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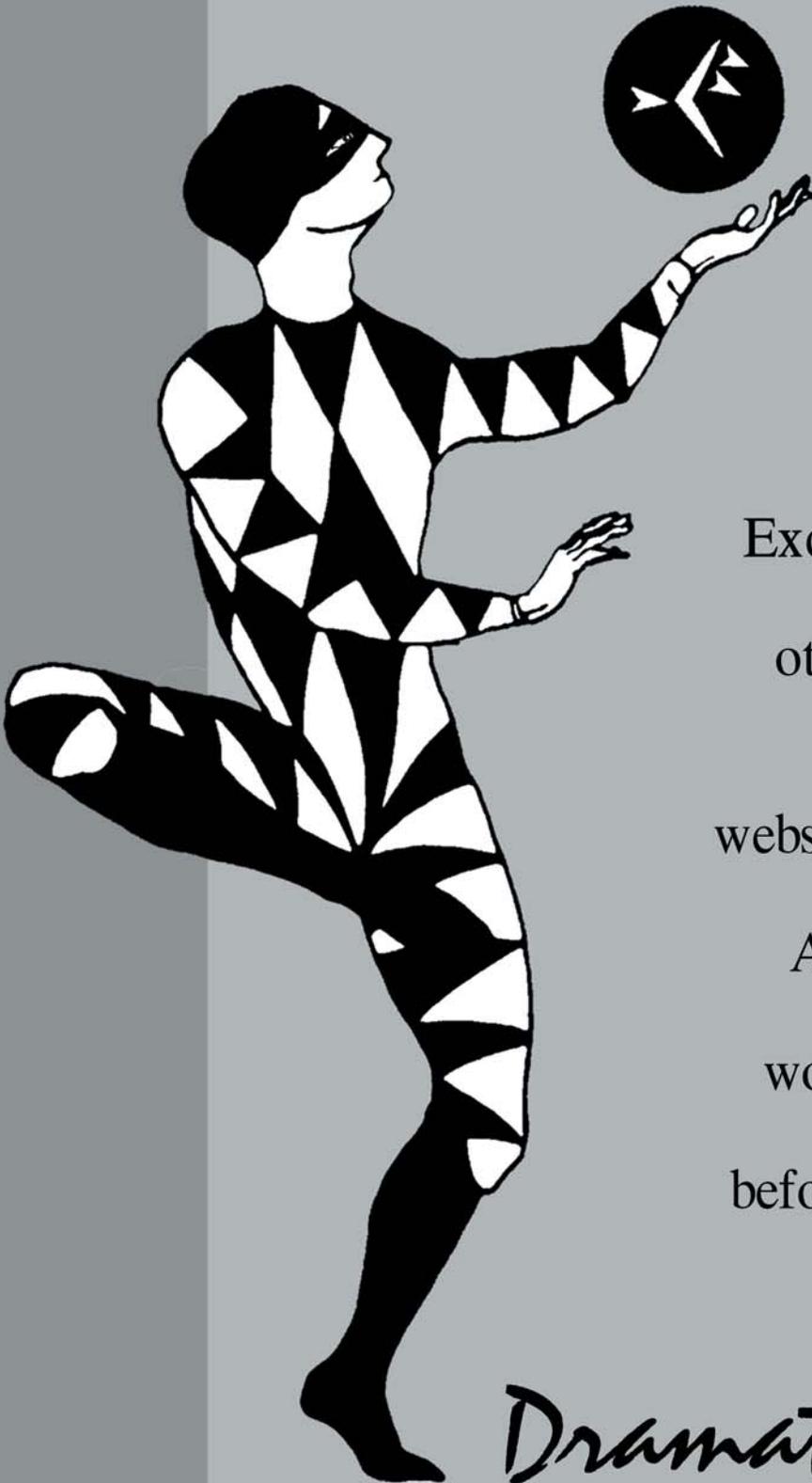
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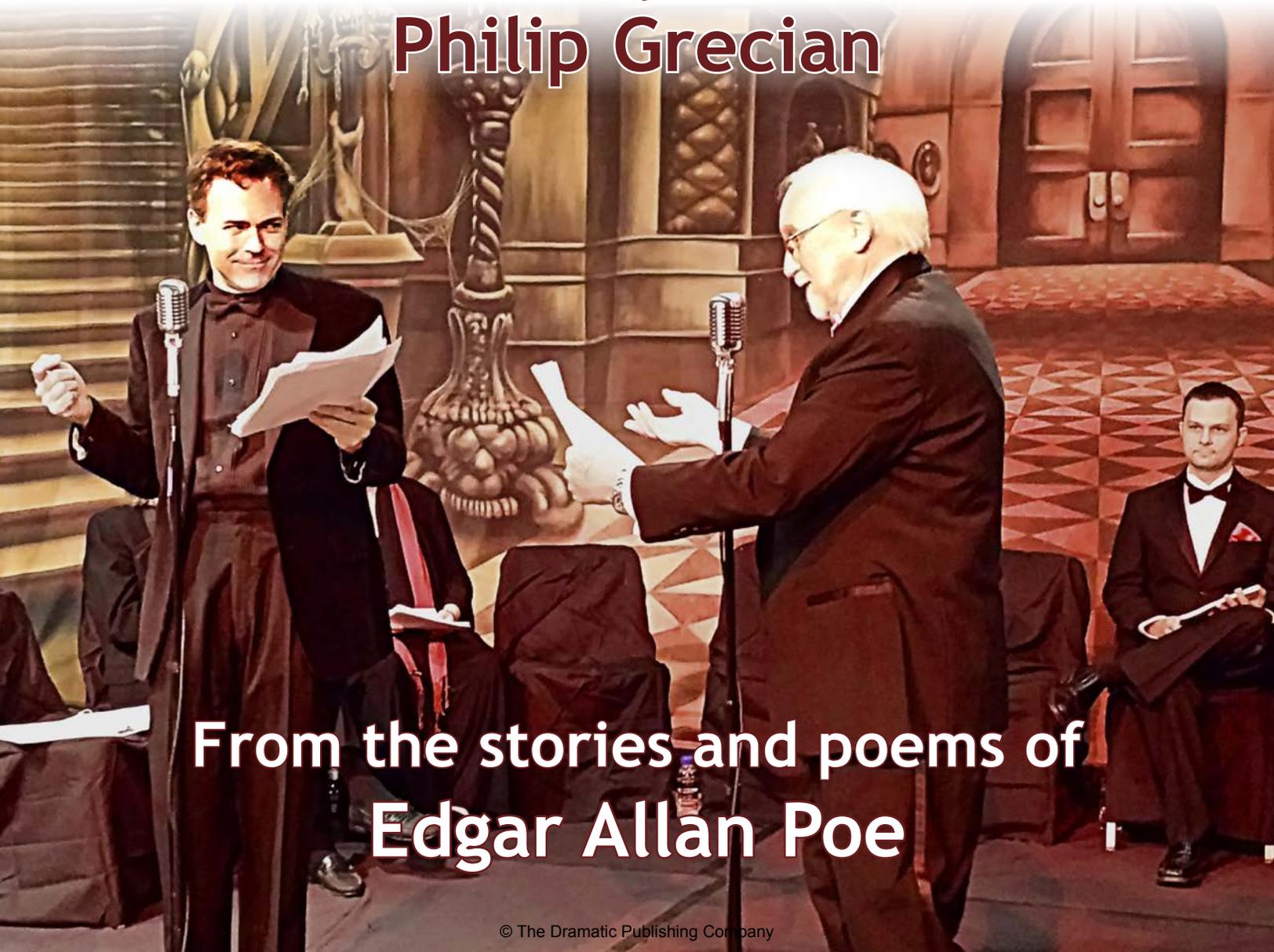
Dramatic Publishing



