

# The Curse of Batvia

A Musical

THE CURSE OF BATVIA

(Prologue: THE CAST is in front of  
curtain on the apron, wearing  
bathrobes: the actors presenting  
the play. THEY sing; lines assigned  
in score.)

IN A LONELY MANOR HOUSE SOMEWHERE IN ENGLAND  
- THIS ALL TAKES PLACE SOME TIME AGO -  
WHAT SEEMS A SCENE OF PLACID DOMESTICITY  
WILL CHANGE INTO A BLOODY GRIM TABLEAU.

DARK SECRETS  
EMERGE AT NIGHT,  
THEY'LL BE REVEALED BY  
THE MOON'S FULL LIGHT.  
THERE WILL BE MAYHEM,  
AND SOME ROMANCING.  
BE BRACED FOR BEDLAM,  
AND SILLY DANCING.

IN A LONELY BOGGY FEN RATHER TOO NEAR HERE  
- THIS ALL TRANSPIRES QUITE SOON FROM NOW -  
A QUITE DISTASTEFUL CRIME WILL BE DISCOVERED, BUT  
WE'RE AT A LOSS AS TO THE WHY OR HOW.

DARK SECRETS  
EMERGE AT NIGHT,  
THEY WILL BE CHANGED BY  
THE MOON'S FULL LIGHT.  
THERE WILL BE BLOODSHED,  
AT THE BEGINNING;  
MAKE WAY FOR MURDER,  
AND PEOPLE SINGING.

THERE'S A COUNTRY FAR WEST OF THE VOLGA,  
LEFT OF THE LAND OF THE LETTS,  
CLOSE TO CARPATHIA'S MOUNTAINS,  
AND BENEATH THE UZBEKISTAN STEPPES;  
IT'S WEST OF THE WILDS OF SHCHERBAKOV  
AND EAST OF ESTONIA'S SHORE;  
IT BORDERS OF PINSK, OR PERHAPS IT'S NEAR PSKOV,  
OR COULD IT BE ULAN BATOR...

IN A LONELY MOUNTAIN PASS QUITE FAR FROM ENGLAND  
- THIS ALL OCCURS WHEN OUR PLAY IS DONE -  
AN ANCIENT CURSE WILL REASSERT ITS SOVEREIGNTY,  
SO SIT QUITE STILL; IT CHASES THOSE WHO RUN.

(Continued)

DARK SECRETS  
EMERGE AT NIGHT,  
THEY'LL BE REVEALED BY  
THE MOON'S FULL LIGHT.  
THERE WILL BE MAYHEM,  
AND SOME ROMANCING.  
BE BRACED FOR BEDLAM,  
AND SILLY DANCING.

ACT 1; SCENE 1

(Curtain rises on the library of an English manor house late one evening in November. Over-stuffed shelves of books compete with animal trophy heads, guns and hunting regalia and a cricket bat hanging on the wall. A fire burns in the massive fireplace. The open French doors reveal a full moon in the night sky.

LORD RODERICK RECLUSE enters;  
mustache, rumpled tweeds. In his 70's or so. HE looks around, under furniture, behind curtains, etc.)

RODERICK

Bodger? Bo-dger?

(HE tries to whistle, but can't make a sound. Goes to the drinks cabinet, pours himself a whiskey, drinks it, and with his whistle "wettted" is able to whistle for his dog. Waits, listening. Then crosses the stage, singing to himself:)

RODERICK (Continued)

LOOKING FOR MY DOG  
I'M LOOKING FOR MY DOG.  
HE USUALLY COMES HOME BY NOW,  
ILL-TEMPERED, ANCIENT DOG.

LOOKING FOR MY DOG  
LOOKING FOR MY DOG.  
I'VE BEEN TRYING TO FIND THE OLD BOW WOW -  
GODAMMIT, WHERE'S MY DOG?

(MORE)

RODERICK (Continued)

HE'S GROWN TOO OLD FOR WANDERING,  
HE'S GROWN TOO OLD TO HUNT  
AND SO, I GUESS, HAVE I.  
AND LIFE IS AWFULLY DULL  
WHEN ONE CAN'T KILL.

I'VE NOTHING TO LOOK FORWARD TO,  
AND NOW I'VE LOST MY DOG -  
I WISH IT WERE MY WIFE.  
I MIGHT AS WELL JUST DIE -  
FROM HEREON IN MY LIFE  
IS ALL DOWNHILL

LOOKING FOR MY DOG  
I'M LOOKING FOR -

(HE exits. The full moon shines.)

After a beat LADY ANTHEA RECLUSE enters quickly through the French doors from the outside. SHE is disheveled and hurried, yet still sleek as a panther in her clinging black evening gown. SHE closes the door firmly behind her and yanks the curtains closed, shutting out the night, then leans back against the door, taking a deep breath. Then SHE pulls herself together, smoothing her hair, adjusting her dress, wiping her mouth. SHE moves quickly to the book shelves and starts taking books out, one after another, opening and looking at them, and putting them back. SHE does this quickly, methodically, obsessively.)

ANTHEA

LOOKING FOR THE BOOK  
LOOKING FOR THE BOOK -  
I'M AFRAID OF WHAT WILL HAPPEN NEXT  
IF I DON'T FIND THE BOOK.

LOOKING FOR THE BOOK  
LOOKING FOR THE BOOK -  
I'VE BEEN HERE A YEAR AND I'M PERPLEXED:  
WHY CAN'T I FIND THE BOOK?

IT HOLDS THE KEY TO EVERYTHING,  
AT LEAST I HOPE IT DOES,  
OR ALL MY HOPE'S FOR NAUGHT,

(MORE)

ANTHEA (Continued)

AND THINGS WILL STAY THE SAME  
BUT ONLY WORSE.

WHERE CAN IT BE? ELUSIVE BOOK,  
WHY DON'T YOU SHOW YOURSELF?  
THE SITUATIONS' FRAUGHT!  
I HAVE TO FIND YOU NOW  
AND END THIS CURSE!

LOOKING FOR THE BOOK  
STILL LOOKING FOR THE BOOK -  
I DON'T KNOW WHAT ELSE THAT I CAN DO  
THAN TO SEARCH EACH SHELF AND FOLLOW THROUGH,  
AND LOOK THROUGH ALL ITS NEIGHBORS TOO,  
THE TIME TO FIND IT'S OVERDUE,  
BUT THE ONLY THING THAT I CAN DO  
IS KEEP LOOKING FOR THE BOOK,  
LOOKING FOR THE BOOK  
LOOKING FOR THE BOOK  
LOOKING FOR THE BOOK...

(RODERICK re-enters)

RODERICK

(Crusty landed gentry accent)

Have you seen Bodger?

ANTHEA

(looking up, distracted)

Hmm?

RODERICK

Good gad, Anthea, rummaging through the books again? Can't  
you just pick one and read it? I said where's bloody Bodger?  
Haven't seen him all evening.

(ANTHEA stops what she's doing.)

ANTHEA

(very posh English accent)

I... don't think your dog came home tonight.

RODERICK

Well, probably some bitch in heat down in the village.

ANTHEA

Yes, that must be it. Throw another log on the fire, will  
you darling? It gets so chilly these long dreary November  
evenings.

RODERICK

This is England, not bloody India. The climate's supposed to be bracing.

ANTHEA

Right. So could you -

RODERICK

Throw a log on the fire? We have servants for that.

(GUNTHER the manservant has entered the room. He is hirsute, dark and virile, with a somewhat lupine air about him.)

RODERICK (Continued)

Good gad man, what are you doing creeping up on us like that?

GUNTHER

A Chief Inspector Cottage has come from the village sir, on a matter of grave importance. Shall I throw him in?

ANTHEA

Show him in.

RODERICK

A man's home is his castle: I'll give the orders here if you don't mind.

ANTHEA

I was correcting his word usage.

RODERICK

By gad, woman, we're not London nobs. Plain country speaking will suit us.

(notices GUNTHER standing there)

What are you doing, standing there like a tea trolley?

GUNTHER

A Chief Inspector Cottage has -

RODERICK

Well show him in, dammit. Never mind - I'll do it myself.

(RODERICK exits.)

GUNTHER

So.

ANTHEA

(her accent changes for this scene to her native Eastern European accent, like Gunther's.)

So?

GUNTHER  
Why is a Chief Inspector here?

ANTHEA  
How should I know?

GUNTHER  
Anthy Panthy?

ANTHEA  
All right. Maybe something happened. The moon was full.

GUNTHER  
But you know, from when we were little children in -

ANTHEA  
Don't. Don't say the name. It makes me sad.

GUNTHER  
I too, sadness. But I have the anger too, with you. You know better when the moon is waxed to fullness than to be in the path of her shining.

ANTHEA  
The doors were left open. The next thing I knew I was outside. And then... things happened...bad things, I think.

GUNTHER  
Ah. How come you get to make rampage? Why couldn't I have been the one to -

ANTHEA  
Gunther. Remember your place. Remember our mission -

ANTHEA & GUNTHER  
*To find the book to cast the spell to free us from the curse.*

GUNTHER  
Okay. You tell me to come and I come, with the snow already high in the mountain passes, so my paws get wet. Feet. I do this for you -

ANTHEA  
- for us -

GUNTHER  
- and now I have to play servant to this imbecile you married while you look for book. Why did you marry him? Why? Why not just rip out his throat on a night like tonight?

ANTHEA  
Because we are human.

GUNTHER

Sometimes.

ANTHEA

Most of the time...

MOST OF THE TIME I'M HUMAN,  
MOST OF THE TIME I'M GOOD.  
MOST OF THE TIME THE LUMINOUS MOON  
DOESN'T TEMPT ME TO DO WHAT I SHOULD...NOT.

