZ

(amused)

My dear Miss Moore, one of the greatest failings of the present is its refusal to learn from the past.

SONIA

But shouldn't science be modern? To
use the newest learning and
techniques?

DR. MUÑOZ

There's a place for that. But I,
for one, do not scorn the
incantations of the mediaevalists.
Among these cryptic formulae are
rare psychological stimuli which
may have singular effects on the
substance of a nervous system from
which organic pulsations have fled.

SONIA

Fled. Do you mean on someone who's
dea---

DR. MUÑOZ

I had a learned colleague back in
Valencia, Dr. del Toro. He and I
conducted just such experiments,
the results of which I can assure
you were quite extraordinary.

SONIA

Are you saying what I think you're
saying?

DR. MUÑOZ

There was a time, some eighteen
years ago, when my own health fell
to a precarious state. My venerable
colleague went to extraordinary
lengths and used archaic processes
to prolong my life.

SONIA

Oh, I see.

DR. MUÑOZ

And in a crowning irony, no sooner
had he saved me than poor Guillermo
succumbed to the grim enemy he had
fought.

MUSIC TRANSITION

SONIA

I learned so much from him, Edwin. I even wrote a story involving his strange alchemy - I sold it to Astonishing Tales. But as I spent more time with him, I could see his physical condition was deteriorating.

EDWIN

Sounds like he needed a doctor himself.

SONIA

He wouldn't hear of it. So I took care of him. He was so alone. His voice weakened. He trembled more. His mind displayed less resilience and initiative.

EDWIN

How old did you say he was?

SONIA

He never... It was more than just old age. He developed strange caprices. He had the landlady's son bring exotic spices and Egyptian incense till his room smelled like the vault of a Pharaoh. He wrote and studied his old books with a new kind of mania. And his need for cold air increased. He had me help him adjust his cooling system until he could keep the temperature as low as 34 degrees or colder.

EDWIN

Good lord, that's like a meat locker! And the neighbors didn't complain?

SONIA

One did. We hung up tapestries and blankets to insulate his rooms. And to keep the pipes from freezing.

EDWIN

Maybe the cold was actually hurting him. I mean... is that why you--

SONIA

It was a vital part of his treatment. But a kind of growing horror seemed to possess him. He knew what was happening and embraced its grim irony. He talked of death incessantly, but laughed hollowly when I suggested such things as burial or funeral arrangements.

BEGIN TRANSITION MUSIC

EDWIN

You've always hated the cold.
Why... why didn't you get out of there?

SONIA

He saved my life. I couldn't abandon him. Everyone else did.

9

ABOUT THE DOCTOR

9

We hear the sound of a NEW YORK STREET as Sonia approaches the building and OPENS THE DOOR.

MRS. HERRERO

Ah Miss Moore, you come back. I need talk you about the doctor.

SONIA

(tired)

What is it, Mrs. Herrero?

MRS. HERRERO

What is in this box? You buy him food?

SONIA

It's chemicals he ordered for his baths. He doesn't eat much these days.

MRS. HERRERO

You need do something about the smell. Other tenants complain!

SONIA

Yes, I'll do what I can.

MRS. HERRERO
Is too much cold from machine. Too
much chemicals. You need bring a
doctor to him.

SONIA
I know, but he refuses to see one.
Perhaps you could send Esteban for--

MRS. HERRERO
No! I tell him he is no to talk to
Dr. Muñoz no more. The devil is
about him. You, you talk to him!

SONIA
Like I said, I'll do what I can. He
takes his baths, he writes long
letters--

MRS. HERRERO
He is go mad in the head. I pray
for him!

SONIA
You do that. Thank you, Mrs.
Herrero.

10 DEATH KNOCKING

10

FOOTSTEPS going up the stairs and then KNOCKING at the door
to the doctor's rooms.

SONIA
Doctor? It's me.

DR. MUÑOZ
Just you - not death knocking at my
door?

SONIA
Just me - and the chemicals you
ordered.

The DOOR OPENS. FOOTSTEPS. Muñoz sounds terrible. So does the
COOLING MACHINE.

SONIA (CONT'D)
I see you haven't eaten.

DR. MUÑOZ
There are other things I must
attend to.

(MORE)

DR. MUÑOZ (CONT'D)
 I need you to promise that you'll
 post these letters for me, should
 the reaper--

SONIA
 You need to eat.

DR. MUÑOZ
 I don't actually. The will, young
 lady, is what matters. Remember
 that. You'll post these letters?
 Promise me.

SONIA
 (blowing into her hands to
 warm them)
 Yes. What do you want me to do with
 these?

DR. MUÑOZ
 Put them in the bath. By the tub.
 Then you should go.

SONIA
 All right. Uh, Mrs. Herrero says--

DR. MUÑOZ
 What she says is of no matter to
 anyone. There are more important
 forces at work here. Go. Please.

Transition MUSIC.

11 HELL'S KITCHEN CONT'D

11

EDWIN
 How long did this go on?

SONIA
 (sighing)
 Until the fall. One night about
 eleven the pump of the
 refrigerating machine broke down.
 Dr. Muñoz summoned me by thumping
 on the floor. I tried to repair it
 while he fretted and cursed. I
 didn't really know what I was
 doing, so I went out and found a
 mechanic from a neighboring all-
 night garage...

SWIFT MUSIC Transition

12

MECHANICS

12

A wrench CLANKS into a toolbox. JOHNNY, a mechanic with a thick Brooklyn dialect weighs in.

JOHNNY

Wish I had better news, lady, but
that thing ain't gonna run without
a new piston.

SONIA

What's the fastest we could get a
replacement?

JOHNNY

The fastest? It's not like you can
run down to Gimbel's. A machine shop
might be able to make one. But they
won't be open until morning, you
know.

DR. MUÑOZ

(fiery)

Damnation! I cannot wait!

SONIA

Don't upset yourself. You know it's
not good for you. Your eyes, my god
they're--

DR. MUÑOZ

Aaah! I can't see. Help me to the
bath.

SONIA

Take my arm. Here, this way. You
want me to--

DR. MUÑOZ

No, get out. I can manage from
here.

Muñoz CLOSES THE BATHROOM DOOR.

JOHNNY

Yikes. What's the matter with him?

SONIA

He's very ill.

JOHNNY

It better not be contagious.

SONIA

It's not.

JOHNNY

Well, sorry miss, there's nothing I can do. You know, it's the middle of the night.

SONIA

I understand. It's just that the temperature's rising.

JOHNNY

Rising? It's the middle of October! It's like 45 degrees outside!

SONIA

Listen, he has money. Go to the machine shop and bring the part back here as fast as you can, please.

JOHNNY

Sorry, honey. My shift ended twenty minutes ago. I been on all night.

SONIA

It's a matter of life and death.

JOHNNY

Look, I'm sorry about your grandpa, or whatever, but hey, show any decent fabricator or machine shop the bent piston. They should be able to tool you a new one. They'll be open in a few hours.

SONIA

But--

JOHNNY

(sniffs)

I gotta get outta here. I can't take the smell any more. I mean, come on. Good luck to ya.

DRAMATIC MUSIC.

EDWIN

What did you do?

SONIA

I went and got ice. I made trips to all night drug stores and cafeterias, and brought back all I could find. All I could carry.

EDWIN

Just you?

SONIA

I had to leave it outside his bathroom door. He wouldn't let me see him.

14

MECHANICS CONT'D

14

Sonia DROPS A BAG OF ICE at Muñoz's bathroom door.

SONIA

Here's five more pounds. You want--

DR. MUÑOZ

(through the door)

More! More!

15

HELL'S KITCHEN CONT'D

15

EDWIN

What about the piston?

SONIA

The sun had risen and the temperature was rising. I needed to keep ice coming, but I needed the piston too. I found a seedy-looking loafer on the corner of Eighth Avenue and paid him to keep bringing ice from a little shop, while I tried to find a pump piston and hire workmen who could install it.

EDWIN

Did you find one?

SONIA

It was a nightmare. I telephoned, I went all over town by subway and surface car until finally about noon I found a suitable supply house way downtown, and returned with the necessary part and two mechanics to install it. I had done all I could, and hoped I was in time.

EDWIN

What happened?