TWISTED TALES OF POE

The Radio Play
by

Philip Grecian



From the stories and poems of
Edgar Allan Poe

TWISTED TALES OF POE

Radio drama. By Philip Grecian. From the stories and poems of Edgar Allan Poe. Cast: 7 to 9m., 4 to 5w. Four stories from Edgar Allan Poe are told in the form of a staged radio drama, complete with sound effects and music. The prisoners of Leverett Street Jail, Death Warrant Division, await their fates as three of the doomed souls tell their stories, and we enter the mind of a fourth. The Caretaker insists that, although she has murdered the old man she was caring for, chopped him up and buried him under the floor, she is not mad. In fact, she says, she loved the old man. We segue into the night the deed was done and witness the murder and the concealment of the old man's body. It is his unnerving, staring eye she seeks to murder, but it is his *Tell Tale Heart* that eventually leads to the discovery of her crime. Montresor tells of luring Fortunato away from carnival and into the wine cellar with the promise of sampling from a *Cask of Amontillado*. He proffers the notion that by walling Fortunato up to die, he has done a service to humanity, thereby amputating "a diseased portion from the body human." In the third tale, we enter the mind of the catatonic Poet, who has witnessed the death of his lover or has, perhaps, been responsible for it. After the memorial service, the Poet is visited by guilt ... and *The Raven*. Finally, Bedloe, who has buried an axe in his wife's skull and hidden her in the cellar, is brought to justice by *The Black Cat*. *Twisted Tales of Poe* is a staged radio drama with the actors reading from scripts at three floor microphones downstage while all sound effects and music are performed live. Originally produced by public television station KTWU in Kansas, *Twisted Tales of Poe* has aired throughout North America. *Single set. Approximate running time: 80 minutes. Code: TU6.*