MOST OF THE TIME I'M HUMAN,  
MOST OF THE TIME WELL BEHAVED.  
BUT SOME OF THE TIME I'M BESTIAL AND CRUEL,  
AND YOU COULD EVEN SAY I'M DEPRAVED....BUT

DON'T MIND A RAMPAGE  
ONCE IN A WHILE  
BUT FOR ALWAYS  
WOULD START TO PALL.  
IF KILLING WERE CONSTANT,  
NO LET UP,  
THEN A RAMPAGE WOULD DISENTHRALL.

DON'T MIND A BLOODBATH,  
BLOOD CAN BEGUILE,  
BUT FOR ALWAYS  
WOULD BE A BORE.  
BLOOD ON ONE'S MUZZLE  
IS MESSY,  
BUT THAT'S LIFE AS A CARNIVORE.

AND WHAT'S MORE:

I'D MISS  
WALKING ON TWO LEGS,  
SITTING ON A CHAIR,  
WEARING PRETTY GOWNS,  
PERFUME IN MY HAIR.

SLEEPING IN A BED,  
KNOWING HOW TO READ,  
HAVING WINE WITH LUNCH,  
A LUNCH THAT DOESN'T BLEED.

I'D MISS  
CARESSING MY BARE SKIN,  
CAUSE FUR CAN BE SO HOT  
WHEN IT COATS YOUR LIMBS  
AND IT'S ALL YOU'VE GOT.

(MORE)



ANTHEA (Continued)

I'D MISS  
FALLING INTO LOVE;  
NEVER HAD THE CHANCE  
FINDING WHAT IT'S LIKE  
TO REALLY FEEL ROMANCE.

I WANT TO STAY HUMAN,  
TRANSFORMING NO MORE,  
SO FOR ALWAYS,  
PLEASE, I IMPLORE,  
LET ME GIVE UP THE GLORY  
- EXCITING, BUT GORY -  
OF BECOMING A CARNIVORE.  
I MAY HAVE ENJOYED IT  
SOMETIMES HERETOFORE  
BUT I'M DONE WITH THAT FOREVERMORE,  
DONE WITH BEING A CARNIVORE.

(RODERICK brings C.I. COTTAGE into  
the room. RODERICK seems shaken.  
COTTAGE is a handsome man, wearing  
something tartan. There is a large  
bulge in the pocket of his  
overcoat. HE seems startled to  
find a beautiful young woman in the  
library.)

CHIEF INSPECTOR COTTAGE

(broad Scots accent:)

Oh - forgive the intrusion.

RODERICK

Oh yes, my wife, Lady Anthea Recluse.

CHIEF INSPECTOR COTTAGE

Your - ? I dinna ken you were married, Lord Recluse.

RODERICK

Last year.

CHIEF INSPECTOR COTTAGE

This is a surprise.

RODERICK

To me too. I need a drink.

CHIEF INSPECTOR COTTAGE

Lady Anthea. My felicitations.

ANTHEA

(English accent again:)

Thank you, Chief Inspector. Would you care for a drink as well?

CHIEF INSPECTOR COTTAGE

I wouldn't say no.

ANTHEA

Sherry? Brandy?

CHIEF INSPECTOR COTTAGE

Scotch?

ANTHEA

Right. Gunther, drinks.

(GUNTHER goes to drinks cabinet,  
takes out bottles, glasses.)

ANTHEA (Continued)

So what brings you out on this raw night Chief Inspector?  
Are you all right, Roderick? You look rather ragged.

CHIEF INSPECTOR COTTAGE

A terrible thing has happened, Lady Anthea.

ANTHEA

Really?

RODERICK

Bodger's been found in the fens.

ANTHEA

Oh dear.

RODERICK

He's dead.

ANTHEA

Yes. I mean, really?

CHIEF INSPECTOR COTTAGE

His throat had been ripped open and his body eviscerated.

(GUNTHER drops a glass; it falls  
with a crash. ANTHEA and GUNTHER  
lock eyes for a moment, look away.)

RODERICK

You clumsy oaf!

ANTHEA

Oh darling, your poor dog. I am sorry.

GUNTHER

Me too. For glass. Not dog.

RODERICK

His body - what?

CHIEF INSPECTOR COTTAGE

His guts had been ripped out.

ANTHEA

What a shame - what do you think could have done it, Chief Inspector? A fox?

RODERICK

A fox? Bodger could snap a fox in half like a bloody cheese straw. Bodger was bred for hunting wolves.

CHIEF INSPECTOR COTTAGE

But there hasn't been a wolf in England for centuries.

(ANTHEA and GUNTHER again lock eyes briefly, then look away. GUNTHER forcefully places a drink on the table next to Anthea.)

GUNTHER

Your drink, Madam.

ANTHEA

Thank you, Gunther.

RODERICK

Dammit to hell - he was a fine damn dog. Many's the happy day we spent together in the fresh air, killing things.

CHIEF INSPECTOR COTTAGE

Aye, he was a fine dog.

ANTHEA

And unexpectedly tender, for a dog.

(ANTHEA absently picks at her teeth with a long red fingernail. GUNTHER glares at her, serves the rest of the drinks. HE slowly cleans up the spilled drink, puts things away, as he listens to the conversation.)

RODERICK

D'you think it's the Hammerpate killer again?

ANTHEA

The what?

CHIEF INSPECTOR COTTAGE

The last time I came to this houe 'twas because Sir Roderick found a man on the moors with his head hammered in by someone.

RODERICK

Dora's husband, it was.

ANTHEA

Our cook's husband was the murderer?

CHIEF INSPECTOR COTTAGE

The victim. I regret to say I never found the murderer; the only case I never solved. It haunts me to this day.

ANTHEA

Perhaps the same person killed Bodger?

CHIEF INSPECTOR COTTAGE

Nae. Different modus operandi. The body ripped apart.

ANTHEA

And blood everywhere. I imagine.

RODERICK

Could Bodger have been struck by a car, d'you think?

CHIEF INSPECTOR COTTAGE

Nae; it wasna a car that did the deed; the poor beast was found in the fens, far from the road.

RODERICK

I'll wager it was Pete Loutish the poacher. I had him sent down, you know. Shot one of my peasants - pheasants. Three months in the clink, and he just got out.

CHIEF INSPECTOR COTTAGE

No sir, it wasna Pete.

(Music up.)

RODERICK

How d'you know?

CHIEF INSPECTOR COTTAGE

I LOOK FOR SOLID EVIDENCE  
IN EACH INVESTIGATION.  
A CASE IS SOLVED BY CONCRETE FACTS,  
NOT IDLE SPECULATION.

YOU NEED THE RIGHT CLUE TO CRACK A CASE.  
YOU CANNA MAKE DO WITHOUT IT.

(MORE)

CHIEF INSPECTOR COTTAGE (Continued)

YOU CAN INTERVIEW 'TIL YOU'RE BLUE IN THE FACE;  
OR SPEND ALL YOUR TIME REVIEWING EACH CRIME  
IN THE LITERATURE OF THIS DESOLATE MOOR;  
BUT WILL THIS SOLVE THE CASE? I DOUBT IT.

YOU NEED THE RIGHT CLUE TO CRACK A CASE;  
I'LL MENTION A FEW CASE HIST'RIES:  
T'WAS A STRYCHNINE TRACE IN THE COOK'S BOUILLABAISSSE,  
OR THE PARING KNIFE IN THE PURSE OF THE WIFE  
OF A MAN WHO WAS FOUND FULL OF HOLES AND THEN DROWNED  
THAT HELPED ME TO RESOLVE THOSE MYST'RIES.

I FOUND A FINE, FIRM FOOTPRINT IN THE FENS!  
IT'S WHAT I LIVE FOR, TO FIND THAT CLUE.  
I TRY TO RECONSTRUCT THE MISE EN SCENES  
OF EVERY CASE; IT'S WHAT I DO.  
I COMB THE CRIME SCENE, AND FIND THE CLUE.

YOU NEED THE RIGHT CLUE TO CRACK A CASE.  
AND IN THIS CASE I'VE GOT IT.  
I SEARCHED ALL AROUND ON THE MOOR'S MUDDY GROUND  
'TIL I FOUND SOME HINTS OF THE MURDERER'S PRINTS.  
PERSEVERED 'TIL AT LAST I'D A GOOD PLASTER CAST  
OF A FOOTPRINT MY PRACTICED EYE SPOTTED,  
THOUGH 'TWAS RED FROM BLOOD SHED BY THE DEAD DOG'S WOUNDS,  
ESPECIALLY HIS SEVERED CAROTID.

I FOUND A FINE, FIRM FOOTPRINT IN THE FENS!  
IT'S WHAT I LIVE FOR, TO FIND THAT CLUE.  
I TRY TO RECONSTRUCT THE MISE EN SCENES  
OF EVERY CASE; IT'S WHAT I DO.

IT WASNA CAR; IT WASNA PETE  
THAT LAID YOUR DOG  
IN HIS WINDING SHEET;  
IT WASNA THIS, NOR WAS IT THAT -

THE KILLER WAS...  
                  (HE pulls a large chunk of white plaster from his coat  
                  pocket)  
A GIANT CAT!

(GUNTHER drops another glass.)

RODERICK  
Good gad man! Have you got palsy?

(GUNTHER picks up the broken glass;  
lingers to overhear.)

ANTHEA

A cat? How very peculiar.

CHIEF INSPECTOR COTTAGE

One might almost say *fantastical*.

ANTHEA

Or, one could say, *it stretches credulity*.

CHIEF INSPECTOR COTTAGE

Aye, that works. Or, one could say -

RODERICK

Say it's a damn bloody outrage and be done with it.

ANTHEA

However one describes it, one must grant that the situation smacks somewhat of the ironic.

RODERICK

I don't see how irony has damn all to do with it.

CHIEF INSPECTOR COTTAGE

Ironic, ma'am? How do you mean?

ANTHEA

Bodger was a cat-killer.

RODERICK

He was a hunting dog. Dogs and men are meant to hunt.

ANTHEA

I still maintain that slaughtering the kitchen tabby while she slept was not quite sporting.

RODERICK

Nature red in tooth and claw, Anthea, fact of life.