16

THE ICEMAN GOETH AWAY

16

We hear the MAD NOISES of the boarding house on overdrive:
MUMBLING IN SPANISH, PRAYERS, SHOUTING NEIGHBORS.

MRS. HERRERO

Miss Moore, where you go? Ay, the smell, Dios mio! He go crazy and run away!

SONIA

Dr. Muñoz?

MRS. HERRERO

No, the man you pay for bring ice.

SONIA

What?

MRS. HERRERO

He come in with ice second time and take up, but then I hear him yell and he come run out like he see the Devil himself!

SONIA

When was this?

MRS. HERRERO

Hours ago.

SONIA

Oh my god.

(to the mechanics)

C'mon men, follow me.

MUSIC. RUNNING FOOTSTEPS.

17

HELL'S KITCHEN CONT'D

17

SONIA

I ran up the stairs, followed by
the workmen I'd hired. The hall
door was locked.

EDWIN

The ice man couldn't have locked it
behind him, could he?

SONIA

No. It was fastened from the
inside.

18

QUE OLOR MALO

18

MUSIC. The RATTLE of the doorknob. KNOCKS. The WORKMEN MUMBLE
and their tools CLANK.

SONIA

Dr. Muñoz? Shhhhh. Listen.

Slow, thick DRIPPING. More RATTLING of the knob.

WORKMAN

Yeesh. Sounds like what you need is
a plumber, lady. I'm a machinist.
Do you even know the difference?

SONIA

Yeah, you're not a locksmith
either, but can you get this door
open?

MRS. HERRERO

(from down the hall)

You no break my door. I have key.
You take. Que olor malo!

The LOCK TURNS. The door CREAKS open. FOOTSTEPS.

SONIA

My god...

19

HELL'S KITCHEN CONT'D

19

EDWIN

What was it?

SONIA

The south room blazed with the sun
of early afternoon. I'd never felt
his room so warm. A kind of dark,
slimy trail led from the open
bathroom door to the desk, where a
terrible little pool had
accumulated.

EDWIN

A pool of--

The workmen HEAVE and GASP and MUTTER. Mrs. Herrero PRAYS.

SONIA

Something was scrawled there in
pencil in an awful, blind hand on a
piece of paper hideously smeared as
though by the very claws that
traced the hurried last words. Then
the trail led to the couch and
ended... unutterably.

EDWIN

You found him?

GASPS and RUNNING FOOTSTEPS. A SCREAM out in the hall.

SONIA

What was, or had been, on the couch
I can't describe. The landlady and
mechanics ran out of that hellish
place to babble their incoherent
stories at the nearest police
station. I've never spoken of it to
anyone, until now. For me, the
horror was in the words scrawled on
that horribly stained bit of paper
on the desk.

The little boy COUGHS AND WHEEZES.

EDWIN

Sonia, this is crazy! Why are you
telling me this horrible story?
What does any of it have to do with
our boy! We need to call a proper
doctor!

SONIA

(anger flaring)

And pay him with what, Edwin? Sob
stories? Your big salary? We can't
afford a doctor!

EDWIN

But he has diphtheria! We can't--

SONIA

(starting to break)

Oh, Edwin! Don't you see? It's not diphtheria. Not anymore.

OMINOUS MUSICAL PUNCTUATION.

EDWIN

(terrified)

What do you mean by that?

SONIA

(desperate)

I didn't know what else to do! Jack was dying! The diphtheria poison had already spread! I thought if I could--

FOOTSTEPS as Edwin runs to the crib. The RUSTLE OF CLOTH.

EDWIN

Jack! My little-- My god, Sonia. What is that... thing?! What have you done to our boy?

The NOISE coming from the crib is perhaps not entirely human.

SONIA

(almost babbling)

Dr. Muñoz cured me! I was sure I could use his methods, his-- I had read his ancient books. All his letters! I thought I knew what to do. I realize now I shouldn't have burned them all, but at the time--

EDWIN

What?! Sonia, what have you done?

SONIA

I thought I could save him, but he's just a little boy! He doesn't have the will!

EDWIN

Oh my god! Jack!

Edwin breaks down WEEPING. TRAGIC MUSIC, perhaps incorporating the LULLABY Sonia was singing at the beginning.

SONIA

Shh, cover him up, darling. That's the best we can do for him now. What he needs now is warmth. Like Dr. Muñoz wrote to me, that final day. "The end is here. No more ice - the man looked and ran away....

CROSSFADE to Muñoz. MUSIC underneath.

DR. MUÑOZ

The end is here. No more ice - the man looked and ran away. Warmer every minute, and the tissues can't last. I fancy you know - what I said about the will and the nerves and the preserved body after the organs ceased to work. It was good theory, but couldn't keep up indefinitely. There was a gradual deterioration I had not foreseen. Dr. del Toro knew, but the shock killed him. He couldn't stand what he had to do - he had to get me in a strange, dark place when he minded my letter and nursed me back. And the organs never would work again. It had to be done my way - artificial preservation - for you see I died that time eighteen years ago.

MUSIC CRESCENDO and TRANSITION.

CREIGHTON COBB

For our second act, we bring you Edgar Allan Poe's "The Facts in the Case of M. Valdemar". You might have heard something of it before: it excited discussion in newspapers across the globe. The shocking and disturbing revelations were so troubling that those involved were quickly brought before the highest authorities of the medical establishment....

A gavel WHACKS against a table. There's a dull MURMUR of an official meeting of learned professionals and the gentle CLICKING of the STENOTYPE MACHINE.

DR. TURNBULL

For the record, this emergency
hearing of the New York State
Medical Board is now called to
order. Present are--

QUINLAN

If I might--

DR. TURNBULL

(imperiously)

Wait your turn, sir!

(officially)

In attendance are Dr. Eustace
Watkins, Dr. Elmer Hogg, Dr. Travis
Dixon and Professor Emeritus
Maurice Fleishmann. Is the
committee prepared to begin, Dr.
Watkins?

WATKINS

We are.

DR. TURNBULL

I am Dr. Dwight R. Turnbull
presiding. The proceedings are
being recorded by stenographer
Gretchen Ruha. We are assembled to
review the facts in the case of M.
Valdemar and his attending
physician, Dr. Michael Quinlan. Our
purpose today is to evaluate
purported breaches in ethical
conduct on the part of Dr. Quinlan.
Now then, Dr. Quinlan, there are
rumors of a disturbing nature
swirling about. You are called
before this panel to provide a
clear and direct account of this
case.

QUINLAN

I am prepared and eager to do so.

DR. TURNBULL

May I remind you that providing
false or misleading information
during this hearing will result in
the revocation of your license to
practice medicine.

QUINLAN

I understand, sir. If I may, I'd like to offer these documents to the panel.

The RUFFLE of papers changing hands.

WATKINS

What are they?

QUINLAN

The notes of Mr. Lionel, documenting the proceedings.

DR. TURNBULL

You kept notes? You've been careful.

QUINLAN

Standard procedures, sir. Besides, I wouldn't want the Board to base its decision on rumors.

WATKINS

Lionel? Wasn't he the medical student who assisted you?

DR. TURNBULL

It's my understanding he attempted to dissuade you from undertaking this dubious endeavor!

QUINLAN

That's not quite how I'd describe it, but yes, Mr. Lionel was there at the beginning. We discussed the unique issues involved in this case.

TRANSITION MUSIC.

21

THE GAUNTLET THROWN

21

LIONEL

You're fooling yourself, Dr. Quinlan.

QUINLAN

So you've said.

LIONEL

Wasting your time.

QUINLAN

Mmm.

LIONEL

It can't be done. No one's ever
done such a thing.

QUINLAN

My dear Mr. Lionel, What kind of
medical student are you? The same
can be said of every experimental
surgical procedure, every new
treatment. It's through such
experiments that medicine, that
science itself advances.

LIONEL

Don't go trying to sell this as
science, man! This is...
witchdoctory, Bohemian quackery...

QUINLAN

Are you suggesting that Mesmerism
is not real?

LIONEL

Well...

QUINLAN

Shall I put you in a mesmeric
trance right now? Leave you
catatonic in the ladies powder room
again?

LIONEL

(sheepish)

That won't be necessary. I'm not
disputing that there's something to
it, but this is beyond the pale.

