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The House of Dracula

A comedy-horror

Martin Downing

Samuel French - London
New York - Toronto - Hollywood



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THE HOUSE OF DRACULA

Originally performed by The Screaming Blue Murder Theatre Company at the Civic Theatre, Leeds—Hallowe'en 1991—with the following cast:

Baron von Frankenstein	Gilbert Robinson
Baroness von Frankenstein	Stéphanie Wright
Ygor	Keith Baxter
Frau Lurker	Jo McCarey
Harry Talbot	Anthony Bentley
Isabel Channing	Lisa Lowe
Count Dracula	Simon Wellings
Countess Dracula	Pam Jones
Doctor Jekyll	Orazio Rea
Groat	Simon Motin
Ethel	Michelle Greenley
Ka-Seet	Matthew Brighton
Spectre	Chaz Elliott
Creature	Tim Stephenson

The play was directed by **Jo McCarey**

The action of the play takes place in a grim castle near Borgo Pass, Transylvania.

ACT I Late evening, Walpurgisnacht

ACT II Scene 1 Half an hour later
Scene 2 Immediately following
Scene 3 Shortly afterwards

Technical personnel for the original production

Stage Manager	Michelle Hainsworth
A.S.M.	Debbie Burton
Lighting	Peter Waddicor
Sound	Julian Deering
Crew	Steven Crabb
	Stephen Earle
Settings and Props	Keith Baxter
	Orazio Rea
Specialist Make-up	Steve Hadi
Costumes	Micheal Downing
F.O.H. Manager	Eric Tillotson

CHARACTERS

Baron Victor von Frankenstein, a scientist
Baroness Elisabeth von Frankenstein, his wife
Ygor, his butler
Frau Lurker, his housekeeper
Harry Talbot, a werewolf
Isabel Channing, a bitch
Count Vlad Dracula, the King of Vampires
Countess Ilona Dracula, his Queen
Doctor Henry Jekyll, a schizophrenic
Groat, a zombie
Ethel, a vampire
Ka-Seet, a mummy
A Spectre
A Creature

AUTHOR'S NOTE

In any programme, so as not to give too much away, it is better to list **Jekyll** as **The Doctor**.

The **Spectre** and the **Creature** are intended to be played by the same actor and, if you are stuck for men, **Groat** can double **Ka-Seet**. If this is the case all **Groat's** business in Act II and his one line should be given to **Ethel**, apart from his bits in the chase sequence, which can be covered by the **Spectre**.

The tune for Frau Lurker's sung entrance in ACT II Scene 1 comes from *The Pirates of Penzance* by Messrs Gilbert and Sullivan. Similarly, if the actress wishes to sing the lines "When the night wind howls . . . etc." (ACT II Scene 3), these are derived from *Ruddigore*.

It is important to remember that the play is a comedy-horror, and in staging it the sinister elements should be emphasized as much as the humour.

Costume and special effects suggestions follow at the end of the script.

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(See also page ii)

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**To Mum and Dad, for thirty-four years of love,
loyalty and encouragement.**

**And to Jo, Keith and all the members
of their company for showing such
faith, friendship and expertise when
staging the first performances of
this play.**

CHARACTER DESCRIPTIONS

The Baron: he is 36 years old, of clean-cut appearance and has a forceful, if disillusioned personality.

The Baroness: she is 28, very attractive, but vain, diffident and outspoken.

Ygor: he is of indeterminate age, ugly, scruffy and shambles everywhere. Extrovert and eccentric.

Frau Lurker: she is in her mid-sixties and has a grim, menacing manner. She speaks tersely with a German accent and marches rather than walks.

Talbot: he is a good-looking, athletic but rather irritable American in his early thirties.

Isabel: she is an American in her early twenties, attractive but extremely brash and provocative.

The Count: he appears to be in his mid-forties and speaks with a Romanian accent. His appearance is suave yet sinister and he has great presence.

The Countess: she appears to be in her late thirties, very attractive but rather melancholy. She speaks with a mid-European accent.

Dr Jekyll: he is an outspoken, temperamental Scotsman in his early fifties. A total extrovert. As **Hyde** he is horribly sinister and has to be able to speak and sing with a cockney accent.