(Cover: Performed by The Air Command at PBS affiliate television station KTWU, Topeka, Kan., featuring (l-r) Shawn Trimble, David Tangeman, Dustin Dean and Les Smith. *Photo: Valerie VanDerSluis, KTWU.*)



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The Radio Play

By

PHILIP GRECIAN

From the stories and poems of
EDGAR ALLAN POE



Dramatic Publishing Company

Woodstock, Illinois • Australia • New Zealand • South Africa

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(TWISTED TALES OF POE)

ISBN: 978-1-58342-981-5

IMPORTANT BILLING AND CREDIT REQUIREMENTS

All producers of the play *must* give credit to the author of the play in all programs distributed in connection with performances of the play and in all instances in which the title of the play appears for purposes of advertising, publicizing or otherwise exploiting the play and/or a production. The name of the author *must* also appear on a separate line, on which no other name appears, immediately following the title, and *must* appear in size of type not less than fifty percent (50%) the size of the title type. Biographical information on the author, if included in the playbook, may be used in all programs. *In all programs this notice must appear:*

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For Eugene Williams, Val VanDerSluis, Jim Kelly and Kevin Goodman,
who believed.

PRODUCTION NOTES

A staged radio drama is often more economical than full-stage productions, but there are several things to consider before going into rehearsal:

1. Everything depends on sound. Never cast an actor because of his or her physical presence. Cast the actor because of what he or she can do vocally. Many of the actors from the golden age of radio looked not at all the way they sounded.
2. Don't worry about costuming your actors to look like the characters they play. That's not the point. If you must have costuming, concentrate on the fashions of the 1940s, when radio was in its golden age, or costume your cast and musicians in cocktail dresses and tuxedos. Sometimes, perhaps, the addition of a hat may help the actor to get into character. A prop may be necessary or even a cigar or pipe or glasses.
3. Remind your actors that the voice must carry it all. In the final evaluation, everything is in the voice.
4. Try to cast actors who can do multiple voices and accents. Onsite audiences are fascinated to watch a single actor play multiple characters, though it's usually best not to have a single actor's characters in conversations with each other.
5. Music is terrifically important. It sets mood, moves your story from one location or time frame to another and gives your audience clues regarding how they are supposed to relate to a scene. It is like the score in a film. We use a single keyboard in our productions, sometimes with an organ sound, sometimes with a piano sound. We have also used a violin for some scenes and an autoharp for transitions between times and/or space.
6. The real visual drama for the onsite audience is in watching the sound effects crew. Make sure they, and their various apparatuses, are clearly seen.
7. Try never to use prerecorded sound. It robs the audience of the experience of seeing how a sound is produced.
8. A pause in radio drama is eternal. Though you are staging this drama, the audience is "seeing" it in their minds' eyes, and a pause that is too long may throw them out of the story. Always keep energy high. Always.
9. Some actors are more comfortable when they can make eye contact with those with whom they are acting. In staging, whenever possible, keep two characters in a conversation close to each other, without another actor between them.
10. In the commercial breaks written into the script, consider actually selling commercial time to local merchants and dramatizing commercials written specifically for your production. It helps with the production budget, and audiences love it.

Twisted Tales of Poe was first produced live at the Hussey Playhouse in the Topeka Performing Arts Center on Oct. 15, 2004, airing live on KMAJ-FM and a year later in Oct. 2005. On Oct. 8, 2007, a third production was simulcast on KTWU television and KMAJ-AM radio, dropping *The Black Cat* to fit an hour time slot and winning an International AVA gold award. In 2013 it was televised on KTWU as two productions: the hour-long *Twisted Tales of Poe* and the half-hour *The Black Cat*.

Leverett Street Jail

Katy..... Kirsten Hanna ('04, '05), Carole Ries ('07), Sarah May Pippitt ('13)
 Prisoners..... Karen Hastings ('04-'07), Kirsten Goodman ('04-'07), Cliff Alfrey ('04-'07),
 Shirley Mae Gorman ('04), Cortni Hurst ('13), Shawn Trimble ('13),
 Dustin Dean ('13), Les Smith ('13), Chelsey Shirrell ('13)

The Tell-Tale Heart

The Caretaker..... Karen Hastings ('04-'07), Kirsten Goodman ('13)
 Katy..... Kirsten Goodman ('04, '05), Carole Ries ('07), Sarah May Pippitt ('13)
 The Old Man..... Cliff Alfrey ('04-'07), Skip Ellis ('13)
 Inspector Talbot..... Cliff Alfrey ('04-'07), Les Smith ('13)
 Officer Simpson Philip Grecian ('04-'07), Dustin Dean ('13)

The Cask of Amontillado

Montresor Raymond Remp, Jr. ('04, '05), David Tangeman ('07, '13)
 Fortunato Cliff Alfrey ('04-'07), Shawn Trimble ('13)