QUINLAN

It's science! That's all! No person
has ever been mesmerized in
articulo mortis. Think of what we
could learn! Whether a patient on
the verge of expiring has any
susceptibility to the magnetic
influence; whether it is impaired
or increased by the condition; and
to what extent, or for how long a
period, the encroachments of Death
might be arrested by the process.
And that's just the beginning.

LIONEL

You're mad. Who? Who would allow
you to induce a mesmeric trance
just as they're dying?

QUINLAN

I'm glad you asked. I've found a
volunteer. We're going to go meet
him.

LIONEL

(stunned)

You're going through with it? Who
is he?

QUINLAN

My friend, M. Ernest Valdemar, of
Harlem. An excellent subject
actually.

LIONEL

The writer?

QUINLAN

Yes. He has a very nervous
temperament, perfect for the work.

LIONEL

You've mesmerized him before?

QUINLAN

A few times. I put him to sleep
with little difficulty, but was
disappointed in other results. His
will was at no period positively,
or thoroughly, under my control,
and in regard to clairvoyance, his
reactions could not be relied on.
But I believe those failures are
due to the disordered state of his
health.

LIONEL

Why, what's wrong with him?

QUINLAN

Confirmed phthisis.

LIONEL

Poor fellow.

QUINLAN

Well yes, but his impending death
is perfect. I told him of my idea.

(MORE)

QUINLAN (CONT'D)

He had no philosophic objections and no relatives who would be likely to interfere. He was vividly excited about it. And his disease allows for fairly exact calculation of the time of death; and it was finally arranged between us that he would send for me about twenty-four hours before his anticipated decease.

LIONEL

You're insane. Both of you. You call yourself a doctor?

QUINLAN

Really the state medical board calls me that. Here, this note came this morning. Read it -

The RUSTLE of paper.

QUINLAN (CONT'D)

And put on your coat.

LIONEL

"My Dear Dr. Quinlan,

You may as well come now. Dunham and Fenwick are agreed that I cannot hold out beyond tomorrow midnight; and I think they have hit the time very nearly.
VALDEMAR."

Quinlan OPENS THE DOOR and goes out.

QUINLAN

We don't have much time. Come on!

MUSICAL STING! TRANSITION MUSIC.

DR. TURNBULL

Why didn't you treat your patient in an accredited hospital, Quinlan? Was it to avoid supervision?

QUINLAN

No, Dr. Turnbull. The patient expressed a wish to die in the comfort of his own bed.

23

BEDSIDE MANOR

23

Quinlan RAPS at the dying man's door. Dr. DUNHAM is loud, blustery and rather insufferable. Dr. FENWICK is a pointy little man with a pointy personality.

DUNHAM

Enter.

The DOOR CREAKS OPEN. A CLOCK TICKS.

QUINLAN

Good evening, Dr. Dunham, Dr. Fenwick.

FENWICK

Oh, it's you.

QUINLAN

I think you gentlemen know Mr. Lionel? He's in this third year--

FENWICK

Yes, yes, of course.

LIONEL

(embarrassed to be seen
here by colleagues)

Gentlemen.

M. Valdemar speaks with a surprising vigor for a man truly at death's door. He's having a very hard time breathing and COUGHS occasionally.

M. VALDEMAR

Quinlan. You got my note.

QUINLAN

Would that it were under better circumstances. And this is -

M. VALDEMAR

Lionel, yes, I heard. What kind of name is Lionel? Bah, never mind, I'll jot it down in my notebook, look it up later.

QUINLAN

You're looking... well.

M. VALDEMAR

Ah, you amuse, Quinlan. But not to worry, these two assure me my end is nigh.

QUINLAN

Ah. Mr. Lionel, would you mind
sitting for a moment with our
patient while I have a word with
the doctors?

LIONEL

Not at all.

(awkwardly)

A pleasure to make your
acquaintance.

M. VALDEMAR

(coughing)

Lionel? That's not French is it?
Never cared much for the French...

His voice fades away as the other doctors STEP OUT for a more private colloquy.

QUINLAN

Gentlemen, you're confident
Valdemar's death is imminent?

DUNHAM

Are you blind, Quinlan? His face is
leaden. The eyes utterly
lustreless. His emaciation is now
so extreme that his cheek bones are
breaking through the skin. His
pulse is barely perceptible.

QUINLAN

All the same, he seems surprisingly
alert and energetic.

FENWICK

The left lung has been in a semi-
osseous state for months. The upper
portion of the right is also
partially ossified, while the lower
region is merely a mass of purulent
tubercles, running one into
another. Several extensive
perforations exist and there is at
least one permanent adhesion to the
ribs.

DUNHAM

These changes in the right lobe are
recent date. There were no signs of
ossification in my examination a
month ago.

(MORE)

DUNHAM (CONT'D)

The adhesion appears to have manifested during the past three days.

FENWICK

Independent of the phthisis, I suspect an aneurism of the aorta; but the osseous symptoms have precluded an exact diagnosis.

QUINLAN

How long do you think he has?

DUNHAM

It's, what, seven fifteen on Saturday? I'd wager he'll be done by midnight tomorrow.

FENWICK

I should take your wager. I'd say eight p.m. tomorrow. There's really nothing left for us to do but bid him a final farewell.

QUINLAN

I'll attend to him now. If you would be so kind, gentlemen, would you be willing to come by at ten tomorrow night to check on him?

FENWICK

Why? What are you playing at, Quinlan?

QUINLAN

Of course if he's passed by then, I'll send word and spare you a trip.

DUNHAM

I suppose so, though I hardly see the point.

FENWICK

Hm. Shall we offer our farewell?

FOOTSTEPS back to Valdemar's room.

DUNHAM

Valdemar, Dr. Quinlan here has graciously agreed to tend to your last needs. I lament there's nothing left we can do for you.

FENWICK

Courage, Valdemar, and prayer. Try
to be at peace.

M. VALDEMAR

Gentlemen, I thank you for your
services and my executor shall
attend to your compensation.

DUNHAM

Very kind of you. Farewell, sir.

They GO.

M. VALDEMAR

Good riddance, those two.

LIONEL

Mr. Valdemar here confirms he's
quite prepared to undergo your
experiment, Dr. Quinlan.

QUINLAN

Of course he is.

M. VALDEMAR

For the sake of science, eh,
Quinlan?

QUINLAN

Mankind's quest for knowledge.

M. VALDEMAR

Ay, there's the rub,
For in that sleep of death what
dreams may come
When we have shuffled off this
mortal coil,
Must give us pause.

QUINLAN

Indeed.

M. VALDEMAR

So, when do we begin?

QUINLAN

I fear if we begin too soon, the
mesmeric effect may wear off before
the actual onset of death. Let us
plan for eight o'clock tomorrow.
Lionel, you'll join us then? I'd
like you to document the
proceedings.

LIONEL
Yes, of course.

QUINLAN
I'll stay with you until then, my old friend.

Transition MUSIC.

24 HEARING

24

QUINLAN
I stayed the night with him, and remained into the next evening.

WATKINS
Hm, that shows admirable devotion.

QUINLAN
Honestly, I was more devoted to the notion of my experiment. A patient like M. Valdemar does not come along often.

DR. TURNBULL
(appalled)
Really now...

WATKINS
(troubled)
I see.

QUINLAN
The following evening, Lionel arrived shortly before eight.

25 ENTRANCED

25

Lionel ENTERS.

QUINLAN
Ah, Lionel, thank God you're here. I was afraid you were going to miss it.

LIONEL
How is he?

QUINLAN
No time for that. Quickly. Get your pen and paper, take this down.
(to Valdemar)
(MORE)

QUINLAN (CONT'D)
 Could you please give Mr. Lionel
 your statement.

M. VALDEMAR
 (at death's door)
 Let it hereby be known that I am
 entirely willing to be mesmerized.
 (a dry hacking cough)
 I fear you have deferred it too
 long, Quinlan.

QUINLAN
 No, no, right on time. All you need
 do is relax and watch the motions
 of my hands.

MUSICAL THRILL OF MESMERISM being performed!

LIONEL
 Good lord - I still say it's hocus
 pocus....

QUINLAN
 The magnetic flow induced by the
 lateral motions worked well with
 him previously. And now, of course,
 he's in a weakened state. Check the
 pulse, will you?