Groat: he can be any age. The main thing is he is decayed, uncoordinated and stupid.

Ethel: a pretty bride of Dracula, aged 30. She looks fearsome, but when she speaks she has a warm cockney personality.

Ka-Seet: he should appear to be just like *The Mummy* from the old films; withered, with only one good arm and leg.

The Spectre: any permutations are possible, i.e. a shrouded ghoul, walled-up monk, drowned warrior.

The Creature: try to follow the suggestion at the end of Act II, but if you can't please avoid the Phantom of the Opera and Frankenstein's monster, both of whom appear in *The House of Frankenstein!*

Baron (*off*) For pity's sake—let us in!

Baroness (*off*) We're being blown to pieces out here!

Countess (*moving to the window*) What a nuisance. What a bore.

Baroness (*off; screaming above the gale*) Oh Victor!

Baron (*off; frantically*) Elisabeth! Come back.

Baroness (*off; terrified*) I can't. The gale's caught my skirts!

Countess (*peering out of the window; amused*) Up, up—and away!

Baron (*off; shouting*) Grab that creeper! The one by the chimney.

Countess I shouldn't—it's loose.

The Baroness screams off

Baron (*off*) What's wrong?

Baroness (*off*) It's come away from the wall!

Countess (*shaking her head*) I told you.

Baron (*off*) Hold tight! I've got the other end.

Baroness (*off*) Then haul me down!

Baron (*off*) I'm trying—I'm trying. (*Shouting*) What's it like up there?

Baroness (*off*) Dreadful! I feel like a kite.

Countess You look more like Mary Poppins.

Baroness (*off*) Hurry up, will you?

Baron (*off*) Just a few more feet, dearest. Can you see the sea?

Baroness (*off*) No!

The gale starts to fade

Oh look—the wind's dropping.

Countess So are you.

A short scream, a crash and a groan are heard off. The Countess moves towards the doorway L

Baroness (*off; relieved*) Thank goodness for that.

Baron (*off; pained*) You didn't have to land on top of me.

Baroness (*off; brusquely*) Of course I did. Stop moaning!

Reaching the doorway, the Countess turns and waves her hand at the door R, then exits

The door opens mysteriously and the Baroness sails in, her hair dishevelled, and clutching a wicker cat-box. She is closely followed by the Baron, who is equally ruffled

Baron (*dusting himself down irritably*) Next time I'll side-step.

Baroness (*putting the cat-box on the sofa*) It won't make an ounce of difference. I've got perfect aim.

She starts adjusting her hair and he scowls. The door R begins to close and they both stare at it, startled

(*Gesturing, wide-eyed, as it shuts*) Did you see that?

Baron (*moving to examine it*) An automatic door. Fascinating.

Baroness It's uncanny.

Baron (*turning*) You've been to Tesco's?

Baroness Yes—but this is a castle.

Baron Quite. (*Producing a notebook and pen*) And with all those carefully constructed cobwebs—(*glancing up*)—candelabra creating cunning chiaroscuro effects—(*gesturing to the floor*)—and a carpet of centuries-old dust, it's everything one might expect. (*He starts to move round the hall, making notes*)

Baroness (*shuddering*) From a tip—yes.

Baron Why can't you think positively, dearest?

Baroness Very well, it's a *positive* tip. (*Running her fingers over the sofa, raising dust*) Look!

Baron Well at least nothing grisly has come to greet us.

Baroness No, we left that to stable the carriage and horses. What was it?

Baron A cross between an orang-utan and Siamese twins. (*Musing*) Someone has clearly taken the maxim "two heads are better than one" to heart.

Baroness (*shuddering*) It was *hideous*.

Baron (*brightly*) But it did give us a lift. Would you have preferred to walk? Think of all those perilous ravines.

Baroness I'm unlikely to forget them, darling. With two wheels constantly teetering over the edge I had a bird's-eye view.

Baron I could do with a Birds Eye snack.

Baroness (*angrily*) Oh, how can you be so glib? We almost perished!

Baron Don't be silly. We were in perfectly safe hands.

Baroness And all four of them *hairly*. (*Sitting on the sofa*) I've never been so terrified in my life.

Baron You have—and often. Castle Frankenstein was hardly Shangri-La.