The Raven

The Poet Philip Grecian ('04-'13)
 Helen Kirsten Hanna ('04, '05), Carole Ries ('07), Chelsey Shirrell ('13)
 Mourners The Company

The Black Cat

Bedloe Raymond Remp, Jr. ('04, '05), David Tangeman ('07), Jay Hurst ('13)
 Mary Bedloe..... Kirsten Hanna ('04, '05), Carole Ries ('07), Cortni Hurst ('13)
 Pluto Karen Hastings ('04-'07), Sarah May Pippitt ('13)
 Mrs. Pitts..... Karen Hastings ('04-'07), Chelsey Shirrell ('13)
 Inspector Talbot..... Cliff Alfrey ('04-'07), Les Smith ('13)
 Officer Simpson Philip Grecian ('04-'07), Dustin Dean ('13)

KTWU Executive Producer Eugene Williams
 KTWU Producers..... Val VanDerSluis ('04-'07), Jim Kelly ('07, '13)
 KTWU-TV Directors Jim Kelly, Lloyd Slaper
 Director Karen Hastings ('04-'07), Philip Grecian ('13)
 Stage Manager Stephen McKnight ('04, '05), Martin "Kodi" Peterson ('07),
 Dee Butterfield ('13), John Hanna ('13)
 Musical Director/Keyboard Joseph Kampsen ('04, '05), Jon Lothenore ('07, '13)
 Violin, Autoharp..... Sarah May Pippitt ('13)
 Sound Effects Ute Mueller ('04-'07), Arlyn Brunken ('13),
 Karen Gutzwiller ('04, '05), Heath Wilson ('07), Mardine Wilson ('07),
 Stacey Smith ('13), D'sean Hendricks ('13)
 Costumes..... Arlyn Brunken ('13)

Twisted Tales of Poe

CHARACTERS

P.A. VOICE

ANNOUNCER: This dialogue may be changed to reflect individual productions.

Leverett Street Jail

Katy
Prisoners 1-6
Guard

The Raven

The Poet
Helen
Mourners 1-4

The Tell-Tale Heart

The Caretaker
Katy
The Old Man
Inspector Talbot
Officer Simpson

The Black Cat

Bedloe
Mary Bedloe
Cat
Male Neighbors 1-2
Crowd
Mrs. Pitts
Inspector Talbot
Officer Simpson

The Cask of Amontillado

Montresor
Fortunato

Twisted Tales of Poe

ACT I

SETTING: *A radio studio. A door upstage with an “On Air” light above. A platform L where the keyboard player sits. R is an array of sound effects machines and tables with sound equipment. There is a couch and a coffee table UC, a counter area UR with water pitchers and cups. Chairs and incidental tables are scattered. Downstage are three microphones evenly spaced. The light plot is simple: a general wash for the beginning and end of Act I and the beginning of Act II, the ability to independently dim the lights upstage and downstage and the ability to spot each of the microphones, the keyboard and the sound effects.*

AT RISE: *Sound effects crew enters and crosses to equipment. Music director enters. Actors enter one at a time and in groups. Some carry scripts.*

P.A. VOICE. Thirty seconds to air!

ALL (*ad-lib*). Thank you!

(The actors, ad-libbing, prepare. Some leaf through their scripts. Some pick up scripts from chairs and tables. Others sit or move to microphones.)

P.A. VOICE. In 10 ...

(The pace quickens as those actors on microphones find places in their scripts and listen for the P.A. or watch the “On Air” light on the set.)

P.A. VOICE (*cont’d*). Five ... four ... three ... two ... one ...

(“On Air” light comes on.

MUSIC: *Opening theme up and under.*

ANNOUNCER. Broadcasting from the _____ Studios, it’s theatre of the mind ... Radio you can see, written by Philip Grecian and based on the works of Edgar Allan Poe. In a moment, *Twisted Tales of Poe!* But first, these words ...

(MUSIC: *Theme segue to commercial break.*

Commercials here.

MUSIC: *Theme up and under.*

ANNOUNCER (*cont’d*). And now ... turn out your lights and move in close to the glow of your radio dial, for ... *Twisted Tales of Poe!*

(MUSIC: *Up and under to fade.*

PRISONER 1. What time is it?

PRISONER 2. Why do you care?

PRISONER 1. Why shouldn't I care? I do care. I ...

PRISONER 3. The women would know.

PRISONER 2. Maybe.

PRISONER 1. Anybody awake over there?

PRISONER 4 (*off mic*). Whaddya want?

PRISONER 2. They are awake! Move up closer. Maybe we can see 'em.

PRISONER 3. Hey over there!

PRISONER 4 (*off mic*). What?