LIONEL
 Weak, but present. What now?

QUINLAN
 He's still alive. We have to wait.

THE CLOCK TICKS. TRANSITION MUSIC.

26

HEARING

26

QUINLAN
 His condition deteriorated rather
 rapidly.

DR. TURNBULL
 Not surprising given his diagnosis.

WATKINS
 What happened next, Quinlan?

QUINLAN
 Just before ten, Fenwick and Dunham
 returned.

27

DEATH MAY DIE

27

KNOCKING at the chamber door. Fenwick and Dunham ENTER.

QUINLAN
Doctors, thank you for your
punctuality.

FENWICK
Is he still...?

QUINLAN
Just barely.

FENWICK
(to Dunham)
You owe me a dollar.

M. Valdemar BREATHES STERTOROUSLY.

DUNHAM
Yes, the death rattle. Won't be
long now.

QUINLAN
Gentleman, I have induced a
preliminary mesmeric state in
Valdemar. I propose to put him into
a full mesmeric trance just before
the moment of his final expiration.

FENWICK
Hmph. At this point I don't suppose
it makes any difference what you do
to him.

DUNHAM
The death agony is already
underway. I have no objection.

QUINLAN
Could you note that in your
account, Mr. Lionel.
(to the patient)
Valdemar? I want you to look
directly into my eyes now.
(to Lionel)
Watch, now I change to a downward
gesture, like so.

MESMERIC MUSIC. Valdemar's LABORED BREATHING goes quiet and
then is punctuated by an OCCASIONAL GASP.

FENWICK
Decrease in stertorous breaths.

QUINLAN
Pulse, Lionel?

LIONEL
I... I can't make out a steady
beat.

DUNHAM
Not unusual at the time of passing,
Mr. Lionel.

FENWICK
The heart's action becomes
spasmodic, as does respiration.

LIONEL
So, what do we--

DUNHAM
We wait with him, until the actual
end.

LIONEL
I've been around cadavers, you
know, I just haven't been with
someone when they actually--

FENWICK
Extremities cold to the touch.

Valdemar sucks in ANOTHER BREATH.

QUINLAN
Come on, now. Focus Valdemar. Do
you hear me?

DUNHAM
I say, Quinlan, what are you hoping
he'll do?

QUINLAN
I just need an unequivocal sign
that he's fully under the mesmeric
influence. Ah--

Dunham, Fenwick and Lionel all START at a sudden change in
Valdemar.

QUINLAN (CONT'D)
There! You see the glassy roll of
the eyes?
(MORE)

QUINLAN (CONT'D)
You only see that in cases of sleep
walking and mesmerism. I'll
endeavor now to close his eyes by
my gesture.

Flare of MESMER MUSIC.

LIONEL
He's blinking - they're closed!

QUINLAN
(exerting effort)
Yes. Let's try one last thing to
confirm. This gesture will instill
a rigidity to the limbs.

A quick phrase of MESMERIC MUSIC.

QUINLAN (CONT'D)
Doctors, will you flex the
patient's arms at the elbows?

FENWICK
(with effort)
No. Fully inflexible. Rigid.

LIONEL
This side too.

DUNHAM
(a little impressed)
Well, you've done it, Quinlan. He
appears to be in a full mesmeric
trance.

LIONEL
Well done, sir.

FENWICK
Honestly, I can't believe the man's
still alive. Fascinating.

LIONEL
You look exhausted. Perhaps you
should sit down, sir.

QUINLAN
It's been a long day.

DUNHAM
You should get some rest, Quinlan.
I'll stay with your patient
tonight. You come back in the
morning.

TRANSITION MUSIC.

28

HEARING

28

QUINLAN

I went home for a few hours rest.
But I was eager to return to
monitor Valdemar's condition.

DR. TURNBULL

To see if this so-called mesmeric
state persisted through the night?

QUINLAN

Precisely.

WATKINS

(getting sucked in)
Well? Did it?

29

WAKEY, WAKEY

29

The door CREAKS OPEN.

LIONEL

(yawning)

Ah, good morning, sir.

QUINLAN

Well, how is he?

DUNHAM

Much the same. No movement, pulse
still imperceptible. Breathing is
faint but present. The limbs are as
rigid and as cold as marble. You
can see for yourself he's obviously
not...

QUINLAN

No, no he's not. Let me see here.

Eerie MESMERIC MUSIC.

DUNHAM

What's that you're doing?

QUINLAN

I move my arm gently to and fro
above his in an effort to--

LIONEL
He's moving! See there, his arm!
Back and forth!

DUNHAM
Great scot! But how? Doesn't it
require a suggestion...

QUINLAN
(scoffing)
No, that's hypnotism. This isn't
the same thing at all. This is a
direct manipulation of the vital
force.

DUNHAM
To what end?

QUINLAN
I'm hoping I can induce him to
speak.

DUNHAM
Do you think that wise?

QUINLAN
Valdemar. Are you asleep?

LIONEL
Look. There's a slight tremor in
his upper lip.

QUINLAN
Are you asleep?
(pause)
Valdemar, are you asleep?

EERIE BACKGROUND MUSIC creeps in underneath the MESMER MUSIC.

LIONEL
He's shivering. His eyes, they're--

M. VALDEMAR
(a barely audible whisper)
Yes; asleep now. Do not wake me! --
let me die so!

QUINLAN
(hushed to the others)
Look. His limbs remain rigid, but
the right arm still follows my
movements.

(to Valdemar)
(MORE)

QUINLAN (CONT'D)
Do you still feel pain in your
chest?

M. VALDEMAR
No pain -- I am dying.

Awkward pause. MUSIC. The CLOCK.

QUINLAN
Perhaps we should let him rest and
see what--

The DOOR SWINGS OPEN.

FENWICK
I came as soon as I could. Is
he...?

DUNHAM
See for yourself.

FENWICK
Cold. No pulse. Hand me that
mirror.

MUSICAL PUNCTUATION. The very faintest sound of A BREATH.

FENWICK (CONT'D)
Ah - faint respiration.

LIONEL
The patient just spoke, sir.

FENWICK
He didn't. He couldn't. I mean this
man... how?

DUNHAM
Quinlan's mesmeric influence. Quite
astonishing.

FENWICK
Do it again.

QUINLAN
I was thinking perhaps we should
let him--

FENWICK
Make him speak.

QUINLAN
 Very well.
 (to the patient)
 Valdemar. Do you still sleep?

MESMER MUSIC, then sustained MUSICAL TENSION BUILDS.

M. VALDEMAR
 (very faint)
 Yes; still asleep -- dying.

MUSICAL PUNCTUATION.

FENWICK
 This is astonishing, Quinlan. I
 wouldn't have believed it had I not
 seen it with my own eyes. Should we-

DUNHAM
 Perhaps we should let him be. He's
 tranquil and death should supervene
 in minutes.

FENWICK
 Yes, yes of course.

QUINLAN
 I'm sorry but this might be our
 last chance.
 (to Valdemar)
 Valdemar, are you still sleeping?

LIONEL
 (startled)
 Doctor, he's--

QUINLAN
 Lionel, take note: eyes rolled
 open, pupils disappeared upwardly.
 Skin assuming cadaverous hue, color
 drained from cheeks, upper lip
 pulled back from teeth in rictus,
 lower jaw opened, tongue blackened
 and swollen.

MUSIC and AD LIB SHUDDERS.

DUNHAM
 I've witnessed hundreds of deaths,
 but that...

FENWICK
 I've never seen a death like it.
 Look at him - positively ghoulish.

LIONEL

Would anyone object if I cover the
face with a sheet?

QUINLAN

As we can confidently say Mr.
Valdemar is dead, yes, Lionel, go
ahead and-- no, stop!

LIONEL

(terrified)

What?

QUINLAN

The tongue.

FENWICK

It's moving... vibrating...

DUNHAM

(loss of SAN points)

I've... I've... I've...

MUSICAL PUNCTUATION and TRANSITION.

30

HEARING

30

WATKINS

Could he speak? What did he say?

QUINLAN

It's genuinely hard to describe. I
might say, for example, that the
sound was harsh, and broken and
hollow; but the hideous whole is
indescribable, for the simple
reason that no similar sounds have
ever jarred upon the ear of
humanity.

DR. TURNBULL

Don't be coy, Quinlan - we're
professionals here.

