

Dark Adventure Radio Theatre

The IRON MAIDEN

...in *Dysthrophane*

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LUDO FORE PUTAVIMUS

The Players

Annie Abrams	Emily Dowdswell
Yeni Alvarez	Wedding Guest
Sean Branney	Stansfield Oglander
Kacey Camp	Fanny Oglander
Ken Clement	Lester Mayhew
Matt Foyer	Chalvers, Evans
Larissa Gallagher	Rachel, Mary Dowdswell
Andrew Leman	Nathaniel Ward
Dick Lizzardo	Wedding Guest
David Pavao	Jordan Lowell
Patrick Quinlan	Alfred Oglander
Zak Robertson	Tommy
Kevin Stidham	Eustace Miles
Josh Thoenke	Announcer
Sarah van der Pol	Hallie Miles
Time Winters	Theodore Dowdswell

The Staff

Written by Sean Branney and Andrew Leman
Based on "The Venus of Ille" by Prosper Mérimée
Original Music by Reber Clark
"Salut d'Amour" by Edward Elgar, performed by @benchfiddler
Paintings by Darrell Tutchton
Prop Inserts by Andrew Leman and Sean Branney
Special Thanks to Matt Lagan
Recorded, in part, at Horse Latitudes Studio by Marco Moir
Produced by Sean Branney and Andrew Leman
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HPL was a big fan of weird fiction. He avidly read all the strange stories he could get his hands on, and thoroughly expresses his admiration for his favorites in his exhaustive essay "Supernatural Horror in Literature". We recorded many of the tales HPL mentioned for our audiobook *The Literature of Lovecraft*, and among the standouts was Prosper Mérimée's 1837 short story "The Venus of Ille". Having adapted Robert E. Howard's "The Black Stone" as a young Charlie Tower story, we thought it would be fun to give his pal Nate Ward an adventure from early in his own career. "The Venus of Ille" seemed like a great starting point.

We have relocated the story from its original setting in the Pyrenees mountains of southern France to the Isle of Wight in the English channel. This opened up some possibilities to involve some mysterious fish-men while still connecting the tale to Roman (and possibly Phoenician) archeology. The tale's distinctive tennis match also made perfect sense in this environment. We folded many real-world elements into the story, including the Roman villa at Brading, the Oglander family, and tennis champion Eustace Miles.

The story's mythic underpinnings remain intact. Tales of statues coming to life go back to Pygmalion and his statue of Galatea in Ovid's *Metamorphoses* to Hermione in Shakespeare's *The Winter's Tale*. Mérimée's story itself is something of an adaptation of an earlier work. The basic plot has been around since the Middle Ages, and an early version was written by William of Malmesbury, a prominent 12th-century English historian.

Prosper Mérimée proved to be an interesting character in his own right: not only a writer but also an archeologist. He served as the Inspector-General of French historical monuments from 1830 to 1860, in which capacity he worked on some very famous landmarks including Carcassone and Notre Dame. To this day the official database of French monuments is named after him. We can't say for certain if any old statues came to life during his career, but it's easy to imagine that he drew on his personal experiences when writing the story.

—SB and ARHL



BEMBRIDGE SCHOLARS

Scientia non est Sapientia

*A Banquet in Honour of
Professor Nathaniel Ward*