PRISONER 3. Come up to the bars ... up in the corner. All of you. We can maybe see each other.

PRISONER 4 (*off mic*). Why not? Sure.

(Mumbling, ad-libs, all women off mic.)

PRISONER 1. Ah, there you are. What time is it?

PRISONER 4 (*on mic*). How should we know?

PRISONER 5 (*on mic*). Is it still daylight?

PRISONER 2. Who cares?

PRISONER 5. You've got a window.

PRISONER 3. Not much of a window. Too high and narrow. Can't look out.

CARETAKER. I'd give anything to have a window. To see the sun.

PRISONER 3. You'll see it soon enough. I've heard them building the gallows out in the yard.

PRISONER 5. Comes to that, we'll all see it soon enough.

PRISONER 6. We've all got that in common.

PRISONER 5. Murder, you mean.

CARETAKER. I had no choice.

KATY. Course you didn't. Hey!

PRISONER 1. What?

KATY. Move out where I can see you. (*Pause.*) That's good. Anybody else awake over there?

PRISONER 2. Just the poet.

PRISONER 4. The poet?

PRISONER 2. The quiet one.

PRISONER 4. Oh. Poet, huh?

PRISONER 6. Catalepsy. The guard told me ...

CARETAKER. Which one?

PRISONER 6. The one that brings the food.

PRISONER 5. Oh. I like him.

KATY. What'd he say?

PRISONER 6. Told me yesterday the quiet one's a poet. (*Pause.*) I think it was yesterday.

PRISONER 1. Doesn't move. Doesn't speak. Just stares.

CARETAKER. Mad?

PRISONER 1. No.

KATY. Not like some.

CARETAKER. What are you saying? Do you think me mad?

KATY. What I think doesn't matter, luv—you'll hang all the same.

CARETAKER. Why will you say I'm mad? Well, certainly I have a disease ... a condition of the senses that's sharpened them ... above all, the sense of hearing.

KATY. I see.

CARETAKER. No, truly! It's become acute. I hear all things in heaven and earth. I hear many things in hell. Madness? No. It's my condition ... my curse. Let me tell you how calmly I can tell my story. Like a person ... a person ... *not* mad.

KATY. Very well.

CARETAKER. It's impossible to say how the idea first came to me ... but once it did, it haunted me.

KATY. You hated him.

CARETAKER. No. No ... I loved the old man. He had never wronged me.

KATY. Then why did you kill him? Money?

CARETAKER. No! I never took money. It wasn't for his money.

KATY. Then what?

CARETAKER. His ... eye!

KATY. His eyes? But what did ...

CARETAKER. No! No. Only *one* of his eyes. Only one. It was ... it was larger than the other ... and pale blue, with a film over it. An evil eye. It saw me. It knew me. It wanted to destroy me. Whenever it fell upon me, my blood ran cold! I made up my mind to kill it ... to take its life ... and end the evil!

KATY. Kill the *eye*?

CARETAKER. Yes, but to do that, I had to kill the old man. There was no other way. I didn't hate the old man. I loved him ... loved him ... but ...

KATY. You truly are mad. A lunatic.

CARETAKER. No! No! A lunatic knows nothing! But I ... I ... I know everything! I was careful. I planned it out carefully. Can a lunatic do that?

KATY. I don't see why not.

CARETAKER. I had been engaged to nurse the old man through his illness. You must know that I was never kinder to him than during the week I killed him. I would see to his needs during the day, and then go to my own home in the evening ...

(MUSIC: Long, low suspense chords and harp gliss.)

(SFX: Clock striking midnight and under.)

CARETAKER (*cont'd*). ... but that week ... every night that week ... at midnight, I would return ... I would creep into his house and quietly steal up to the door of his room.

(SFX: Door latch turns. Door squeaks open.)

CARETAKER (*cont'd, sotto voce*). I would open the door ... oh, so gently, and put in a dark lantern, closed up, so that no light shone out. Then I would put in my head ... sloooooowly, so as not to disturb the old man's sleep.

(OLD MAN is gently snoring. Establish, fade out.)

CARETAKER (*cont'd*). I could see him in the moonlight through the window ... see him upon his bed. I would undo the lantern ...

(SFX: Shutter on lantern.)

CARETAKER *(cont'd)*. ... so that a single thin ray fell upon that eye ... that vulture eye ... but ... every night ... it was closed. So it was impossible to do my work.

KATY. Your work?

CARETAKER. It wasn't the old man who vexed me, it was that eye! That evil eye! But for five nights it was not there, you see ... it was closed ... asleep ... and I was safe from it. Once I knew this, I would creep out, leave the house and go to my own apartment. But every morning, then, I would go back to his house and into his chamber ...

(MUSIC: Bridge and autoharp gliss

SFX: Door opens more quickly.)

CARETAKER *(cont'd)*. Good morning!