Baroness (*irritably*) Don't remind me.

Baron (*snapping his notebook shut and putting it away*) So control yourself. *There is an eerie noise off and they both jump*

(*Bravely*) This outing's nothing untoward. In fact so far it's been exhilarating. We've ridden the Boot Hill Express—cameoed in *Gone with the Wind*—

Baroness (*unfastening the cat-box*) Yes, but abseiling and shooting the rapids on the penultimate leg was *far* from amusing. (*She produces a leafy green "thing" from the box and cradles it*) All that jarring and jolting nearly cost Cabbage his teeth.

Baron You know I can always dig him up a new set.

Baroness Thanks, but no thanks, Victor—knowing *your* sources. (*Angrily*) What you could find is my hat!

Baron (*exasperated*) I've told you—it's probably still with our luggage and the servants.

Baroness But where in heaven's name are they?

Baron (*faltering*) I don't know. We mislaid them at Charles de Gaulle.

Baroness Why?

Baron Frau Lurker suddenly needed the Gents and Ygor wanted something to suck on the plane.

Without them realizing a huge spider starts to lower itself over their heads c

Baroness (*disparagingly*) Humbug!

Baron Glacier mints, actually.

Baroness (*sniffing*) He should have used his thumb.

Baron Have you seen it?

Baroness Yes.

Baron (*sharply*) Then stop being fatuous. (*Before she can retort*) And cease worrying about your hat. It's bound to turn up soon. (*Wryly*) Knowing Frau Lurker, she's almost certainly commandeered the next flight out.

Baroness I hope you're right, Victor. That hat cost a small fortune, and I feel quite nude without it.

Baron The small fortune?

Baroness The hat, silly!

Baron Yes—the fortune's *my* deprivation.

A bell tolls once. Glancing up, they suddenly see the spider

Baroness (*recoiling*) Aah!

Baron (*waving his hands at it*) Go away! Shoo!

The spider retreats up its web

(*Checking his pocket watch*) Ten o'clock. (*Turning to his wife*) Have you given Cabbage his potash?

Baroness Yes—but the guinea-pig in him's chirping for greens.

Baron (*grimacing*) That's cannibalism.

There is another eerie noise and Cabbage suddenly leaps out of the Baroness's lap on to the floor

Baroness (*hurrying to scoop him up*) Oh no, sweetie—don't! Stay with Momma.

He jumps out of her hands again and a mad little chase ensues during the next few lines

Baron (*moving to the doorway* L) Anybody here? (*He pauses*) Feel free to gibber! (*Another pause*) Well that's promising.

He turns to watch as his wife manages to corner Cabbage UR

Baroness (*breathlessly*) Who are you expecting?

Baron I haven't the foggiest.

Baroness (*scrambling to her feet, clutching Cabbage tightly*) You mean you don't know?

Baron (*shaking his head*) Neither who invited us, nor why. (*He produces a letter from his pocket*) The letter simply says: "Take the diligence to Bukovina; places on it are reserved in your name. At the gallows-tree—" (*Turning to her, pointedly*) We'd have missed that, except for the corpse.

Baroness (*shuddering*) Oh, don't!

Baron (*grinning and glancing back at the letter*) "—my carriage will await you and bring you to Borgo Pass. I trust you will enjoy your stay in my beautiful home."

Baroness (*with conviction*) I knew it. We're at the wrong house!

Baron (*putting the letter away*) Elisabeth, we're *not*. (*Gazing round*) This place has wonderful character.

Baroness Which would be greatly enhanced by stripping it bare, installing sensible central heating, shag pile and a Heal's suite. But that will *never* happen.

Without either of them realizing, a bride of Dracula (the vampire, Ethel) slowly drifts downstairs R and slowly approaches the Baron

Baron (*puzzled*) Why?

Baroness The probability that the owners take *Interiors* or *Woman and Home* is as minimal as their use of a Hoover or Mr Sheen.

Baron Ah, but the glossy mag may not yet have permeated darkest Europe.

Baroness (*without looking at him*) What are you implying? That *I* counsel the unfashionable?

Baron (*turning to see the vampire; terrified*) God, no!

Baroness (*unaware of his plight*) The thought's absurd.