GUNTHER

Madam is not strange to this fact, I think.

RODERICK

Gunther! Good Gad! What are you still doing here, and what do you mean speaking without being spoken to?

GUNTHER

I forgot myself. Sir.

RODERICK

Then be so good as to remember your place.

(Spot up on GUNTHER, as he steps  
downstage, out of scene.)

GUNTHER

I POLISH UP THE DOORKNOBS MANFULLY,  
THOUGH IT'S WOMAN'S WORK, I DO CHEERFULLY.  
I CARRY IN THE FIREWOOD, THE TEA TRAY TOO;  
REARRANGE THE BRIC-A-BRAC AND TIDY UP THE LOO;  
OPEN JARS OF MARMALADE AND CLEAN OFF MASTER'S BOOTS;  
EMPTY OUT HIS CHAMBER POT; BRUSH DOG HAIR OFF HIS SUITS.  
I'M A JOLLY PROPER MANSERVANT, I WANT YOU TO BELIEVE,  
'THOUGH I'VE A TRICK OR TWO OR THREE HIDDEN UP MY SLEEVE.  
I'LL BIDE MY TIME AND TALK IN RHYME UNTIL THE HOUR ARRIVES  
WHEN GUNTHER THE INSCRUTABLE WILL RIP APART THEIR LIVES.

THEY'LL PAY ATTENTION TO ME THEN,  
WHEN I'M EMERGING FROM MY DEN.  
WHEN GUNTHER LETS HIS MANNERS LAPSE,  
AND WAKES THEM FROM THEIR MIDDAY NAPS  
AND FINALLY SHOWS HIS TEETH, PERHAPS  
THEY'LL PAY ATTENTION TO ME THEN.

THEY'LL PAY ATTENTION TO ME THEN,  
AND NEVER SNEER AT ME AGAIN.  
WHEN GUNTHER'S BREATH IS IN THEIR EARS,  
AND HE BECOMES WHAT EACH ONE FEARS,  
AND LAUGHS TO SEE THEIR PLEADING TEARS -  
THEY'LL PAY ATTENTION TO ME THEN.

WHEN I'M HOME AGAIN  
DEAREST MUMSEY WILL ADMIRE ME,  
AND THE PROLETARIATS WILL BOW,  
THAT'S HOW IT SHOULD BE.  
WHEN I'M HOME AGAIN  
I CAN SHOW MY NOBLE PEDIGREE.  
IF I STAY HERE I'LL GO CRAZY! CRAZY!

THEY'LL PAY ATTENTION TO ME WHEN  
- IT'S NOT A CASE OF "IF" BUT "WHEN" -  
WHEN GUNTHER TAKES HIS RIGHTFUL PLACE,  
AND LAUGHS "HA HA!" INTO THEIR FACE,  
AND GIVES THEM ALL THE COUP DE GRACE.  
THEY'LL PAY ATTENTION TO ME THEN.

(Spot down; GUNTHER and ANTHEA lock  
eyes again.)

ANTHEA

That will do, Gunther.

GUNTHER

Very good. Madam.

(HE bows and exits.)

RODERICK

I fear for the social order when servants get above themselves. Do you think the man's a Bolshie?

CHIEF INSPECTOR COTTAGE

He's not from these parts; I can tell by the accent.

RODERICK

Where did he come from? Anthea, didn't you - ?

ANTHEA

I only meant ironic in the sense that here was Bodger, a dog who, fond of him as you may have been, was the bane of the local cats, and now it looks as if the tables have been turned, as it were.

CHIEF INSPECTOR COTTAGE

Aye, the shoe's on the other foot.

ANTHEA

Or the worm turned.

RODERICK

I thought you said the tables turned?

ANTHEA

May I see the plaster cast, Chief Inspector?

(C.I. COTTAGE hands the plaster cast to ANTHEA. SHE examines it.)

ANTHEA (Continued)

My, what long sharp claws.

RODERICK

Enormous.

CHIEF INSPECTOR COTTAGE

Speaking of claws, let me call your attention to what on a human would be the forefinger of the right hand. The claw there, appears to be foreshortened; in brief, broken off.

(ANTHEA looks, sees the nail of her own right forefinger is broken off. SHE whisks her hand behind her.)

ANTHEA

But surely the most salient, astonishing thing about this print, Chief Inspector, is its enormous size.

(SHE gestures with both hands.)

CHIEF INSPECTOR COTTAGE

Ah, you've put your finger right on it, Lady Anthea.



(ANTHEA hides her hand again.)

RODERICK  
I said it first; I said it was enormous.

CHIEF INSPECTOR COTTAGE  
Huge.

ANTHEA  
Prodigious.

CHIEF INSPECTOR COTTAGE  
Colossal.

ANTHEA  
Gigantic.

CHIEF INSPECTOR COTTAGE  
Gargantuan.

ANTHEA  
Positively Brobdingnagian.

CHIEF INSPECTOR COTTAGE  
Ooh. Very nice. So aye, this is the pug print of no ordinary cat. T'wasn't made by the paw of any known tabby, puss or pussums, grimalkin, kitty, felus domesticus or felus catus. No, mark my words. 'Twas a most monstrous mouser made that!

RODERICK  
What the devil are you driving at, Cottage?

CHIEF INSPECTOR COTTAGE  
I hazard a guess that a great cat of some sort has escaped from a traveling circus or private zoo. A lion or tiger is loose and at large.

ANTHEA  
Just as easily a jaguar.

CHIEF INSPECTOR COTTAGE  
Or an ocelot.

ANTHEA  
An at-large lynx or leopard.

CHIEF INSPECTOR COTTAGE  
Could be a cougar, aka catamount. Also called mountain lion; felis concolor.

RODERICK  
Or... panther.

(ANTHEA gasps, drops her glass.)

RODERICK (Continued)

Anthea?

ANTHEA

Panther?

CHIEF INSPECTOR COTTAGE

Lady Anthea - are you all right?

ANTHEA

Yes! Topping! It just reminded me of a pet name I had, when I was a girl. Anthea, Panther; Anthy Panthy. A meaningless, harmless little nickname. My goodness, so you believe that an actual panther may be out and about on the moors? What a truly terrifying turn of events.

CHIEF INSPECTOR COTTAGE

Aye. There's nae a moment to lose - we must warn the villagers their women and children aren't safe!

ANTHEA

Or their dogs.

RODERICK

Bollocks, what about Bodger's body?

CHIEF INSPECTOR COTTAGE

Sir, women and children -

RODERICK

Bugger women and children; Bodger was a good dog to me. I won't have him left to fester in the fens. And isn't his corpse crime exhibit A? The starting point of your entire investigation?

CHIEF INSPECTOR COTTAGE

Well, when you put it like that sir -

RODERICK

I'll get a gun.

(HE takes down several guns hanging from the wall by upturned deer hooves. Looks down barrels, etc.)

CHIEF INSPECTOR COTTAGE

Are you coming with me then, to get the dog's body?

RODERICK

You mean Gunther? He's a man servant, not a dogsbody.

CHIEF INSPECTOR COTTAGE

What? Oh, I see, you thought I said dogsbody. No, I said dog's body.

RODERICK

Right. Only he's not a dogsbody, he's a man servant. And a damned clumsy one at that. Where did he come from, anyway? Anthea, didn't you hire him?

ANTHEA

Darling, don't forget your ascot and deerstalker. It's a raw, bitter night outside and in.

RODERICK

What? Oh yes. Deerstalker, what?

(RODERICK goes to a deer's head hanging on the wall, removes a hat and ascot hanging from its antlers.)

CHIEF INSPECTOR COTTAGE

Although in this instance you might call it a cat stalker, heh?

RODERICK

By gad man, do you think this is amusing? My dog is dead and there's a bloodthirsty big cat on the prowl.

ANTHEA

She's not likely to be bloodthirsty for the nonce, considering she's just dined on dog.

CHIEF INSPECTOR COTTAGE

Had a hound.

ANTHEA

Feasted on Fido.

RODERICK

Egad, you don't spare a man's feelings, do you?

ANTHEA

Don't get excited, darling; think of your heart.

RODERICK

Damn my heart! I'm in my prime!

CHIEF INSPECTOR COTTAGE

She? Why did you say *she*, Lady Anthea?

ANTHEA

Did I? It's common usage, isn't it? Dogs are he and cats are she. Though of course in nature they're both, or there wouldn't be any cats and dogs.

CHIEF INSPECTOR COTTAGE

Och, there's no pulling the wool over your eyes, Lady Anthea.  
It's an early bird what catches the worm.

RODERICK

I've had about enough of your worms, if you please. I have a  
dog to bury.

(RODERICK steps downstage into a  
spot, hand on heart.)

RODERICK (Continued)

OH, A DAMNED DECENT DOG WAS BODGER,  
BOON COMPANION IN MANY A HUNT.  
HE WAS ALWAYS TOP DOG IN MY BOOK  
THOUGH IN REAL LIFE HE BEGAN AS A RUNT.

OH BODGER MY BUDDY, MY BOYO,  
I'LL MISS YOUR WET NOSE IN MY CROTCH,  
I'LL MISS COMING HOME IN THE GLOAMING  
AND HAVING OUR KIBBLES AND SCOTCH.

YES BODGER MY BUDDY, MY BOYO,  
WHAT A GAY DOG YOU WERE - WHAT A RAKE!  
TO FIND BITCHES IN HEAT YOU'D GO ROAMING  
AND LEAVE PUPPIES BEHIND IN YOUR WAKE.

I KNOW YOU WERE RATHER ILL TEMPERED,  
AND BIT ANY CHILDREN YOU MET,  
AND CHEWED UP THE CHAIRS  
AND THREW UP ON THE STAIRS  
AND KILLED ANY CAT YOU COULD GET.