Quinlan hesitates.

WATKINS

Come on, out with it, man.

QUINLAN

Well, there were two particulars which I thought then, and still think, might fairly be stated as characteristic of the intonation -- as well adapted to convey some idea of its unearthly peculiarity. In the first place, the voice seemed to reach our ears -- at least mine -- from a vast distance, or from some deep cavern within the earth. In the second place, it impressed me the way gelatinous or glutinous things impress the sense of touch.

WATKINS

(shuddering)

Good lord... So he did speak?

QUINLAN

For lack of a better word, I have spoken both of "sound" and of "voice." I mean that the sound was one of distinct -- of even wonderfully, thrillingly distinct -- syllabification. M. Valdemar spoke -- obviously in reply to the question I had asked him a few minutes before: "are you still sleeping".

DR. TURNBULL

Well? What did he say?

TRANSITION MUSIC back to Valdemar's chamber.

31

NIGHT OF THE LIVING DEAD

31

M. VALDEMAR

Yes; -- no; -- I have been sleeping -- and now -- now -- I am dead.

AD LIB HORRIFIED REACTIONS. Lionel GROANS and COLLAPSES in a faint.

32

HEARING

32

QUINLAN

No person present even affected to deny, or attempted to repress, the shuddering horror which these few words, thus uttered, were so well calculated to convey. Mr. Lionel swooned.

WATKINS

What about you, Dr. Quinlan?

QUINLAN

My own impressions to this day I cannot render intelligibly. For nearly an hour, uttering barely a word, we busied ourselves in endeavors to revive Mr. Lionel.

33

NIGHT OF THE LIVING DEAD - CONTINUOUS

33

SLAPPING. Lionel GROANS again. RUSTLING of a medical bag.

FENWICK

(rummaging through his
bag)

Here, I have some ammonium carbonate - that should bring him around.

Lionel SNIFFS and GASPS at the smelling salts.

LIONEL

What--

FENWICK

Pull yourself together, Mr. Lionel.

LIONEL

But Valdemar... he...

DUNHAM

Spoke. Yes. We all heard it.

LIONEL

But he was... we agreed he was--

QUINLAN

M. Valdemar shows no evidence of a pulse, nor is there any evidence of respiration.

FENWICK

I tried to draw blood but could not. No circulation.

QUINLAN

His arm no longer responds to mesmeric control.

LIONEL

So he's dead.
(pause)
Right?

DUNHAM

Yes. But no.

QUINLAN

Watch his tongue carefully.
Valdemar, are you still sleeping?

MUSICAL PUNCTUATION.

LIONEL

It moved! I saw it.

DUNHAM

Yes. It's as if he's making an effort to reply, but no longer has sufficient volition.

LIONEL

So he's not dead?

FENWICK

He has neither pulse nor respiration, Mr. Lionel. What does your medical training tell you?

LIONEL

This is not supposed to happen.

TRANSITION MUSIC.

WATKINS

Fascinating. Did he answer any other questions?

QUINLAN

Not at this point. Nor was he responsive to questions from anyone but me.

DR. TURNBULL

So none of your colleagues could independently confirm or replicate your results?

QUINLAN

You'll see them confirmed in Mr. Lionel's notes, but the mesmeric link was clearly vital to his responsiveness. His condition appeared stable and we all thought it best to leave him to rest as we grappled with the issues at play.

DR. TURNBULL

Hmph! More likely, you realized the kind of trouble you were in.

QUINLAN

We discussed the propriety and feasibility of awakening him.

WATKINS

What good could come of that? Wouldn't he just have died immediately, again?

QUINLAN

Exactly. It seemed to us that to awaken M. Valdemar at this point would lead to... undesirable results.

DR. TURNBULL

So the rumors are true? You simply left him in this hellish limbo?

WATKINS

The patient wasn't suffering, Turnbull, let him--

QUINLAN

We did the best we could sir, but yes,

(with grave hesitation)

from this period until the close of last week -- an interval of nearly seven months -- we continued to make daily calls at M. Valdemar's house, accompanied, now and then, by medical and other friends. All this time the sleeper-waker remained exactly as I have last described him.

DR. TURNBULL
Seven months!

QUINLAN
Approximately.

WATKINS
And he was both dead and alive all
that time?

QUINLAN
He was both. And neither. And then,
on Friday last, we finally
attempted to bring some resolution
to the case.

WATKINS
(thrilled)
What exactly did you do, Quinlan?

QUINLAN
I performed one final experiment.
It was the result of this
experiment which has given rise to
so much discussion, and to so much
of what I cannot help thinking
unwarranted popular feeling.

DR. TURNBULL
Unwarranted? Hmph! Quinlan, you--

WATKINS
So what was this experiment?

QUINLAN
We returned to his chamber,
Fenwick, Dunham, Lionel and I, to
finally awaken M. Valdemar.

MUSIC TRANSITION.

DUNHAM
Proceed, Dr. Quinlan.

We hear the MUSIC OF MESMERISM.

QUINLAN
And that completes the customary
passes. Would you note the time
please, Mr. Lionel?

LIONEL

Seven minutes past eight in the evening.

FENWICK

I'm seeing no change here.

QUINLAN

Dammit!

DUNHAM

Do it again, a third time. Perhaps after so many weeks he just needs--

QUINLAN

No, it's time for something stronger. I'll attempt the Issachar configuration.

MUSICAL PUNCTUATION. MORE INTENSE MESMERIC MUSIC.

FENWICK

Yes! Keep going. The iris has just descended into view.

DUNHAM

Let me see. Yes... yes.
(sniffs)

Oh my. There's a profuse yellowish ichor discharging from under the eyelid.

LIONEL

God, the smell!

DUNHAM

Steady, there. Just write it down.

LIONEL

Noted.

DUNHAM

Try the movements of his arm again.

QUINLAN

Very well.

MESMER MUSIC.

LIONEL

Nothing so far. No. No.

FENWICK
 (panicky)
 Ask him something!

QUINLAN
 Valdemar, can you explain to us
 what are your feelings or wishes
 now?

MUSICAL PUNCTUATION.

LIONEL
 There's coloration in the cheeks!

DUNHAM
 The tongue is quivering, rolling in
 the mouth.

M. VALDEMAR
 (in that hideous and
 frightening voice)
 For God's sake! -- quick! -- quick!
 -- put me to sleep -- or, quick! --
 waken me! -- quick! -- I say to you
 that I am dead!

QUINLAN
 What do I do?

DUNHAM
 Do... something! We've got to end
 this. Wake him!

FENWICK
 Just break him out of the trance!
 Make the passes, damn it!

BACKGROUND MUSIC RAMPS UP, TOPPED BY MESMER MUSIC!

LIONEL
 Oh my god, he's moving--

DUNHAM
 Impossible!

LIONEL
 --sitting up!

QUINLAN
 Don't touch me!

M. VALDEMAR
 (loud and strong)
 Dead! Dead!

CLIMACTIC MUSIC! THE FINAL RAGGED SIGH OF VALDEMAR.

AD LIB SHRIEKS OF HORROR as we hear Valdemar's voice collapse into something gooshy and wet.

36

HEARING

36

WATKINS
What happened?

QUINLAN
We never expected... somehow Valdemar rose slightly from his recumbent position, his arm reaching for me. I frantically made the final mesmeric passes, and his whole frame at once -- within the space of a single minute, or even less, shrunk -- crumbled -- absolutely rotted away beneath my hands. Upon the bed, before that whole company, there lay a nearly liquid mass of loathsome -- of detestable putridity.

WATKINS
Good God, man!

AD LIBS of appalled horror from the committee.

DR. TURNBULL
(shaken)
Dr. Quinlan, we've heard enough. This experiment of yours, it's... well outside ethical and moral boundaries, perhaps the boundaries of natural law! Your license to practice medicine in this state is hereby suspended pending the final judgement of the board. We are adjourned.

The BANG of the gavel. The FINAL CLICKS of the STENOTYPE.

QUINLAN
Sir, if I may--

DR. TURNBULL
Quiet! Miss Ruha, did you get all that down?

MISS RUHA
Yes, Doctor Turnbull.

DR. TURNBULL
Very well. You can go.

The door closes behind her.