Speechless with fright, he tries to indicate the vampire, gesticulating madly, but she is oblivious of him

The vampire drifts off up R

They'd find my fees far too prohibitive. (*Turning to him*) Shall we sneer at the rest of the place?

Baron (*shaken*) I don't think that's terribly advisable.

Baroness Why? Don't tell me *you're* scared?

Baron (*casting a furtive glance UR; bravely*) Of course not.

Baroness In that case, let's take advantage of absent fiends to have a real nose round.

Baron (*sighing*) If you insist.

Baroness (*firmly*) I do. (*Heading for the stairs, still holding Cabbage*) She who relies on the host never gets the full tour—if any. Let's go!

She starts climbing the stairs. The Baron glances round warily, then follows her

Baron (*wryly*) Onwards—into *mystery*.

They both exit

Eerie music is heard as the Countess enters from L

At the same time a grotesque zombie (Groat) enters up R in a lurching, uncoordinated fashion

Countess (*reading from her volume*)

Presently my soul grew stronger; hesitating then no longer,
 "Sir", said I, "or Madam, truly your forgiveness I implore——"

Groat looks around the hall, moaning in a confused fashion. The Countess picks up the cat-box and gives it to him irritably

They travelled light. Now go!

Groat stares at the cat-box then lurches off upstairs with it as the Countess resumes her recital

(*Scanning the page*) Where was I? Oh yes.

But the fact is I was napping, and so gently you came rapping—

There is a loud pounding on the door R. She reacts angrily

And so faintly you came tapping—

More pounding as she heads up R

—kicking down the

castle door,

That I scarce was sure I heard you!

She turns and gestures to the door

Thus I opened

wide the door;—

The door opens mysteriously as before

Darkness there and—

Frau Lurker enters the hall, goose-stepping, swinging a suitcase and singing wildly

Frau Lurker “Deutschland, Deutschland über alles!” (*Dropping the suitcase, she raises her arms triumphantly*) We have arrived. We are here!

The Countess exits smartly UR

(*Gazing round*) What a dump! (*Sharply*) Ygor! (*Whirling on her heel she heads for the open door and yells*) Ygor!

Ygor (*off; plaintively*) Help!

Frau Lurker (*staring upwards*) Gott in Himmel! What are you doing?

Ygor (*off*) What does it look like?

Frau Lurker (*grimly*) Swinging around, as usual. Come down—at once!

Ygor (*off*) I can't. I'm snagged on something.

Frau Lurker (*peering off*) Ja. It is a gargoyle.

Ygor (*off*) It's flaming horriboyle!

Frau Lurker (*sternly*) Do not urinate. It is simply a lifeless statue.

Ygor (*off*) This one isn't—it keeps hitting me. Ow! Leave off! *Help!*

Frau Lurker You have only one choice if you wish to escape.

Ygor (*off; eagerly*) What's that?

Frau Lurker Disengage the parachute.

Ygor (*off*) You're joking.

Frau Lurker (*shouting*) Ygor—I never joke.

Ygor (*off; glumly*) That's true.

Frau Lurker (*impatiently*) So do it. Schnell!

Ygor (*off; dubiously*) Oh boy . . . Here goes. (*Yelling*) Aaaah!

A crash is heard off

Frau Lurker (*chuckling*) The Ygor has landed. (*She marches over to the drinks table and starts pouring herself a brandy*)

Ygor limps through the door, clutching a large suitcase. He has an enormous hump

Ygor (*irritably*) Yes, but it hurt.

Frau Lurker (*sharply*) Don't whine! Forty feet is feeble.

Ygor (*askance*) Feeble? (*Dumping his suitcase c; sulkily*) Why couldn't we have flown Virgin?

Frau Lurker Balloons are unpredictable und slow. We could not keep the Baron waiting.

The door R suddenly slams shut and they both jump

Ygor How d'you know he's here?

Frau Lurker (*pointing at the floor*) See—footprints!

Ygor (*recoiling*) Where did they come from?

Frau Lurker (*acidly*) Shoes, Ygor. Those large prints are the Master's—size eight.

Ygor (*shrugging*) A lot of folks take an eight.