BUT BODGER MY BUDDY, MY BOYO,  
I'LL MISS HOW YOU'D BARK ALL NIGHT LONG  
I'LL MISS HOW YOU'D GROWL AND SLAVER AND HOWL  
AND SO I SING YOU THIS SONG:

OH BODGER MY BUDDY, MY BOYO,  
THOUGH I WON'T MISS YOUR STRONG DOGGY BREATH,  
AND DON'T BLAME ME IF MY UPPER LIP'S STIFF,  
I'M STILL DAMNED BROKEN UP BY YOUR DEATH.  
DAMN! I'M DAMNED BROKEN UP BY YOUR DEATH.

(Spot down.)

RODERICK (Continued)

We're off. Oh jolly thrill! - on the hunt again!

CHIEF INSPECTOR COTTAGE

Lady Anthea, I'd recommend you lock all doors and windows. I  
wouldn't want anything to happen to...to anyone in the  
household.

ANTHEA

Yes, I'll be careful. And you as well- Roderick's blind as a mole; don't let him shoot a gun anywhere near you.

RODERICK

Cottage - come!

ANTHEA

Ta. Oh and darling, could you send Gunther in to put that other log on the fire?

RODERICK

He was supposed to do that hours ago. Damn lazy lad, what?

(RODERICK opens the door. GUNTHER is revealed kneeling on the other side of it, eavesdropping.)

GUNTHER

I crave pardon, sir. I was polishing the doorknobs.

(HE whips out a handkerchief, rubs the doorknob.)

RODERICK

Good man. Don't let the brass grow...something. You too, Cottage, mustn't dawdle while big game's afoot.

CHIEF INSPECTOR COTTAGE

Coming, Sir. Lady Anthea.

ANTHEA

Chief Inspector.

(RODERICK & COTTAGE exit. ANTHEA and GUNTHER are alone.)

GUNTHER

So.

ANTHEA

(Eastern European accent again:)

So.

GUNTHER

I hated that dog. How come you're the one who got to -

ANTHEA

It was mistake.

GUNTHER

Yah yah, the doors were left open. You should fix that fingernail, Anthy Panthy. Someone will notice.

ANTHEA  
Roderick? He's practically blind. And the Chief Inspector  
is...

GUNTHER  
Is what?

ANTHEA  
Rather attractive, I thought. For an Englishman, that is.  
Scotsman.

GUNTHER  
Oh, so that's how it is.

ANTHEA  
What?

GUNTHER  
You have crushed on him.

ANTHEA  
Don't be silly. I was merely remarking -

GUNTHER  
No, don't you be silly. If he crush you too we'll never make  
it back to Batvia.

GUNTHER & ANTHEA  
(with much emotion)  
Ah Batvia!

(We hear the sound of a mournful  
folk melody, played on peculiar  
instruments. GUNTHER and ANTHEA  
dance a few steps together of a  
slow, clogging folk dance. The  
music/dance sequence lasts only a  
few measures.)

GUNTHER  
Ach! I'm homesick.

ANTHEA  
Yah, me too, I guess. How long until again we see the native  
headdress of our backward yet loyal people and hear their  
voices raised in ululation?

GUNTHER  
How long until we taste again the tasty schnacklevurst of  
home, or feast on meats that twitch?

GUNTHER & ANTHEA  
Ah Batvia!

(Again we hear the sound of a  
mournful folk melody. GUNTHER and  
ANTHEA dance a few steps together  
of their folk dance.)

GUNTHER

I'm so ravenous. English food is grey - grey bread, grey  
pudding, and worst of all, grey meat.

ANTHEA

I know. The cook can't cook a rare roast beef to save  
herself. You'd think she'd taste her cooking and know how  
terrible it is.

GUNTHER

Perhaps Dora has no buds of taste; she eats very much of her  
cooking.

ANTHEA

Yes, Dora's quite the little stuffed sausage, isn't she?  
Like a giant shnacklevurst. Oh god, don't you long for the  
native food of Ba -

(GUNTHER's song interrupts her.)

GUNTHER

IF I STAY HERE I'LL GO CRAZY! CRAZY!

ENGLISH FOOD MAKES ME SICK-  
TOAD-IN-HOLE, SPOTTED DICK,  
COLD SPAGHETTI ON TOAST,  
OVERDONE SUNDAY ROAST.  
I PREFER MY MEAT RAW  
AND SOME FRESH BONES TO GNAW,  
BUT A MANSERVANT CANNOT BE CHOOSY  
EVEN IF FOOD SERVED HERE MAKES HIM WOZZY.

ANTHEA

OH WE HATE ENGLISH FOOD,  
WE DESPISE IT,  
AND THE TWEE-EST OF NAMES  
CAN'T DISGUISE IT.  
CULLEN SKINK, PLOUGHMAN'S LUNCH  
- WHICH I HAVE A HUNCH  
WILL MAKE ILL ANY PLOWMAN WHO TRIES IT.

GUNTHER

OH WE HATE ENGLISH FOOD,  
WE ABHOR IT;  
YOU CAN'T HOLD YOUR NOSE  
AND IGNORE IT.  
NOT A CREATURE ALIVE  
WILL CONTINUE TO THRIVE  
IF YOU PUT BRANSTON PICKLE BEFORE IT.

ANTHEA & GUNTHER  
SCHNACKLEWURST! WE MISS SCHNACKLEWURST!  
WE ARE SICK TO DEATH OF THE BANGERS HERE.  
APPETITES! WE'VE GOT APPETITES!  
AND NOT FOR BAKED BEANS AND SMALL BEER.

(THEY trade lyrics; see score)  
OH WE HATE ENGLISH FOOD,  
WE DETEST IT.  
WITH OUR DYING BREATH  
WE'LL PROTEST IT.  
AS A FOOD, LEMON CURD  
IS COMPLETELY ABSURD,  
IT WOULD TAKE A MAD DOG TO DIGEST IT.

OH WE HATE ENGLISH FOOD,  
WE DERIDE IT.  
CAN'T FATHOM HOW  
BRITONS ABIDE IT.  
AND THE FACT THEY ESPOUSE  
EATING KIPPERS AND SCOUSE  
SHOWS HOW MUCH THEY'RE COMPLETELY MISGUIDED.

SCHNACKLEWURST! WE MISS SCHNACKLEWURST!  
WE ARE SICK TO DEATH OF THE BANGERS HERE.  
APPETITES! WE'VE GOT APPETITES!  
AND NOT FOR BAKED BEANS AND SMALL BEER.

HERE'S A QUESTION FOR YOU:  
IS IT PUDDING OR GLUE?

AND DOG'S BREAKFAST AS WELL  
IS A FOOD SERVED IN HELL.

I HAVE GRAVEST DOUBTS  
ABOUT BOILED BRUSSEL SPROUTS.

HOW I LOATHE FISH AND CHIPS.

CAN'T ABIDE PG TIPS.

WENSLEYDALE MAKES ME WINCE.

ME TOO! ALSO MINCE.

BOVRIL SPREAD ON A BICKY?

OH HOW PERFECTLY ICKY.

MARMITE ON CRUMPET?

(MORE)



ANTHEA & GUNTHER (Continued)

DON'T LIKE IT.

SO LUMP IT.

HAVE SOME BUBBLE AND SQUEAK?

RATHER STARVE FOR A WEEK.

CARE FOR CURRIED PRAWN PASTE?

A DESPICABLE TASTE.

AS IS GENTLEMAN'S RELISH,

ALSO HORLICKS,

AND WE ALL AGREE HAGGIS IS HELLISH.

(COTTAGE pops his head out for a second.)

CHIEF INSPECTOR COTTAGE

Here, haggis is Scottish it is!

ANTHEA & GUNTHER

AND SO IN SUMMARY,  
KEEP YOUR HUFFKINS AND FLUMMERY!  
AND GOD SAVE US ALL FROM ENGLISH FOOD!

ANTHEA

Oh, for the native food of Ba -

(GUNTHER puts his hand over her mouth. The Batvian folk tune starts, screeches to a stop. GUNTHER and ANTHEA each do a half step of dance and stop.)

GUNTHER

Don't say it.

ANTHEA

No, it's too sad.

GUNTHER

You mean, yes it is too sad, no?

ANTHEA

Yes. I think so.

GUNTHER

So. What do we do now?

ANTHEA

We must wait until I find it.

GUNTHER

I hate waiting. It is not manly to wait. In Batvia I was a man!

GUNTHER & ANTHEA

Ah Batvia!

(Mournful folk melody; dance.)

ANTHEA

You were a man when you weren't...something else.

GUNTHER

Even when I was...something else... I was a very manly something else.

ANTHEA

Then be manly and put another log on the fire.

GUNTHER

Do it yourself; I'm not your servant.

ANTHEA

Yes you damn well bloody are, as long as we're here.

GUNTHER

You even talk like them now. *Bloody* this and *bloody* that. I show them bloody.

ANTHEA

Oh no you won't!

GUNTHER

How come you get to rampage and I don't? You always get to do what you want! Even when we were little children in B-

ANTHEA

How can you say that? Papa always took you hunting while I had to stay home and embroider folkloric blouses typical of our homeland.

GUNTHER

How I envied you; you got to stay home with Mumsey and learn the sad and plangent folk songs of our native land.

ANTHEA

Even so, Mumsey loved you best.

(MORE)

ANTHEA (Continued)

All she could talk about was her wunderbar son Gunther - it was oh Gunther this, and ooh Gunther that. I hated you!

GUNTHER

I hate you too! Always the spoiled baby.

ANTHEA

I was not.

GUNTHER

Was too.

ANTHEA

Was not.

GUNTHER

And still. You have to do what you want, all the time, like a spoiled...a spoiled schnacklevurst.

ANTHEA

I'm going to bed. Have Bridget draw my bath.

GUNTHER

Draw it yourself.

ANTHEA

And pick up that log.

GUNTHER

Do it yourself.

ANTHEA

Baby.

(GUNTHER glares at ANTHEA as she sweeps out of the room. A beat, then HE picks up a log and hurls it in the fireplace.)