QUINLAN
Sir, it was science in its purest form: willing participants exploring the unknown in search of understanding. I shouldn't--

WATKINS
Quinlan, we're none of us children. Medicine isn't pretty. We understand that horrors must sometimes be endured in the name of progress. If only the public hadn't caught wind of it. Your little experiment isn't the problem. It's the reporting.

QUINLAN
What do you mean?

DR. TURNBULL
The Board cannot sit idly by. We must be seen to take action. The public demands it!

QUINLAN
But I've--

WATKINS
Or, you can make a public statement that this was all an elaborate hoax and the Board will issue a quiet rebuke and six months of probation.

QUINLAN
A hoax? It's the truth!

DR. TURNBULL
The truth is a harsh and costly medicine, Quinlan. Sometimes the public is better served with cheap sugar pills.

QUINLAN
It was science, documented facts...

The doctors CHUCKLE.

WATKINS

Oh you can give all the facts you want. Facts and truth are not the same thing.

DR. TURNBULL

I hope we'll all be reading about the hoax in tomorrow's paper.
Gentlemen.

They rise and exit. Turnbull and Quinlan are last to leave.

DR. TURNBULL (CONT'D)

(sternly)
Quinlan.

QUINLAN

Sir?

DR. TURNBULL

(with a change in tone)
If you try something like this again... I'd be interested in seeing the demonstration.

MUSIC TRANSITION. Wind picks up and light rain.

CREIGHTON COBB

A wise man once wrote, "That is not dead which can eternal lie, and in strange eons even death may die."
It's a pity that Quinlan and his associates failed to heed that warning.

MUSIC TRANSITION. Wind picks up and light rain.

CREIGHTON COBB (CONT'D)

And finally, for our third and final act, we take you to yet another physician's office for H.P. Lovecraft's "The Picture in the House".

Lead in MUSIC.

We're in the office of Dr. Clark Hull at Yale University. He's a psychologist and a hypnotist. His patient is Eugene Crowley, a young man with a trauma-induced stutter. Mrs. Hegarty is a speech pathologist in her 40s.

MRS. HEGARTY
Hello, Eugene. How are you today?

EUGENE
Fine...

MRS. HEGARTY
Good. Could you give me a full sentence, Eugene.

EUGENE
(stuttering)
I... am... fine... Mrs. Hegarty...
thank... you.

MRS. HEGARTY
Well done. Do you remember last week, I mentioned I was going to have one of my colleagues join us? I'd like to introduce Dr. Hull; he's from Yale University.

DR. HULL
How do you do, young man?

EUGENE
(with effort)
Hello.

MRS. HEGARTY
Rather than work on our speech exercises today, Eugene, Dr. Hull would like to talk to you about the incident. Will that be all right?

EUGENE
Why?

DR. HULL
Excellent. Eugene, my research involves treating patients like you by examining the underlying issues in your unconscious mind. Events which you may not even remember can sometimes be the cause of a wide variety of symptoms, including yours. So, I'm going to use the process of hypnosis to try to help you remember exactly what happened in your bicycle accident. It was a bicycle accident, yes?

EUGENE
Yes.

DR. HULL

And in revisiting that trauma through a hypnotic state, I hope to dislodge the cause of your stutter. It won't take long and it's not painful. Some patients report they rather enjoy the treatment. Do you have any questions?

EUGENE

None... that... I... can... think... of.

DR. HULL

Do you mind if Mrs. Hegarty stays with us and takes some notes?

EUGENE

No.

DR. HULL

So, you'll obviously want to be on the lookout for any subtle changes in Eugene's actual speech, and whether reliving any particular moments impacts the severity of disfluency.

MRS. HEGARTY

Yes, doctor.

A delicate bed of hypnotic MUSIC.

DR. HULL

Comfortable, Eugene? Good. I'm going to make a fist with my left hand. Follow the movements of my fist with your eyes. Good. Now, I want you to put your hand on top of my fist.

(he does)

Very good. Watch our hands move. It's warm in here, isn't it? That's good. Feel yourself relax. It's like you're going to sleep but you will not be asleep. And now we...

(quickly)

...lower our hands.

Pause.

DR. HULL (CONT'D)

Tell me your full name.

EUGENE
(slowly and deliberately)
Eugene Lawrence Crowley.

DR. HULL
And again. Quickly this time.

EUGENE
Eugene Lawrence Crowley.

DR. HULL
(quietly to Hegarty)
He's entered the hypnotic state.

MRS. HEGARTY
Remarkable.

DR. HULL
Eugene, I want you to remember the
day of the accident. What day is
it?

Pause. His speech improves from being slightly hesitant to
impeccable. Music bed fades out.

EUGENE
(slowly but not
stuttering)
November 22nd.

DR. HULL
What are you doing?

EUGENE
(easier)
I'm pedaling this blasted bicycle.

DR. HULL
It sounds difficult. Eugene, tell
me, do you usually ride a bicycle
in November?

EUGENE
No. I've been visiting remote
regions of the Miskatonic Valley.

DR. HULL
Why were you doing that?

EUGENE
I'm seeking certain genealogical
data; a bicycle seemed convenient,
despite the lateness of the season.

MRS. HEGARTY

This is amazing. I've never heard
him able to--

DR. HULL

Shhh. Eugene, tell me about this
genealogical data.

EUGENE

Generations of strange people have
lived in New England, and the world
has never seen their like. I'm
studying them.

DR. HULL

I see.

EUGENE

Their ancestors were seized with
gloomy and fanatical beliefs which
exiled them from their kind, and
they sought the wilderness for
freedom. There they flourished,
free from the restrictions of
society, but cowered in slavery to
the dismal phantasms of their own
minds.

DR. HULL

(sotto)

Did he talk like this before the
onset of the stutter?

MRS. HEGARTY

I didn't know him then. This is...
almost poetic.

EUGENE

(ignoring them)

The strength of these Puritans
turned into singular channels; and
in their isolation and morbid self-
repression, they adopted dark,
furtive traits. I have been
traveling the rural roads because
only the silent, sleepy houses in
the backwoods can tell all that has
lain hidden since the early days.

DR. HULL

Is there a specific house, Eugene?

EUGENE

Indeed there is.

DR. HULL
Tell me about it. What do you see?

EUGENE
There's a little unpainted wooden house remote from the road, leaning against some gigantic outcropping of rock. Two hundred years and more it must have been here, while the vines have crawled and the trees have swelled and spread. It is all but hidden now in lawless luxuriances of green and guardian shrouds of shadow; but the small-paned windows still stare shockingly, as if blinking through a lethal stupor which wards off madness by dulling the memory of unutterable things.

MRS. HEGARTY
(whispered)
Did you catch that? "Unutterable".

DR. HULL
Yes.
(to Eugene)
Where is this house? Do you know?

Distant THUNDER ROLLS. WIND and other SFX creep in with the memories of that day.

Light CREEPY musical underscore.

EUGENE
It's the road to Arkham. I thought it would be a short cut.

DR. HULL
A short cut? Why do you need a short cut?

EUGENE
It's started to rain - I'm soaked and so very cold.

We hear the WIND and RAIN. Eugene's BREATHING becomes labored as he relives the memory.

DR. HULL
What do you do?

EUGENE

I approach the house. I had somehow taken it for granted that it was abandoned, but now I'm not so sure...

DR. HULL

And how does that make you feel?

EUGENE

I'm nervous. I don't want to go there.

DR. HULL

Hmmm. So why do you approach?

EUGENE

I'm freezing - I've got to get out of the rain. I wheel my machine up to the closed door.

Timid KNOCKING. Pause. KNOCKING. Pause.

EUGENE (CONT'D)

I try the rusty latch and find the door unfastened.

The door SQUEAKS open. We hear him enter with the bicycle.

EUGENE (CONT'D)

Inside is a little vestibule. The plaster is falling from the walls. Ahead rises a narrow staircase, flanked by a small door probably leading to the cellar, while to the left and right are closed doors leading to rooms on the ground floor.

MRS. HEGARTY

(sotto voce)

I don't understand - this doesn't seem to relate to his accident.

DR. HULL

Sometimes the unconscious mind's journey to a place of pain is circuitous and oblique. We'll give him more time.

(to Eugene)

Very good, Eugene, but we need to get on to what's important.