Frau Lurker Ja. But the smallest are undoubtedly the Mistress's.

Ygor Why?

Frau Lurker (*sarcastically*) They have a Gucci heel.

The sound of dragging chains is heard off and they both react

(*Sharply*) What was that?

Ygor (*tentatively*) A Teasmaid?

Frau Lurker Rot! (*Eagerly*) It was something dragging itself along the upper corridors. (*She knocks back her brandy and replaces her glass, peering up the stairs*)

Ygor (*wryly*) Nice.

Frau Lurker (*turning*) Nein—it is almost certainly *unspeakable*. (*She laughs maniacally*)

Ygor (*puzzled*) Frau Lurker . . .

Frau Lurker Ja?

Ygor Are you a virgin?

Frau Lurker (*sharply*) That is no question to ask a lady.

Ygor No—I was asking you.

She clouts him

Ow! Don't hit me. I'm black and blue as it is.

Frau Lurker (*savagely*) You will be a rainbow if you don't watch it!

Ygor (*recoiling*) Sorry. Sorry! (*He sits in the armchair, cowering*)

Frau Lurker (*proudly*) I, Brunnhilde Lotte Lurker, have given myself to no man. Und no-one has ever dared to force me.

Ygor (*wryly*) I'll bet. (*Puzzled*) But what happened to Mr Lurker?

Frau Lurker (*dismissively*) He died young.

Ygor Before you went to bed?

Frau Lurker Before we left the altar. When I lifted my veil, he screamed und dropped dead at my feet.

Ygor I wonder why.

Frau Lurker (*quickly*) He was allergic to bouquets.

Ygor (*nonplussed*) Oh. (*Brightly*) Didn't you ever fancy other blokes?

Frau Lurker Lots. (*Musing*) But there was only one who held the key to my heart.

Ygor (*rising to join her*) Crippen?

Frau Lurker (*glaring at him*) *Der Führer*. (*Bitterly*) But he was ensnared by that Scheisse bitch, Eva.

Ygor (*puzzled*) Gardner?

Frau Lurker Braun! (*Ruefully*) I fought madly for his love—but with a black eye, fractured jaw und concussion, what can you do?

Ygor She was a heavyweight?

Frau Lurker (*acidly*) She was slime!

During the following the spider gradually lowers itself over their heads c

Ygor (*curious*) How did Adolf take all this?

Frau Lurker (*miserably*) Sitting down, munching popcorn und cheering occasionally. I was mortified. (*Sighing*) All I could do was swallow my pride und dedicate myself to higher things.

Ygor (*knowingly*) Aryan philosophy.

Frau Lurker (*sharply*) The *Luftwaffe*.

Ygor (*wryly*) Cor—they must have been desperate.

Frau Lurker (*obliviously*) For pilots? Ja. (*Proudly*) Und once I had my wings I was the terror of the skies!

Raising her arms above her head she suddenly notices the spider. So does Ygor

Both (*terrified*) Aaah!

The spider retreats up its web

Ygor (*recovering*) What did you fly? Broomstick seven four seven?

She clouts him again

Ow!

Frau Lurker (*fiercely*) A Messerschmidt, dummkopf!

Ygor Then why did we bail out just now?

Frau Lurker (*grimacing*) That was *Concorde*. (*Abruptly*) Let us reconnoitre the territory.

There is another eerie noise and both jump

Ygor (*reluctantly*) Do we have to?

Frau Lurker Ja. (*With conviction*) I sense a sinister presence here.

Ygor (*glancing up warily*) Only one?

Frau Lurker (*fiercely*) Und I am determined to seek it out.

Ygor (*plaintively*) Can't we leave it in peace? Maybe it's shy.

Frau Lurker (*rounding on him*) Dummkopf! The sensation I am feeling, the vibrations emanating from the bowels of this Schloss, tell me that whoever or whatever lives here is far from shy—and has *never* been at peace. (*Gripping Ygor's arm*) It has lived an evil life, gorging itself, like a filthy leech, on man's hatred, fear und blood—for centuries!

Ygor (*cheerfully*) Well, after that pig-out, it's probably sleeping it off.

Frau Lurker (*darkly, peering round*) Nein. The thing is wide-awake. Even as we speak, it is watching us—and *licking its lips*.