HE sees the velvet curtains at the window. HE stares, then reaches for them, throws them open. Moonlight streams in, illuminating his brooding, demonic face. HE steps through the French doors into the night. Lights fade to black. O.S., the long, lonely howl of a wolf.)

(C. I. COTTAGE appears in a spot.)

CHIEF INSPECTOR COTTAGE

SOMETHING IN THE FENS, PROWLING ALL ABOUT;  
SOMETHING RATHER STRANGE AND RATHER AWFULLY SCARY.  
SOMETHING FOREIGN TO THESE PARTS, THE EVIDENCE IMPLIES,  
SOMETHING LOOMING LARGE AND FIERCE AND OH SO BEASTLY HAIRY!  
SOMETHING GROWLING, SOMETHING HOWLING,  
SOMETHING PROWLING ALL ABOUT.

SOMETHING IN THE FENS, LURKING THERE, NO DOUBT;  
SKULKING IN THE DARK, TO POUNCE ON THE UNWARY.  
NOT YOUR JACK THE RIPPER, NOT HUMAN, I SURMISE,  
NOT YOUR ORDINARY CAT, NOR YET YOUR BOGLAND FAIRY.  
SOMETHING GROWLING, SOMETHING HOWLING,  
SOMETHING PROWLING ALL ABOUT.

PAW PRINTS BIG AS CABBAGES, TEETH AS SHARP AS KNIVES -  
BLOOD AND BITS OF FLESH AND GORE  
ARE DRIPPING FROM ITS FEARSOME MAW.  
LOCK UP ALL YOUR SILVERWARE, LOCK UP ALL YOUR WIVES;  
DON'T GO OUT ALONE AT NIGHT; IT LIKES ITS DINNER RAW.

SOMETHING IN THE FENS WITH BLOOD UPON ITS SNOUT,  
IS PROB'LY COMING CLOSER, ITS MISSION SANGUINARY.  
IT'S LOOKING FOR AN ENTREE, AND SO I WOULD ADVISE:  
IF THERE'S A SCRATCHING AT YOUR DOOR  
I WOULD BE FRIGHTENED, VERY.

SOMETHING PROWLING, SOMETHING GROWLING,  
SOMETHING YOWLING, HOWLING,  
MAD - AND PROBABLY SCOWLING - SOMETHING PROWLING,  
SOMETHING KEEN TO DO MORE DISEMBOWELING,  
SOMETHING PROWLING, HAS ITS EYE ON YOU AND YOURS.  
LOCK YOUR WINDOWS, LOCK YOUR DOORS -  
SOMETHING'S LOOSE UPON THE MOORS!

END OF SCENE 1

ACT1; SCENE 2

(Morning light streams through the library's tall windows, onto an empty room. Birds sing. And then a bloodcurdling scream offstage.)

A beat, then GUNTHER and ANTHEA rush into the room from different doors, each wearing dressing gowns. Hers is satin and marabou; his is sumptuous purple velvet with an imposing embroidered crest on the breast pocket.)

GUNTHER  
WHAT WAS THAT?

ANTHEA  
WHO WAS THAT?

ANTHEA & GUNTHER  
WHO AND WHAT AND WHY WAS THAT?

GUNTHER  
WHAT - ?

ANTHEA  
IT SOUNDED LIKE A SCREAM.

GUNTHER  
SERVANT OR ARISTOCRAT?

ANTHEA  
SOMEONE IN EXTREME DISTRESS -

GUNTHER  
BRIDGET?

ANTHEA  
THAT WOULD BE MY GUESS.

GUNTHER  
WHY?

ANTHEA  
I THINK IT CAN BE INFERRED  
SOMETHING GHASTLY HAS OCCURRED.

(RODERICK runs in, wearing a nightshirt and nightcap; brandishing a gun. GUNTHER claps his hand over his breast pocket, hiding the crest.)

RODERICK

A TERRIBLE THING! A TERRIBLE THING!  
A TERRIBLY HORRIBLE TERRIBLE THING!

THE COOK IS ON THE KITCHEN FLOOR!  
HER THROAT'S BEEN SLASHED,  
HER BLOOD'S BEEN SPILLED -  
THERE'S BITS OF DORA EVERYWHERE,  
AND SHE'S BEEN GASHED AND GNASHED AND KILLED  
BEFORE SHE'D MADE OUR BREAKFAST.

SHE'S RIPPED APART! INTO WEE BITS!  
CHEWED UP TO A FARE-THEE-WELL!  
A DREADFUL SIGHT! NOT SINCE THE BLITZ  
HAVE I SEEN SUCH SCENES OF HELL.  
SOME FINGERS HERE, A FEMUR THERE -  
NOR WILL I SOON FORGET  
A FEW SPARSE CLUMPS OF WISPY HAIR  
NEXT TO A FISH CROQUETTE.

THE COOK CAN'T COOK US ANY MORE  
POTATOES, MASHED,  
OR BANGERS, GRILLED.  
THE KITCHEN IS A FEARFUL SIGHT -  
THE PLATES ARE SMASHED, THE KETTLE STILLED -  
WE'LL NEVER HAVE THAT BREAKFAST.

SHE'S STEAK TARTARE! BLOODY AND RAW!  
LAID OUT LIKE A SLAB OF MEAT.  
MOST DISMAL THING I EVER SAW,  
THOSE TWO SEVERED, SOGGY FEET.  
A KNEECAP THERE, A NOSTRIL HERE,  
AND, SURE TO HAUNT MY DREAMS,  
THE LAST FEW REMNANTS OF AN EAR  
ATOP SOME CHOCOLATE CREAMS.

THE COOK LIES IN A POOL OF GORE!  
HER SKULL'S BEEN BASHED,  
HER -

(ANTHEA slaps RODERICK in the face,  
silencing him and the music.)

ANTHEA

Sorry, but you were hysterical. Did you say Dora's been done  
in, darling?

RODERICK

Looks like poor old Bodger, only worse. Her throat's been  
torn out, and her stomach has been...strewn. And various  
extremities are...no longer attached, as it were.

ANTHEA

How perplexing. I know *I* didn't - um...hear anything. Did you, Gunther?

(ANTHEA glares at GUNTHER.)

RODERICK

Perplexing's not the half of it. All the doors are still locked from last night. So the killer must be...Good gad! still inside!

ANTHEA

Could have gone out through a window.

GUNTHER

Yah. He defenestrated.

(ANTHEA stares at him. RODERICK runs to the wall, takes down armloads of guns.)

RODERICK

Don't move. Shoot any strangers. I'll go give Cottage a ringy-ding, what? I say, Gunther, something wrong with your ticker?

GUNTHER

Beg pardon?

RODERICK

You're clutching your chest, man.

GUNTHER

Yes. So I am. In my country it's a way of respect for the dead, to hold your heart.

RODERICK

I've been meaning to ask you: what country are you from, anyway?

GUNTHER

From Ba-

(ANTHEA claps her hand over Gunther's mouth. A note of music, a dance step.)

ANTHEA

This is no time for geography lessons! A woman is lying dead in the kitchen!

GUNTHER

And the pantry. Bits of her.

ANTHEA

Run along, darling, and give Cottage that ringy-ding, why don't you.

RODERICK

Right-oh. Keep your peckers up. Oh god, there won't be any kippers now.

(RODERICK exits.)

ANTHEA

(Batvian accent again)

You idiot!

GUNTHER

Why am I idiot and you are not? We both -

ANTHEA

- yes we did, but there is a difference between killing a bad dog and killing a cook.

GUNTHER

But she was a bad cook.

ANTHEA

Look for the book. We must find it before they find us.

(ANTHEA and GUNTHER turn to the bookshelves and take books out, look at each briefly, put them back, take out others.)

ANTHEA (Continued)

I've done that row. Do that row, below.

(THEY feverishly look through books for a moment, then GUNTHER slams himself down in a chair in despair.)

GUNTHER

WE'LL NEVER FIND THE BOOK  
NO MATTER HOW WE LOOK,  
HOW DO WE EVEN KNOW  
THAT IT IS HERE?

WE'LL NEVER -

(ANTHEA slaps him. Song stops.)

ANTHEA

Where else could it be? And what choice do we have? We must look.



GUNTHER

No. We are doomed to become beasts full time in England. At the new year it will be 500 years since -

ANTHEA

I know, I know, but that's months away.

GUNTHER

Less than two.

ANTHEA

Surely in six weeks we can go through the rest of these books. Why, in the dismal, dreary year I've been here already I've gone through the north, west and south walls of the library. That only leaves...

(ANTHEA and GUNTHER slowly turn and look at the east wall, i.e., out at the audience.)

ANTHEA (Continued)

...A lot more books.

GUNTHER

And what if your husband has already found it?

ANTHEA

Roderick? I'm not convinced he can read. Besides, what would he know about the legends of Batvia?

GUNTHER & ANTHEA

Ah, Batvia!

(THEY have a disconsolate little folk dance moment.)

(RODERICK enters, carrying a gun; GUNTHER and ANTHEA freeze in awkward dance poses)

RODERICK

Cottage should be - I say, what the devil are you two doing?

GUNTHER

With respect, I was teaching Lady Anthea one of the mourning dances of my country. For Dora.

RODERICK

A damned funny country that dances when a poor blighter's kicked it. What obscure little country is it anyway?

ANTHEA

This is no time for your xenophobic persiflage, Roderick; poor Dora's leaking blood on the kitchen lino as we speak.

GUNTHER

The pantry too. And part of her is in scullery hall. Some toes.

RODERICK

How d'you know that?

ANTHEA

Did you give Cottage that ringy-ding, darling?

RODERICK

He should be here in a tick. Damn I'm peckish.

ANTHEA

Yes, how thoughtless of somebody -  
(glares at Gunther)  
- that cook was killed before she'd made our breakfast.

RODERICK

Good gad, Anthea, you're in your negligee, in front of the man servant.

ANTHEA

It's a peignoir.