OLD MAN. Ah! Good morning, my friend.

CARETAKER. And did you sleep well?

OLD MAN. Aye. Tolerable well, thank you.

(SFX: Door closes.)

CARETAKER. Good, good! I've brought you breakfast!

OLD MAN. No, no! I'll have a cup of tea. That will be enough.

CARETAKER. Nonsense, I won't hear of it! Sit up. Sit up.

OLD MAN *(you can hear the movement in his voice)*. Oh ... you have a good heart ... You are so good to me.

(SFX: Bed creaks.)

CARETAKER. Let me fluff up your pillows, then ...

(SFX: Fluffing pillows.)

CARETAKER *(cont'd)*. There we are. Ease back ... ease back. There! How's that?

OLD MAN. Aaaaah. Excellent. It does my heart good to see how you care.

CARETAKER. Now ... here's the tray. You see ... Look out now, we'll set it across your lap.

(SFX: Dishes rattle on tray.)

CARETAKER *(cont'd)*. There ...

OLD MAN. Ah! The aroma!

CARETAKER. Wait till you see.

(SFX: Metal cover comes up and off.)

CARETAKER *(cont'd)*. Sausage and eggs!

OLD MAN. Sausage and eggs! A meal after my own heart!

CARETAKER. There's more!

(SFX: Another cover off.)

CARETAKER (*cont'd*). Bread, fresh from the oven! Toasted and buttered.

OLD MAN. You baked this?

CARETAKER. I did! And churned the butter as well!

OLD MAN. You've gone to such trouble! It warms my heart to see how you look after me.

CARETAKER. And here ...

(SFX: Another lid off.)

OLD MAN. Oranges!

CARETAKER. And melon! Fresh from the market this morning!

OLD MAN. Melon! You fulfill my heart's every desire!

CARETAKER. And tea. Here you are ...

(SFX: Teacup on saucer. Pouring tea.)

OLD MAN. Aaaaah! Just smell that!

CARETAKER. A breakfast fit for a king, eh?

OLD MAN. Aye! A hearty breakfast indeed!

CARETAKER. Of course! Eat it all! You must keep up your strength!

OLD MAN. I will take what you say to heart, my friend. Come back in an hour and there'll be not a single scrap left on the tray.

CARETAKER. Very good.

(SFX: Door opens.)

CARETAKER (*cont'd*). Till then.

OLD MAN. Till then.

(SFX: Door closes.)

MUSIC: Bridge—transition, then under and continue under.)

CARETAKER. You see? You see! It was that way each morning after my midnight visits for a week!

(SFX: Slight rain. Wind. A rumble of thunder. Footsteps on cobblestone. All under.)

CARETAKER (*cont'd*). But then, upon the eighth night, I came along the street ...

(SFX: Footsteps up stone steps.)

CARETAKER (*cont'd*). ... climbed the steps to his front door ...

(SFX: Key misses keyhole once or twice, then in. Door latch. Door opens.)

CARETAKER (*cont'd*). In quickly, so as not to be seen by anyone on the street.

(SFX: Door closes. Stairway creaks. Cut rain.)

CARETAKER (*cont'd, speaking quietly*). Then up the stairs to his door ...

(SFX: Door latch.)

CARETAKER (*cont'd, whispering*). I was more than usually cautious in opening the door.

(SFX: Door squeaks open very slowly and under next.)

CARETAKER (*cont'd*). I knew that this would be the night. I could feel it!

(SFX: Rustling of bedclothes and under. Door squeaking stops suddenly.)

CARETAKER (*cont'd*). He moved ... as if startled.

KATY. He awoke? Did you ...

CARETAKER (*shushes her*). Sh sh sh.

(SFX: Rustling of bedclothes the only sound for a moment.)

CARETAKER (*cont'd, whispering*). Now, you may think I drew back ... but no. His room was filled thick with darkness ... for there was no moon.

KATY. The light from the hallway.

CARETAKER. There was none! And my lantern was shuttered.

(SFX: Door creaks slowly, long and low ... and under.)

CARETAKER (*cont'd*). I simply kept pushing on the door ... slowly, for I knew he could not see it. And then, just as I was prepared to open the shutters of the lantern ...

(SFX: Sudden rustling of covers, squeak of bedsprings.)

OLD MAN. Who's there?

KATY. He was awake!

CARETAKER (*whispering*). Sssshhhh. Yes. But he could not *see*. For a whole hour I did not move a muscle.

KATY. He went back to sleep?

CARETAKER. I knew he was sitting up in the bed ... listening.

KATY. I've done that ... awakened at night ... listened.

CARETAKER. But I was quiet. You see? Would a lunatic have been quiet?

KATY. Well, but you ...

(OLD MAN groans.)

CARETAKER. Sh! Sh! Sh!

KATY. What?