EUGENE

(a bit ominously)

Oh, but this *is* important. I lean
my cycle against the wall, and open
the door at the left.

The CREAK of the door, and FOOTSTEPS. An antique clock TICKS.

EUGENE (CONT'D)

It appears to be a kind of sitting-
room. It has a table and several
chairs, and an immense fireplace.
There's an antique clock on the
mantel. Hmm, archaism is displayed
in every visible detail.
Interesting....

DR. HULL

Why is this so interesting to you?

EUGENE

Most of the houses in this region I
have found rich in relics of the
past, but here the antiquity is
curiously complete. In all the room
there is not a single article of
definitely post-revolutionary date.
If the furnishings were less
humble, the place would be a
collector's paradise.

DR. HULL

So you're happy to be in this
house?

EUGENE

Oh, no. The aversion I felt on
seeing the bleak exterior of the
house is now far worse. Something
in the whole atmosphere seems
redolent of unhallowed age, of
unpleasant crudeness, and of
secrets which should be forgotten.
Wait, what's that?

MUSICAL THRILL.

DR. HULL

Yes, what do you see?

EUGENE

There's a book.

DR. HULL
What is the book?

EUGENE
Lying upon the table - medium sized, but so ancient, like something from a museum or library. It's bound in leather with metal fittings, in an excellent state of preservation.

DR. HULL
And do you open the book?

EUGENE
Oh yes. Astonishing. It's Pigafetta's account of the Congo region, written in Latin from the notes of the sailor Lopez and printed at Frankfort in 1598.

DR. HULL
(utterly bewildered)
I've never heard of it.

EUGENE
Oh, I have. It's famed for its curious illustrations by the brothers De Bry. The engravings were drawn wholly from imagination and careless descriptions. The picture of the zebra is almost comical. It--

Eugene stops suddenly with a GASP.

DR. HULL
Eugene? What's wrong?

EUGENE
The way it opens. It's... The volume persistently falls open at Plate XII.

DR. HULL
That's a picture? What is it?

EUGENE
It shows in gruesome detail a butcher's shop of the Anziques. The drawing is disturbing, especially in connexion with some adjacent passages describing Anzique gastronomy.

MRS. HEGARTY
(hushed)
Anziques? Have you heard of--

DR. HULL
Yes. A tribe of cannibals, I think.

MRS. HEGARTY
Oh my!

EUGENE
I turn away to a neighboring shelf
- an eighteenth-century Bible, a
Pilgrim's Progress of like period,
the rotting bulk of Cotton Mather's
Magnalia Christi Americana, when--

Pause. MUSIC.

DR. HULL
(softly)
What is it, Eu--

EUGENE
Shhh!

We hear FOOTSTEPS.

EUGENE (CONT'D)
Overhead. Someone's coming....

The FOOTSTEPS move onto the stairs and descend. Eugene's BREATHING is labored. The LATCH opens and door to the sitting room CREAKS. Eugene TRIES TO SPEAK but seems caught once again on a stutter.

DR. HULL
You're perfectly safe here. Relax
and tell me what you see, Eugene.

EUGENE
There's a... person.

DR. HULL
What does this person look like?

EUGENE
He's just stepped into the room.
Old, white-bearded, and ragged...
His height could not be less than
six feet, and despite his age and
poverty he is stout and powerful in
proportion.

(MORE)

EUGENE (CONT'D)

His face is almost hidden by a long beard which grows high on his cheeks, but seems abnormally ruddy and less wrinkled than one might expect... over a high forehead falls a shock of white hair little thinned by the years. His eyes... blue, though a trifle bloodshot, seem inexplicably keen and burning. But... my lord, the smell!

DR. HULL

What is he doing?

EUGENE

He's motioning me to a chair. He's sitting down opposite me... for conversation.

38

THE HOST

38

AMBROSE is of great yet indeterminate age, yet his weak voice full of fawning respect and ingratiating hospitality. His speech is very curious, an extreme form of Yankee dialect long thought extinct.

AMBROSE

Ketched in the rain, be ye? Glad ye was nigh the haouse en' hed the sense ta come right in. I calc'late I was asleep, else I'd a heerd ye - I ain't as young as I uster be, an' I need a paowerful sight o' naps naowadays. Trav'lin' fur? I hain't seed many folks 'long this rud sence they tuk off the Arkham stage.

EUGENE

I was going to Arkham. I apologize for my rude entry into your home.

AMBROSE

Glad ta see ye, young Sir - new faces is scurce arount here, an' I hain't got much ta cheer me up these days. Guess yew hail from Bosting, don't ye? I never ben thar, but I kin tell a taown man when I see 'im - we hed one fer deestrick schoolmaster in 'eighty-four, but he quit suddent an' no one never heerd on 'im sence.

Ambrose lapses into a kind of CREEPY CHUCKLE.

EUGENE

He seems to be in an aboundingly good humour, amused by something. For some time he rambles on with an almost feverish geniality, and finally I dare to ask him...

(to Ambrose)

Excuse me, sir, but I saw your book. I can't help but wonder how you came by so rare a book as Pigafetta's *Regnum Congo*.

AMBROSE

Oh, thet Afriky book? Cap'n Ebenezer Holt traded me thet in 'sixty-eight - him as was kilt in the war.

EUGENE

Ebenezer Holt?

DR. HULL

You know the name?

EUGENE

I've encountered it in my genealogical work, but not in any record since the Revolution.

AMBROSE

Aye. Ebenezer was on a Salem merchantman for years, an' picked up a sight o' queer stuff in every port. He got this in London, I guess - he uster like ter buy things at the shops. I was up ta his haouse onct, on the hill, tradin' hosses, when I see this book. I relished the picters, so he give it in on a swap. 'Tis a queer book - here, leave me git on my spectacles...

EUGENE

The old man fumbles among his rags, producing a pair of dirty and amazingly antique glasses. He dons them and reaches for the volume on the table, turning the pages lovingly.

AMBROSE

Ebenezer cud read a leetle o' this
 - 'tis Latin - but I can't. I hed
 two er three schoolmasters read me
 a bit, and Passon Clark, him they
 say got draownded in the pond...

(with creepy glee)

Kin yew make anything outen it?

EUGENE

Um, well, I could try. Let me see
 here. ...dicam solummodo has
 insulas... "Only Ptolemy has
 described these islands..."

Ambrose CHUCKLES and GRUNTS in apparent delight.

EUGENE (CONT'D)

I do my best, but if I err, he is
 not scholar enough to correct me.
 I'm amused at the childish fondness
 of this ignorant old man for the
 pictures in a book he cannot read.
 Realizing he could probably not
 read his English books either
 removed much of the ill-defined
 apprehension I had felt.

AMBROSE

Queer haow picters kin set a body
 thinkin'. Take this un here near
 the front. Hev yew ever seed trees
 like thet, with big leaves a-
 floppin' over an' daown? And them
 men-them can't be negroes - they
 dew beat all. Kinder like Injuns, I
 guess, even ef they be in Afriky.
 Some o' these here critters looks
 like monkeys, or half monkeys an'
 half men, but I never heerd o'
 nothing like this un.

EUGENE

He's pointing to a fabulous
 creature of the artist, which one
 might describe as a sort of dragon
 with the head of an alligator.

AMBROSE

But naow I'll shew ye the best un -
 over here nigh the middle-

EUGENE

The old man's eyes assume a brighter glow... The book falls open, almost of its own accord, to that picture... the repellent twelfth plate shewing the butcher's shop amongst the Anzique cannibals. The limbs and quarters hanging about the walls of the shop are ghastly, while the butcher with his axe is hideously incongruous. But my host seems to relish the view as much as I dislike it.

AMBROSE

What d'ye think o' this - ain't never see the like hereabouts, eh? When I see this I telled Eb Holt, 'That's suthin' ta stir ye up an' make yer blood tickle!' When I read in Scripter about slayin' - like them Midianites was slew - I kinder think things, but I ain't got no picter of it. Here a body kin see all they is to it - I s'pose 'tis sinful, but ain't we all born an' livin' in sin? Thet feller bein' chopped up gives me a tickle every time I look at 'im - I hev ta keep lookin' at 'im - see whar the butcher cut off his feet? Thar's his head on that bench, with one arm side of it, an' t'other arm's on the graound side o' the meat block.