Without them realizing the vampire has entered up R and is drifting towards them

Ygor (*staring at Frau Lurker wide-eyed*) What are you saying?

Frau Lurker (*gleefully*) We are in for a fun time!

Laughing maniacally, she marches out L

Ygor turns, sees the vampire and recoils, yelling

Ygor Wait for me!

He belts out after her

Eerie music is heard as the Countess enters UR, still holding her volume of poetry. She and the vampire confront each other C, but following a commanding gesture from the Countess the vampire drifts off upstairs

Countess (*reading from her volume*)

And the silken, sad, uncertain rustling of each
sombre curtain

Thrilled me—filled me with fantastic terrors never
felt before—

There is a terrified yell from Ygor off L, then Groat enters L, chuckling horribly. He goes to pick up the two suitcases C

(*Impatiently*) Out, out—out.

He gives her a filthy look, then staggers upstairs with the cases

(*Resuming her recitation*) Well, then.

Now, to still the beating of my heart, I
stood repeating—

There is another fierce pounding on the door R. She slams her book shut in exasperation

Bollocks—bollocks! Why's there always someone at the door?

There is more pounding

It's like some infernal meeting. Four was plenty, now there's more!

She heads L as the pounding is repeated

(*Waving at the door, irritably*) Come inside.

As it starts to open she disappears out L

Isabel Channing bounces into the hall, swinging a small suitcase

Isabel (*loudly*) Well, hi y'all! (*She halts, staring about her wide-eyed*) Huh?
(*With feeling*) W-e-i-r-d. (*Shouting off*) Harry—there's no-one here!

Talbot lopes in with a rucksack, dark stubble and pointed, hairy ears

Talbot (*gruffly*) What did I tell ya? This ain't Grand Central.

Isabel No—it's the pits.

She drops her case up C as the door suddenly starts to close. Both of them react

Talbot What the——!

Isabel Cree-py. (*Warily*) D'you think there's spooks?

Talbot Does a bear shit in the woods?

Isabel (*irritably*) You sure are a comfort.

Talbot (*pointing off R, emphatically*) You didn't see that thing swingin' from the tower just now.

Isabel (*faintly*) What was it?

Talbot (*unfastening his rucksack*) Hell, I dunno. It dropped outta sight before I could take a closer look. (*Wryly*) Not that I cared for one.

There is an eerie noise off and they both jump

Isabel (*shivering*) I should never have left the States. I knew this trip would be a mess the second we set out.

Talbot (*dumping his rucksack up C*) That tanker weren't bad.

Isabel Harry, it was lousy. So was that freight-train. But what beat all was hitchin' a ride on a sheep-truck! I've never felt so cheap!

Talbot (*innocently*) Well, maybe if you didn't look it we'd have done better.

Isabel (*bridling*) Oh, that's rich! It was havin' you on the end of a choke-chain that cost us First Class. You sure are unsavoury after dark.

Talbot (*urgently*) It ain't my fault, Isabel.

Isabel It ain't mine, either. (*Musing*) Though I guess when you get down to it—an' you had a wild time with those sheep!—it's my stars I oughtta blame.

Talbot How come?

Isabel The day that letter turned up I took a peek in the papers to see what I'd got comin'. An' you know what they said?

Talbot (*drily*) You'll be cover-girl for *Vogue*?

Isabel (*glaring*) No. (*Quoting*) "You will be obliged to spend money on an exciting journey to foreign parts in the company of a handsome young man."

Talbot (*grinning*) Well that don't sound too bad.

Isabel (*sharply*) It's what it *didn't* say that stinks. The trip cost a bomb—gettin' here was hell on earth—the guy I wound up with is a freak—an' where am I now? Romania's version of Elm Street! (*Furiously*) When I get home that liar won't be writin' stars—he'll be *seein'* 'em.

There is an unearthly creaking sound off and both react

(Startled) What the hell was that?

Talbot *(wryly)* Someone unwrappin' a Hershey bar?

Isabel Come off it! When did Hershey bars creak? *(She takes a small camera from her pocket, moving up C)*

The spider starts to lower itself from above

Talbot *(suddenly doubling-up)* Aagh!