CARETAKER. Did you hear? Sh!

(OLD MAN groans.)

CARETAKER (*cont'd*). There it is again! You know what it is?

KATY. What?

CARETAKER. It is a groan of mortal terror! The low, stifled sound that arises from the bottom of the soul! Many a midnight it has welled up from my own bosom, deepening, with its dreadful echo, the terrors that had awakened me.

KATY. Terrors?

CARETAKER. Terrors! I knew then what the old man felt. I knew he had been lying awake ever since the first slight noise. And I knew ...

KATY (*after a pause*). What?

CARETAKER. ... that *he* knew. That he knew death lurked just past his reach in the stygian darkness beyond his bed! And I knew that *I* was to be the instrument of his death!

KATY. Madness.

CARETAKER. No! No! Not mad! Not mad! I'm not!

OLD MAN (*weakly*). Who is there?

KATY. How could he ...

CARETAKER. Sh sh sh sh sh! You'll give me away. Silence.

OLD MAN. Hello?

CARETAKER. Shhhhhh.

OLD MAN. Hello? (*Pause.*) Wind in the chimney. (*Pause.*) Just a ... a mouse. (*Pause.*) A ... a cricket. (*Pause. Quieter now.*) Hello?

CARETAKER. When I had waited ... patiently, without hearing him lie down, I resolved to open the shutters on the lantern ... only a bit ... just a very very little crevice.

(SFX: Shutter on lantern.

MUSIC: Low, tentative, sustained.)

CARETAKER (*cont'd*). ... so that a single, thin ray ... like the thread of a spider ... shot from the lamp and fell upon that vulture eye. And it was open!

(MUSIC: Sudden sting, then under.)

CARETAKER (*cont'd*). Huge and dull blue with a hideous veil that chilled the very marrow in my bones! That eye! That awful eye! That evil eye! It saw me, I know it did! And then I heard the sound!

KATY. The sound?

CARETAKER. I have said that what you mistake for my madness is an acuteness of the senses.

KATY. You have said that, yes.

CARETAKER. Knowing this, you must believe me when I say there came to my ears a low, dull, quick sound.

(SFX: Heartbeat slowly fade up and under.)

CARETAKER (*cont'd*). ... such as a watch makes when wrapped in cotton. I knew that sound!

KATY. You knew it?

CARETAKER. It was the beating of the old man's heart. Hear it, hear it? Bu-boom, bu-boom ... It increased my fury! It was all I could do to keep still. I scarcely breathed!

(SFX: Heartbeat pounds a rhythm that the CARETAKER's voice begins to follow.

MUSIC: Builds in intensity through speech.)

CARETAKER (*cont'd*). I held the lamp upon that eye ...

... that wicked eye! That evil eye!
 The beating of his heart increased.
 As fast as thought, as loud as drums!
 Bu-boom, bu-boom, bu-boom, bu-boom!
 My horror rose! It saw! It knew!
 Bu-boom, bu-boom, bu-boom, bu-boom!
 That evil eye! That foul tattoo!
 Bu-boom, bu-boom, bu-boom, bu-boom!
 I prayed the old man's heart would burst!
 Bu-boom, bu-boom, bu-boom, bu-boom!
 The eye, it sees! My soul is cursed!
 Bu-boom, bu-boom, bu-boom, bu-boom!
 The windows shatter, the walls come apart!
 Bu-boom, bu-boom, bu-boom, bu-boom!
 That evil eye! That horrible heart!
 Bu-boom, bu-boom, bu-boom, bu-boom!
 I hear it crash and throb and thrum
 Bu-boom, bu-boom, bu-boom, bu-boom!
 The old man's hour had finally come!

(CARETAKER screams.)

(OLD MAN screams but becomes muffled and continues under.

His cries become weaker.)

(SFX: The springs creak madly. The bedclothes are tossed. The heartbeat grows loud and quick. Creaking subsides. Heartbeat slows, softer.)

(MUSIC: Frantic.

Music slows.)

(Silence.)

CARETAKER (*cont'd*). I removed the pillow from his face. The old man was dead. I closed his eyes ... I pulled the lid over the evil eye ... the dead evil eye. It would trouble me no more.

(SFX [under the next speech]: Footsteps quickly on floor. Door latch. Fling open door. Footsteps quickly down hallway, another door.)

CARETAKER (*cont'd*). I worked quickly, for I had planned it all carefully. Could a lunatic plan so carefully? I think not. My disease has sharpened my senses, but this is a benefit, is it not? I can see more colors in the spectrum than any other living being. I knew the scent of everyone and everything that had ever been in that old house. I could hold a length of linen in my fingers and count its threads ... catalog each simple flavor in the complex taste of a wine ... and even hear the tiny creatures in the walls ... the rats in the attic ... hear them breathe. No. No, I am far from mad. And I had planned well ... for you see, I had brought a toolbox during the daylight hours and concealed it in the closet in the corridor.