Long pause. Eugene is BREATHING HARD.

DR. HULL

Eugene? Are you frightened? You're perfectly safe here.

EUGENE

He's mumbling on in shocking ecstasy, and the expression on his hairy, spectacled face is indescribable. All the terror I had dimly felt before rushes upon me actively and vividly, and I know that I loathe this ancient and abhorrent creature with an infinite intensity. His madness, or his partial perversion, seems beyond dispute.

AMBROSE

(in a husky whisper of
perverse joy)

As I says, 'tis queer haow picters
sets ye thinkin'. D'ye know, young
Sir, I'm right sot on this un here.
Arter I got the book off Eb I uster
look at it a lot, especial when I'd
heerd Passon Clark rant o' Sundays
in his big wig. Onct I tried
suthin' funny -

CHAIR SCRAPE as Eugene tries to move away.

EUGENE

Aaah!

DR. HULL

It's all right, Eugene.

MRS. HEGARTY

Doctor, he--

EUGENE

No! No!

AMBROSE

Here, young Sir, don't git skeert -
all I done was ter look at the
picter afore I kilt the sheep for
market - killin' sheep was kinder
more fun arter lookin' at it-

Ambrose's tone drops very low. We hear the RAIN pelting down
outside and another RUMBLE of thunder.

AMBROSE (CONT'D)

Killin' sheep was kinder more fun -
but d'ye know, 'twan't quite
satisfyin'. Queer haow a cravin'
gits a holt on ye - As ye love the
Almighty, young man, don't tell
nobody, but I swar ter Gawd that
picter begun ta make me hungry fer
victuals I couldn't raise nor buy -
here, set still, what's ailin' ye?
I didn't do nothin', only I
wondered haow 'twud be ef I did -
They say meat makes blood an'
flesh, an' gives ye new life, so I
wondered ef 'twudn't make a man
live longer an' longer ef 'twas
more the same...

The STORM outside grows increasingly furious. There is a small SPLAT as of a large drip of water.

MRS. HEGARTY
Is he all right, doctor? Should you bring him out?

DR. HULL
(whispering)
No, no, I think we're nearing the crux of his trauma.

Eugene STARTS as if he's seen something dreadful.

DR. HULL (CONT'D)
Eugene, tell me what you see.

EUGENE
The open book lies flat between us, with the picture staring repulsively upward. As he whispers the words "more the same" I hear a tiny spattering impact, and something shows on the yellowed paper of the upturned volume. It's raining, so I think of a leaky roof, but rain is not red.

MUSICAL PUNCTUATION.

DR. HULL
Red? What do you mean red?

EUGENE
On the butcher's shop of the Anzique cannibals a small red spattering glistens picturesquely, lending vividness to the horror of the engraving.

MRS. HEGARTY
My god, Doctor, are you sure this is helping him?

DR. HULL
Susan, please.

EUGENE
The old man sees it, and stops whispering; sees it and glances quickly toward the floor of the room he had left an hour before. I follow his glance, and there... there....

DR. HULL
What's there, Eugene?

EUGENE
Oh my god. Just above us on the
loose plaster of the ancient
ceiling... a large irregular spot
of wet crimson which seems to
spread even as I view it.

MUSIC.

DR. HULL
What do you do, Eugene? What
happens?

His CHAIR SCRAPES as he moves back from the old man's table.

AMBROSE
What ails ye, young sir?

EUGENE
I should go.

THUNDER.

AMBROSE
Tis a stormin'. Not weather fit for
man ner beast. Best if ye wait it
out.

EUGENE
Thank you, but no, I should...

DUELING FOOTSTEPS as Ambrose rises and moves to the door
blocking Eugene's exit.

AMBROSE
(toying with him)
Now what kind of a host wid I be
effen I let ye ride out in thon
storm?

EUGENE
Please, sir, step aside.

AMBROSE
I can make us tea - and vittles.

EUGENE
No. Please. I'd just like to--

AMBROSE
Ye shall not.

EUGENE

He's blocking the door. There's no way I can pass. I run for the back of the house!

PANICKED RUNNING FOOTSTEPS.

MRS. HEGARTY

He'll hurt himself!

DR. HULL

No, let him flail!

AMBROSE

Here now--

EUGENE

Through the kitchen... a back door.
Must not stop to see what that kitchen contains.

He OPENS THE DOOR and we hear the STORM RAGING.

EUGENE (CONT'D)

I run outside... the old man in close pursuit. Cold rain pelting down. I... I can't make it far on foot!

AMBROSE

(slightly off, still
scary)

Come back in - 'twill be the death of ye!

EUGENE

Just ahead. What is it? An old barn! A dilapidated barn. I must run, must get away!

The BARN DOOR CREAKS open.

AMBROSE

(shouted through rain with
horrible glee)

I wouldna take shelter in there now!

EUGENE

So dim inside, so dim I can barely make it out. My eyes adjust - no, no no!

Eugene SNIVELS.

DR. HULL
What do you see, Eugene?

EUGENE
(this is the trauma)
It's... the butcher shop of the cannibals... actualized in a squalid New England barn. Cutting tables with dried blood and meat hanging from hooks. Cuts of meat that could only come from one source.

He GASPS and runs.

EUGENE (CONT'D)
He's coming, twisted joy written on his face, coming out of the house with an ancient axe slung over his shoulder. I can't move. I try to yell for him to stop but... the...
(the stutter's back)
Words... w-won't...

AMBROSE
(approaching)
Aye now, 'tis best iffen ye don't fuss...

A lightning bolt splits the heavens and thunder CRACKS.
Eugene MOANS in agony.

MRS. HEGARTY
Dr. Hull, I must insist--

DR. HULL
Yes, all right. Eugene. You're safe here. You made it to safety. You got away.

EUGENE
(slow but not really stammering)
The... bolt hit the axe...
(sniffs)
Burned hair... Bicycle. I have to find my... bicycle.

DR. HULL
You found it, didn't you? Back in the house?

EUGENE

Yes. Ride. Through the... rain.
Mud... Miles...

DR. HULL

And that's when you crashed. They
found you, there with your bicycle.

EUGENE

(exhausted)

Yes.

MRS. HEGARTY

My word, Doctor. That can't have
been... real, can it?

DR. HULL

Eugene, what happened at that house
is no longer important to you.
You're going to forget completely
about that house. When you wake up,
you'll only remember that you
crashed your bicycle. You won't
need to be afraid any more.

EUGENE

The... book.

DR. HULL

There will be no book. You saw no
picture in the house. You will have
no memory of that place. You will
have no recollection of me or this
conversation. Now put your hand on
mine again. Good. Now I'm going to
raise it up--

(he does)

--and you're going to feel awake
and refreshed.

Eugene STARTS and then calms.

DR. HULL (CONT'D)

How are you feeling, young man?

EUGENE

(very slowly)

OK... I guess.

MRS. HEGARTY

Can you tell me anything about the
experience, Eugene?

EUGENE
 (full stuttering)
 When... will... we... start?

FINAL DRAMATIC MUSICAL SWELL!

40

OUTRO

40

CREIGHTON COBB
 You've been listening to Bad Medicine, a special anthology episode of Dark Adventure Radio Theatre, brought to you by our sponsor, Bile Beans! Don't rely on dubious concoctions sold under the guise of "medicine". Restore your constitution with tablets made from genuine and natural ingredients - buy Bile Beans today!

I'm Creighton Cobb. Until next week, this is Dark Adventure Radio Theatre reminding you to never go anywhere alone; if it looks bad, don't look; and save the last bullet for yourself.

ANNOUNCER
 "Bad Medicine" was adapted for radio and produced by Sean Branney and Andrew Leman, and based on the "The Facts in the Case of M. Valdemar" by Edgar Allan Poe, and "Cool Air" and "The Picture in the House" by H.P. Lovecraft. Original music by Reber Clark. The Dark Adventure Ensemble featured: Sean Branney, Kacey Camp, Matt Foyer, Andrew Leman, Jacob Lyle, Barry Lynch, John A. McKenna, David Pavao, Kevin Stidham, Josh Thoemke, Sarah van der Pol, and Time Winters. Tune in next week for "The Whispering Newts of Sambongo", a tale of amphibians gone amok in exotic Ceylon.

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