RODERICK

I won't have smarmy French clothes in my home, Anthea! Honest English tweed is good enough for us.  
(looks at Gunther)  
Bloody hell, man, you're indecent as well. What do mean by parading yourself in front of my wife in your bathrobe?

GUNTHER

It is a dressing gown.

RODERICK

It's a damn poncy garment, I say. And what's that I see? Is that a crest on your breast pocket? That takes the biscuit, it really does.

(GUNTHER tries to cover up the crest, but RODERICK knocks his hand away, peers at the crest on Gunther's chest. RODERICK gasps and staggers back, clutching his heart.)

RODERICK (Continued)

Good gad! It's not - it can't be -

ANTHEA

No, it's not.

GUNTHER

Not.

RODERICK  
The royal crest of Batvia!

GUNTHER & ANTHEA  
Ah, Batvia!

(GUNTHER and ANTHEA dance as  
RODERICK pounds his chest in pain.)

RODERICK  
Bloody hell! Batvia!

GUNTHER & ANTHEA  
Ah, Batvia!

(Again THEY dance.)

RODERICK  
I say, Anthea, do you mean to tell me - ?

ANTHEA  
No. I mean to tell you nothing.

RODERICK  
But every time I say "Batvia" -

GUNTHER & ANTHEA  
Ah, Batvia!

(Again THEY dance.)

RODERICK  
Now see here, why do you dance every time I say -

ANTHEA  
(Batvian accent)  
Don't! say it again. All right. It is. Our royal crest. And  
I am. From there.

GUNTHER  
Me too.

RODERICK  
Then the legend is true! My own wife! A demon in a dress!

ANTHEA  
The word is "demoness," but yes.

RODERICK  
A panther in disguise, I see -

ANTHEA  
At last you're wise to me.

RODERICK

And this one too, the same as you -

G: ACTUALLY, SIR RODERICK, I'M MORE LUPINE;  
THOUGH WOLFISHNESS IS EQUALLY MALIGN;  
PANTHER OR WOLF, IT DOESN'T MATTER WHICH,  
EACH OF US FEELS A SANGUINARY ITCH.

A: TRUTHFULLY, POOR RODERICK, I FEEL REGRET  
YOU'VE TUMBLED TO OUR SECRET LIVES, AND YET  
ALTHOUGH THERE'S BEEN THIS UNEXPECTED GLITCH,  
WE STILL MUST SCRATCH OUR SANGUINARY ITCH.

G: A THOUSAND YEARS AGO A GODDESS CAST A CURSE:  
OUR FAMILY BECOMES SAVAGE BEASTS AT EACH FULL MOON.  
AND WE'LL BE BEASTS FOR ALWAYS - EVEN WORSE -  
IF WE DON'T FIND THE COUNTER-SPELL QUITE SOON.

A: I DIDN'T WED YOU FOR YOUR MONEY, LOVE OR LOOKS,  
I MARRIED YOU TO RIFLE THROUGH ALL YOUR BOOKS.  
FINALLY, DEAR RODERICK, THAT'S BEEN OUR PLAN:  
GO BACK TO WHEN BEFORE THE CURSE BEGAN,  
TO CAST THE SPELL AND FINALLY UN-BEWITCH,  
AND SO CAST OFF THIS SANGUINARY ITCH.

G: AND I CAME HERE TO POSE AS YOUR MANSERVANT,  
A JOB AT WHICH I HAVE NOT BEEN SO FERVENT.

A: WE NEED THE BOOK OF SPELLS TO SAVE OURSELVES;  
WE HOPE IT'S HIDDEN SOMEWHERE ON THESE SHELVES.

R: ALAS CRUEL FATE, DELUDED BY MY WIFE -  
MY HEART CAN'T TAKE THE SHOCK; FAREWELL TO LIFE!

(RODERICK looks wildly at a large  
stuffed elk head on the wall,  
reaches for it, then falls to the  
floor with a cry. HE is still.)

GUNTHER

I think his heart has attacked.

ANTHEA

Never mind that - did you see him eyeball that elk?

(GUNTHER and ANTHEA spring as one  
to the elk head. They examine its  
mouth, ears, nostrils, then GUNTHER  
takes it down from the wall,  
revealing a cubbyhole behind it.  
ANTHEA reaches her hand inside,  
gropes around. Nothing. )

(SHE reaches in further and further, until her arm is plunged in the wall up to her shoulder.

Then SHE pulls out a book-sized rectangular bundle, wrapped in a length of scarlet cloth. SHE unwraps it. Under that is a layer of leather. SHE unwraps it. Under that is a layer of chain mail, and then silk, and finally a layer of fur. SHE unwraps the fur, finally revealing an ancient black book. ANTHEA opens the front cover with trembling hands.)

ANTHEA (Continued)

It is *The Book*.

GUNTHER

Ah!

(They both sink reverently to their knees, holding *The Book*.)

CHIEF INSPECTOR COTTAGE enters. There is a bulge in his overcoat pocket.)

CHIEF INSPECTOR COTTAGE

Here, what's this? I thought it was Dora who was done in.

(ANTHEA and GUNTHER pivot around on their knees and bend over the recumbent body of Lord Roderick. Anthea, meanwhile, shoves *The Book* under the nearest rug.)

ANTHEA

(English accent again)

Oh Chief Inspector! How very nice to see you again. I mean, yes, Dora is dead; dreadful business. And now it seems my husband's had a fatal heart attack.

CHIEF INSPECTOR COTTAGE

Och! That's a rough road.

ANTHEA

Yes, sticky wicket, what?

GUNTHER

We are blameless.

(Lord Roderick raises his head)

RODERICK

(faintly)

I'm still alive, you fiends. Cottage, arrest my wife and manservant for murder.

(Lord Roderick's head falls back;  
he's out cold.)

CHIEF INSPECTOR COTTAGE

What did he say?

ANTHEA

Ah - "I'm still alive my friends. Assess my wife and manservant of the murder." He wants us to be apprised of the situation while he's... indisposed. The brave dear.

CHIEF INSPECTOR COTTAGE

We must get a doctor.

ANTHEA

No, no, he loathes doctors.

GUNTHER

Hates them with fierceness.

ANTHEA

A bit of rest is all he needs. He's probably just a little faint with all the excitement, what with no breakfast.

CHIEF INSPECTOR COTTAGE

But didn't you say he'd had a heart attack?

ANTHEA

Did I? Just a moment of wifely hysteria. Gunther, get a pillow to put under his head.

(GUNTHER fetches a pillow. CHIEF INSPECTOR COTTAGE turns away from them for a moment and sees the elk head on the floor; sees the cubbyhole. Looks back and forth from elk to hole a few times, then goes to the wall, inserts first his hand, then his whole arm into the hole. While he's distracted, ANTHEA and GUNTHER hold the pillow over Roderick's face; THEY whisk it away and tuck it under his head when COTTAGE turns back to them.)

ANTHEA (Continued)

Comfy dear?

(RODERICK gasps, a racking breath.)

CHIEF INSPECTOR COTTAGE

There's a hole in the wall. Nothing in it, though.

ANTHEA

How observant you are, Chief Inspector. Of course you have to be in your profession.

CHIEF INSPECTOR COTTAGE

Are you sure we shouldn't call a doctor? He's turning a funny color.

ANTHEA

Funny strange or funny ha ha?

CHIEF INSPECTOR COTTAGE

He's bright red.

ANTHEA

Decades of drinking. Speaking of which - would you care for a drink? Or tea? It is still morning after all.

CHIEF INSPECTOR COTTAGE

But shouldn't we -

ANTHEA

Chief Inspector, do tell me how you're going about solving the case. I'm fascinated. Have you found out anything yet?

CHIEF INSPECTOR COTTAGE

I should know more when the tests come back.

ANTHEA & GUNTHER

Tests?

(COTTAGE takes the lump out of his overcoat pocket. It's a plastic bag containing a hank of hair.)

CHIEF INSPECTOR COTTAGE

You see this?

ANTHEA

It appears to be a hank of hair.

CHIEF INSPECTOR COTTAGE

It is a hank of hair. Long, coarse, black, wiry hair.

(GUNTHER clutches at his head)

CHIEF INSPECTOR COTTAGE (Continued)

I found it clutched in the late cook's hand.

ANTHEA

What does it signify, do you think? Could it be fur - I mean hair - ripped from the head of her murderer?

CHIEF INSPECTOR COTTAGE

It might. It might not. But I've taken the precaution of asking Bridget to get me samples of hair from every hairbrush in the house.

(GUNTHER and ANTHEA both clutch their heads briefly, looking wild-eyed at each other, and away.)

CHIEF INSPECTOR COTTAGE (Continued)

(Struggling to lift Roderick by his armpits -)  
Give me a hand, Gunther.

(GUNTHER sullenly begins to clap.)

GUNTHER

Yes, let's all congratulate the clever Chief Inspector.

CHIEF INSPECTOR COTTAGE

Nae, I mean help me lift your master.

(GUNTHER picks up RODERICK's feet, so that his slack body is slung between him and COTTAGE. THEY start to put him on a sofa or chair.)

ANTHEA

Take him to his room; he'll be much more comfortable there than here among all these books.

(SHE looks meaningfully at The Book under the rug.)

GUNTHER

Oh yah.

(GUNTHER slings the comatose RODERICK towards the door. COTTAGE picks up the slack; they exit.)

ANTHEA

Cheery-bye, Roderick darling. Make Bridget give you a nice cup of tea. Tah for now!

(As soon as the three of them are out the door ANTHEA retrieves The Book from its hiding spot and begins looking through it feverishly.)



ANTHEA (Continued)

GREAT BOOK, ALL REVERENCE TO YOU.  
TELL THE SPELL THAT I MUST BREW  
OUR ENCHANTMENT TO UNDO.  
SHOW ME THE SPELL I NEED. FIRST, HOW ARE YOU ORGANIZED -  
CHAPTERS, INDEX, INDICES?