Isabel *(warily)* What's up? You ain't on the turn, are you?

Talbot *(groaning)* No—it's my back. It's killin' me.

Isabel *(taking a flash photo of a coat of arms)* Yeah. That was a mean climb an' no mistake.

Talbot *(irritably)* The climb was OK. The mean part was you gettin' on board.

(Groaning again) You ever thought of losin' ballast?

Isabel *(bridling)* See here, buster—compared to Twiggy I'm anorexic.

Talbot Well next time you want to go ridin' let me know—an' I'll order reinforcements.

Isabel I'll order you a *six-foot plot* if you don't dry up.

Talbot Oh yeah?

Isabel Yeah! *(Gesturing to her throat)* I've had it up to here with you dishin' me dirt. All along the line it's been the same old thing—"Let's kick Isabel!"

Talbot Aw, c'mon—

Isabel *(obliviously)* So what if I've got an appetite—

Talbot *(drily)* Like Jaws?

Isabel Maybe I do snore—

Talbot To beat Goliath.

Isabel An' I know I ain't soft-spoken.

Talbot Nor's Joan Rivers.

Isabel *(pointedly)* But at least I'm human. *(She raises her camera to take a photograph of him)*

Talbot *(reconciling warily)* Now hold on!

Isabel *(advancing)* I don't eat out an' order *Chum*.

The camera flashes and he covers his eyes

Talbot *(yelping)* Ah—no!

She pursues him up C. The spider retreats up its web

Isabel I don't cruise round on all fours—like *animated dentures*.

The camera flashes again and he ducks down behind the sofa

Talbot Get lost!

Isabel *(standing over him, pointing the camera downwards)* An' I definitely don't wind up lookin' like a *Mohair rug*! *(She takes several more flash photographs in quick succession)*

Talbot *(behind the sofa, desperately)* Ow-wwwww!

Isabel *(lowering the camera and stomping down R)* So there!

Talbot *(growling behind the sofa)* Damn! *(He rises and moves from behind the sofa, holding out hands which are now very hairy. In addition the seat of his jeans bulges prominently. Glaring at her)* Look what you've done to me!

Isabel (*askance*) What I've done? Ha! Those things are home-grown, Paddy-paws.

He starts to growl but is distracted as . . .

The Countess enters L. She stares with fascination at Talbot's rear

Countess (*wryly*) Is that a tail in your pocket—or are you just pleased to see me?

Talbot (*feeling behind him, startled, then embarrassed*) No—it's a draught-excluder. Who're you?

Countess (*moving towards the stairs*) My name is lost . . . Lost!

Isabel (*drily*) Tell us about it.

Countess (*emphatically*) No. I want to be *alone*.

She exits

Isabel returns her camera to her pocket

Talbot (*checking the length of his tail*) So do I.

Isabel Why? I'm doin' my damn best to be nice, Harry.

Talbot (*growling*) Baby, you don't know the meanin' of the word.

During the following Groat descends the stairs to fetch their belongings. The vampire also drifts from up R to L. They exit shortly

Isabel and Talbot are totally unaware of either

Isabel Then who was it who bailed you outta the Venice dog-pound, huh?

Talbot Just 'cos you needed the *map*. You'd have been stuffed without it.

Isabel An' I thought you were grateful.

Talbot Quit foolin'. You were thinkin' of number one—that's all.

Isabel (*blazing*) Well, that's a sight better than *doin'* it!

Talbot (*startled*) Huh?

Isabel (*jabbing his chest*) All those wheelchairs you watered—it's a wonder Europe's old folk aren't down with rust!

Talbot (*furious*) It's a wonder you ain't been *flattened*.

Isabel What are you drivin' at?

Talbot Put it this way . . . Do the words "selfish loud-mouthed broad" make any *sense* to you?

Isabel (*furious*) What do *you* make of *this*?!

She gives him a resounding slap and he reels. Recovering, he heads for her, growling and clenching his fists

Talbot That does it!

Isabel (*squaring up to him, fists raised*) Come any closer an' you'll be flossin' your teeth through your ass!

He hesitates, glaring at her and rubbing his face. The vampire and Groat have now disappeared from the hall

(*Staring round, irritably*) Now where the hell's my case?

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