(MUSIC: Under all.

SFX: Rattling of tools. Close door. Footsteps back up hallway.)

CARETAKER (*cont'd*). The sun was rising, and so I could not carry the old man outside to the street, but I had not planned that, in any case.

(SFX: Dragging body.)

CARETAKER (*cont'd*). I dragged the old man to the bath and threw him into the tub ...

(SFX: Body landing hard in dry metal tub.)

CARETAKER (*cont'd*). ... where I dismembered him.

(SFX: Sawing establish and under.)

CARETAKER (*cont'd*). I stripped to the skin so as to avoid getting blood on my clothing. I spread butcher's paper on the floor ... and I spent the next several hours engaged in dissection. Legs, arms ... head. Nice, neat packages. You see? I planned everything. Does that sound like something a lunatic would do?

(SFX: Nails screaming as they're torn out. Planks being torn up and tossed.)

CARETAKER (*cont'd*). I took up the flooring in the old man's chamber, near the big window, which I'd been careful to cover ... and I put the pieces, each one carefully wrapped, between the scantlings!

(SFX: Rustling of butcher paper packages.)

CARETAKER (*cont'd*). They fit! As if the spaces had been built for them. And you see? Again, more planning ... more care. I neatly tucked the old man in ... as I had done so many times before.

(SFX: Putting flooring back in place and pounding nails.)

CARETAKER (*cont'd*). And then I covered him with a counterpane of flooring ... putting it all back as it had been. I replaced the boards so cleverly, so cunningly, that no human eye—not even *his*—could have detected anything ... even so close to the window, where the sun shone in, brightly.

(SFX: Rustling of large pieces of butcher paper.)

CARETAKER (*cont'd*). Then I gathered up the butcher's paper from the floor around the tub ... taking care so as not to spill any of the blood ...

(SFX: Fireplace. Fire and under.)

CARETAKER (*cont'd*). And I burned it in the fireplace ... the paper and blood incinerating and flying up the chimney and away. It was a good fire. A steady, healthy blaze. The old man would have liked it. He always enjoyed a cozy fire. I was sorry he wasn't there to see it. When I had made an end to these labors, I went home.

KATY. And slept?

CARETAKER. Deeply. And here's where I was clever ... where I planned. Not something a lunatic would do. I knew that someone would miss the old man. There were those who knew that I was his caretaker ... and would be suspicious of me.

KATY. Aye. Sooner or later there'd be a report of a missing person.

CARETAKER. And who would be most logical to file that report with the police, eh? Who?

KATY. Well ... you ... but ...

CARETAKER. Yes! Yes! And if I didn't do that ... if the one who saw the old man every day wasn't the one to report him missing ... would that be very suspicious?

KATY. It would. Yes.

CARETAKER. Ha! So how can you call me mad? I reported him missing! You see? Everything planned. I waited one full day and reported him missing. Then I went to his house and waited for the police.

(MUSIC: Bridge.

[NOTE: INSPECTOR TALBOT and OFFICER SIMPSON refer to the CARETAKER as "ma'am" here, but the role could, of course, just as easily be played by a man.]

(SFX: Knocking on door. Door opens.)

CARETAKER *(cont'd)*. Ah! The police, correct?

TALBOT. Yes, ma'am. I'm Inspector Talbot, and this is my associate, Officer Simpson.

SIMPSON. Ma'am.

CARETAKER. Yes, come in, come in.

(SFX: Door closes.)

TALBOT. Now, ma'am, you say your employer has gone missing.

CARETAKER. Yes, I'm so worried. He wasn't in his room when I came in this morning.

TALBOT. His room?

CARETAKER. Yes ... in his bed.

TALBOT. And that's where you saw him last? In his bed?

CARETAKER. Yes. He was in his bed when I left last evening.

TALBOT. I see.

CARETAKER. He wasn't—isn't—strong, you know. Simply crossing the room tires him; he spent—spends—most of his time in his bed. So when I ...

TALBOT. He is ill?

CARETAKER. My employer is a man of advanced years, and his health is not good.

SIMPSON. And he wasn't in his room this morning.

CARETAKER. No.

TALBOT. And you've touched nothing.

CARETAKER. In the room?

TALBOT. Yes.

CARETAKER. No, no, when I found that he was gone, I notified your offices immediately. Would you like to see the room?

TALBOT. Please.

CARETAKER. Of course. This way, gentlemen.

(SFX: Three sets of feet up stairs, establish and under.)

SIMPSON. What is the nature of your employment, ma'am, if I might ask.

CARETAKER. I'm his caretaker. His nurse. His ...

TALBOT. But you don't live on the premises.

CARETAKER. No. Oh no.