*TO CAST A SPELL, ENCHANTMENT, CHARM.  
TO THROW A HEX TO WITHER TREES.  
CAUSE YOUR TRIBAL RIVALS HARM.  
MAKE YOUR NEIGHBOR'S KUMQUATS FREEZE.  
PRICK A HEART OF STONE TO BLEED...  
BOOK, TAKE PITY ON ME PLEASE -  
SHOW ME THE SPELL I NEED.*

*TO MAKE A GOAT SMELL LIKE A ROSE.  
TO SPIN A SPELL TO START A WAR.  
HAVE A CHILD GROW EXTRA TOES.  
KILL A LION IN MID-ROAR.  
CAUSE THE OCEANS TO RECEDE...  
BOOK, TAKE PITY I IMPLORE -  
SHOW ME THE SPELL I NEED.*

*TO HEAR ALOUD WHAT IS UNVOICED.  
TO TRACK AND CATCH AN ESCAPEE.  
BAKE A CAKE THAT'S ALWAYS MOIST.  
GIVE A MAN THE STRENGTH OF THREE  
THEN CHANGE HIM TO A CENTIPEDE...  
TRANSFORMATIONS! THAT'S THE KEY!  
SHOW ME THE SPELL I NEED.*

*CHANGE A BEETLE TO A BEAR  
AND BACK AGAIN.  
CHANGE A DRAGON TO A  
STOUT OLD LADY'S PETTICOATS, AND THEN  
CHANGE A PITCHFORK TO A SPOON,  
MAKE MIDNIGHT BECOME HIGH NOON,  
TURN A SWORD INTO A SWINE,  
TRANSFORM WATER INTO WINE,  
AND ALSO FAMINE INTO FEASTS -  
OH AND HERE'S THE SPELL THAT TELLS  
THE READER HOW TO TURN A FAMILY  
INTO LYCANTHROPIC BEASTS AND BACK AGAIN. OH!!*

ANTHEA (Continued)

Oh. Oh. Ah? Oh. No. Ah. Ah? Ah ha! Ah... Ooh...Oh.  
Hmmn....All right, all right...yes...okay... OH NO!!!

(Lights down, END OF ACT 1)

INTERMISSION.

ACT 2, scene 1.

(Curtain rises on library. It is evening. ANTHEA, wearing an evening dress, is restlessly pacing, like a caged panther.)

(GUNTHER enters.)

ANTHEA

There you are!

GUNTHER

He's still alive, Roderick. I tried to -  
(HE makes a strangling gesture)  
- but always Bridget comes in with more tea. To hell with their tea! I will go back and give him attack of his heart again, no?

ANTHEA

No.

GUNTHER

No?

ANTHEA

Never mind Roderick. We must leave at once!

GUNTHER

Leave? What do you mean?

ANTHEA

My archaic Batvian's a bit rusty but -

GUNTHER & ANTHEA

Ah, Batvia!

(THEY have a little folk dance moment.)

ANTHEA

- but apparently the spell cannot be efficaciously enacted in England. On the night of the first full moon of the new year, just as the sun goes down, the spell must be cast back in our homeland of Ba-

(GUNTHER clamps his hand over her mouth.)

GUNTHER

Are you sure?

(ANTHEA shows him the place in the book. HE reads. HE staggers back. The next 7 lines said very fast and rhythmically:)

My god you're right. GUNTHER (Continued)

Of course I'm right. ANTHEA

I'll get my things. GUNTHER

Get my things too. ANTHEA

I'm not your servant. GUNTHER

Yes you are. ANTHEA

That's just pretend. GUNTHER

Of course we're pretending; that doesn't mean it's not real. ANTHEA

You're confusing me - and you broke the rhythm of our hurried banter. Get your own things! GUNTHER

Brat! ANTHEA

Spoiled brat! GUNTHER

Mumsey always liked you best. Baby! ANTHEA

Baby! GUNTHER

Baby! ANTHEA

(THEY start boxing each other's ears. CHIEF INSPECTOR COTTAGE comes in. There is a bulge in his overcoat pocket. COTTAGE is supporting LORD RODERICK, who looks feeble but alert. )

(GUNTHER and ANTHEA stop in mid-box. The book has ended up on a chair or table in plain sight)

CHIEF INSPECTOR COTTAGE

Here! Hie! What's going on?

GUNTHER

I was demonstrating to Lady Anthea the ancient self defense arts of my country - in case the murderer comes back.

RODERICK

The murderer - that's rich, you lying knave.

CHIEF INSPECTOR COTTAGE

And what country would that be?

ANTHEA

(English accent again)

Roderick darling, how are you feeling? Are you sure you should be out of bed?

RODERICK

And you, you two-faced bitch.

ANTHEA

Oh dear, language.

RODERICK

I've told you what damned country they're from, Cottage. The damned infernal country of Ba-

(ANTHEA rams a pillow in Roderick's mouth. HE sputters and gags.)

CHIEF INSPECTOR COTTAGE

See here, your husband's not a well man. I don't hold with ramming pillows down the maws of invalids.

ANTHEA

I loathe it when he swears.

RODERICK

I saw the crest! The damned bloody crest of Ba -

(ANTHEA holds the pillow over RODERICK's mouth again)

ANTHEA

Harder to train than a badger. Thanks ever so for all your help, Chief Inspector, but I expect you must run along and inspect something somewhere else.

CHIEF INSPECTOR COTTAGE

Your husband -

ANTHEA

Gunther and I can take care of Roderick, thank you.

(ANTHEA takes the pillow away,  
leaving RODERICK gasping and  
sputtering. SHE pushes him into a  
chair.)

RODERICK

Cottage! Don't leave me alone with these devils!

ANTHEA

(sotto voce)

Poor darling. Not quite *compes mentis*, is he?

RODERICK

Cottage! Remember what I told you.

CHIEF INSPECTOR COTTAGE

Begging your pardon, Lady Anthea, but your husband has just regaled me with a fantastical tale, an ancient and astounding story of skulduggery and the black arts. A mesmerizing, Machiavellian misadventure of mayhem and mishap; a peradventurously preposterous peregrination of possibly impossible implications; a -

RODERICK

Get on with it, man.

CHIEF INSPECTOR COTTAGE

Right. Your husband, Lady Anthea, told me that you and this foreigner here have a frightful and unholy ability to transform yourselves into murderous wild beasts.

(ANTHEA breaks into peals of  
laughter; nudges and elbows GUNTHER  
until he too breaks into his own  
version of studied hilarity.)

ANTHEA

Oh ha ha ha! Wild beasts! Oh Roderick, how fanciful you've gotten in your old age!

GUNTHER

Murderous wild beasts. Yah, that is funny. Ha hah.

RODERICK

I'm not old. My hair is prematurely white.

ANTHEA

I didn't mean *old old*, darling, just -

RODERICK

And who's turned my hair white before its time I ask you?  
You! You hell cat, you murdering hussy!

CHIEF INSPECTOR COTTAGE

Easy now, Lord Recluse. Remember your heart.

RODERICK

I don't have a heart anymore - this woman has chewed it up  
and swallowed it, bite by bloody bite!

ANTHEA

I've been expecting this - delirium tremens.

CHIEF INSPECTOR COTTAGE

He seems quite set in his story.

ANTHEA

Surely you don't give credence to his dipsomaniacal delusions  
regarding animalic transformation?

RODERICK

Cottage?

CHIEF INSPECTOR COTTAGE

It does stretch the sinews of believability, to be sure.

RODERICK

Cottage!

ANTHEA

Then we'll say no more about it. Come Gunther, we must see  
to...to weeding out the marrow beds. The leafy spurge is  
burgeoning!

GUNTHER

Yes, your ladyship.

(GUNTHER and ANTHEA start to leave  
the room.)

RODERICK

Dammit, Cottage!

CHIEF INSPECTOR COTTAGE

Beg pardon, Lady Anthea, but I believe there may be a thread  
of truth to be found in the fabric of implausibility Lord  
Recluse has woven around these recent tragic violent deaths.

ANTHEA

Come again?

RODERICK

Bodger and the cook, he's talking about Bodger and the cook and how they were murdered. As if you don't know.

ANTHEA

What madness are you encouraging him in, Chief Inspector?

GUNTHER

Yah, what do you think you're doing?

CHIEF INSPECTOR COTTAGE

It's not my place to encourage or discourage Lord Recluse in his beliefs. It is, however, my job to solve these recent tragic violent deaths. Now, the idea of people changing into murderous animals -

ANTHEA

Is preposterous. Quite.

CHIEF INSPECTOR COTTAGE

- but I am intrigued that the accusations which Lord Recluse has made against the two of you coincide, so congruously - or is it congruently? Or perhaps they congrue coincidentally?

ANTHEA

I don't believe congrue is a word, actually.

RODERICK

Finish your damned sentence, man! Spit it out!

CHIEF INSPECTOR COTTAGE

Right. To pick up the rope where it was dropped -

ANTHEA

To drive the last nail home -

CHIEF INSPECTOR COTTAGE

To land the boat on its final shore-

RODERICK

Cottage!

CHIEF INSPECTOR COTTAGE

YOU MUST TAKE HEED  
WHEN CLUES AND FACTS ALIGN.  
IS IT A COINCIDENCE?  
OR COULD IT BE A SIGN?

FOLLOW THE CLUES WHEREVER THEY LEAD,  
LIKE A BLIND MAN LEARNING BRAILLE.  
YOU'LL FIGURE IT OUT, YOU'VE NO OTHER CHOICE,  
FOR JUSTICE MUST PREVAIL.

(MORE)

CHIEF INSPECTOR COTTAGE (Continued)

YOU MUST PERUSE THE TIPS THAT COME IN,  
FOR THEY TEND TO TELL A TALE,  
WHOSE END DENOUEMENT WILL SEEM PRE-ORDAINED,  
FOR JUSTICE MUST PREVAIL.

IF A THEORY FITS THE FACTS,  
NO MATTER HOW UNBELIEVABLE,  
YOU MUST PROGRESS TOWARDS AN ARREST,  
THOUGH THE FACTS SEEM INCONCEIVABLE.

SHOULD YOU ACCUSE A SUSPECT YOU KNOW,  
AND IN TURN BE ACCUSED OF BETRAYAL,  
JUST TURN A COLD HEART ON THE SUSPECT'S DISTRESS,  
FOR JUSTICE MUST PREVAIL.  
YOU MUS'NA QUIBBLE, YOU CANNA QUAIL,  
FOR JUSTICE MUST PREVAIL.

To conclude: I am struck by the correspondences, shall we say, between the identities of those persons, in their human form at least, whom Lord Recluse has accused of these heinous acts, and the results of the laboratory tests.

GUNTHER & ANTHEA

Tests? What tests?

CHIEF INSPECTOR COTTAGE

As you may recall from this morning, I had Bridget collect hair samples from every head in this household, and I had them tested in the laboratory, along with the hank of hair found in the unfortunate cook's dead hand.

ANTHEA

How can you be sure that a sample of every householder's hair was included in your roster of testable follicles, Chief Inspector? Can you be certain, for example, that Bridget included the leavings from her own hairbrush, knowing beforehand the grim purpose of her forensic task?

CHIEF INSPECTOR COTTAGE

You forget, Lady Anthea, that Bridget is bald.

RODERICK

Bloody hell, do you mean to tell me that that great swath of ruddy auburn hair, that waterfall of burnished tresses, that crimson mane of saucy ringlets is, in fact, a wig?

CHIEF INSPECTOR COTTAGE

I do.



RODERICK

Gad, the perfidy of women.

GUNTHER

I love bald women. You can see the shape of their skull.

RODERICK

Pervert.

GUNTHER

Me? I've seen your bedroom closet, Lord Recluse.

RODERICK

Foreigner.

GUNTHER

Foreigner? Not where I come from.

RODERICK

Which is where?

ANTHEA

What about these tests?

RODERICK

Yes! Tell them, Cottage, tell them about the match-ups.

GUNTHER & ANTHEA

Match-ups?

CHIEF INSPECTOR COTTAGE

The hank of coarse black wiry hair found clutched in the hacked-off hand of the unfortunate dead cook turned out to be a perfect match with the strands of coarse black wiry hair harvested, as it were, by bald and ergo blameless Bridget from the hairbrush found on the bureau of and identified as belonging to and used exclusively by -

(points at him)

Gunther!

GUNTHER

You accuse me?

CHIEF INSPECTOR COTTAGE

I do.

GUNTHER

But I've served single-malt scotch to you.

CHIEF INSPECTOR COTTAGE

I'm sorry Gunther, but this time *justice* must be served.

GUNTHER

Not to me, it won't!

(GUNTHER runs to the French doors.  
RODERICK tries to reach the wall of  
guns, but ANTHEA trips him.  
GUNTHER struggles to open the doors  
and escape. COTTAGE fumbles in his  
overcoat pocket for his gun.  
ANTHEA embraces Gunther. )

A: RUN GUNTHER, RUN! YOU ARE UNDONE!

G: YES I WILL RUN!

C: I'VE GOT A GUN!

A: FLEE GUNTHER FLEE! DON'T THINK OF ME!

G: YES I WILL FLEE, AND THINK OF ME!

A: FLY GUNTHER FLY! AND BY AND BY  
I'LL FIND YOU.  
BY THE LAKE SHORE,  
OUT ON THE MOOR,  
WE'LL REUNITE,  
WE'LL BOTH TAKE FLIGHT  
AND FLEE TOGETHER  
THROUGH WINTER'S WEATHER  
TO OUR HOMELAND DEAR,  
SO FAR FROM HERE.

G: OKAY BY ME, NOW SET ME FREE!

R: TOO LATE! JUST LOOK BEHIND YOU!

(COTTAGE has by now pulled a  
revolver from his pocket, which HE  
points at Gunther.)

CHIEF INSPECTOR COTTAGE

Not so fast, boyo.

(GUNTHER manages to open the door,  
too late.)

RODERICK

Ah! He's got you, you foreign blighter!

ANTHEA

Oh bad luck, Gunther. Well, stiff upper lip and take your  
medicine like a...a man. More or less.

(MORE)

ANTHEA (Continued)

Well, Chief Inspector, I suppose congratulations are in order but I'm sure Roderick can do the honors; I feel rather fatigued with all of this folderol. I think I'll go upstairs for a bit for a wee lie-down.

CHIEF INSPECTOR COTTAGE

Not so fast, m'lady. If you'll recall, I spoke of laboratory match-ups, in the plural.

GUNTHER

He did. He said match-ups.

CHIEF INSPECTOR COTTAGE

I went back to the fens this morning and searched the scene where the poor dog met his untimely end.

ANTHEA

How very assiduous of you.

CHIEF INSPECTOR COTTAGE

And in the branches of the brambles beside where Bodger's battered body lay, I found some bits of long black silky hair, or fur, as 'twere. I took them to the laboratory along with all the rest of the hair samples to be tested. I'm sorry to have to tell you, deeply and painfully sorry, Lady Anthea, that the hairs found in the gorse were identical to those recovered from, um, *your* hairbrush.

ANTHEA

Are you going to arrest me for the murder of a dog?

CHIEF INSPECTOR COTTAGE

I'm afraid so.

ANTHEA

But - we've bantered.

CHIEF INSPECTOR COTTAGE

We have.

ANTHEA

I don't have badinage with just anyone. Or actually anyone at all in this remote and lonely spot. Only you.

CHIEF INSPECTOR COTTAGE

Nor I. Except for you. But justice, Lady Anthea, must prevail.

ANTHEA

I truly admire your work ethic and perspicacity, not to mention your alliterative polysyllabicity, but surely you must admit that the thought of Gunther and me changing into horrible beasts and going on a murderous rampage is preposterous.

GUNTHER

A wolf is not a horrible beast.

(ANTHEA kicks him)

GUNTHER (Continued)

It's not; it lives in friendly family groupings.

RODERICK

Bodger was bred for hunting wolves. I wish he'd had a chance to bag one before these two got their vile bloody claws into him.

CHIEF INSPECTOR COTTAGE

Begging your pardon sir, but I have to agree with Lady Anthea that it seems a wee bit fanciful to imagine Lady Recluse and this foreigner here transforming themselves into savage wild beasts.

ANTHEA

So there, Roderick! You're dotty as a toad.

CHIEF INSPECTOR COTTAGE

However, the shadow of doubt that I may be casting over one aspect of Lord Recluse's accusations does not lessen the seriousness with which I regard the test results of the hair samples, rigorously and scientifically arrived at, which prove that you were, each one of you in turn, at least present at the two murder scenes, and indeed may be implicated - I deeply regret to say, Lady Anthea - in the murders themselves, thus bearing out the remainder of Lord Recluse's hypothesis.

RODERICK

Ha! Vindication! Incarceration! Divorce!

CHIEF INSPECTOR COTTAGE

Do you have anything to say in your own behalf, Lady Anthea, or you?

GUNTHER

Do you make accusation of us?

ANTHEA

Quite so: are we being formally charged?

CHIEF INSPECTOR COTTAGE

Not as yet. I do want to hear your side of the story, in case there were mitigating circumstances. Where you were when, and who did what how; that kind of thing.

ANTHEA

Shouldn't there be a barrister in the room?

RODERICK

Banister? Why should there be a banister? There's no staircase in the library. Just a lot of bloody books -

(RODERICK glances around the room, sees the elk head on the floor, looks to the hole in the wall; back and forth from elk to wall a few times in astonishment.)

RODERICK (Continued)

Good gad! You found the hiding place!

GUNTHER / ANTHEA / RODERICK

The book!

(RODERICK sees the book on a table; HE, GUNTHER and ANTHEA pounce at once. RODERICK wins, holding the book aloft while the other two try to wrest it from him.)

CHIEF INSPECTOR COTTAGE

Here! Hey! Hi! Ho! Stop that! No fisticuffs indoors! What's all this rumbustious ruckus then?

ANTHEA

Oh it's nothing - nothing at all!

GUNTHER

This thief tries to steal our sacred book!

CHIEF INSPECTOR COTTAGE

Book? What book?

ANTHEA

Book? The book means nothing.

GUNTHER

Book? I laugh at your book. Ha ha.

RODERICK

Really? Then you won't mind if I do...this!

(RODERICK slaps the book with his hand. )

(GUNTHER and ANTHEA scream as if they've been wounded.)

GUNTHER & ANTHEA

Aaahhhh!

RODERICK

(holding the spine of the book with one hand and slapping its covers back and forth, like a face)  
Or this, or this, or this!

GUNTHER & ANTHEA

Stop stop stop!

RODERICK

Tell Cottage your vile truth or I'll rip out its pages one by one.

GUNTHER & ANTHEA

Aaaahhhhh!!

RODERICK

I should have burned this evil thing years ago.

GUNTHER & ANTHEA

Aaaahhhhh!!!

RODERICK

But ever since I found its secret hiding place as a little boy, I have been fascinated by this book, fascinated and yet ...afraid. That long ago afternoon when I knocked the elk head off its bracket with my cricket bat, and saw the hidden hideaway, and drew forth this book, wrapped in its layers of leather, chain mail and silk -

GUNTHER

- Don't forget the strange black fur.

RODERICK

The fur, quite. Where was I?

ANTHEA

Wallowing in your antediluvian childhood.

RODERICK

Right. The book. This book I hold in my hands was long thought to be lost, or even a made-up myth from a misty miasma of times long gone - but when I held it in my hands I knew it was real. I knew I held in my chubby, boyish yet capable hands the fabled book of fearsome foreign spells that my ancestor, Sir Roderick the Red-Handed -

ANTHEA

(Batvian accent for rest of scene)

All right. All right, the game is up. We'll tell you everything.

CHIEF INSPECTOR COTTAGE

(startled by her accent)

Lady Anthea?/

GUNTHER

/We will?

ANTHEA

What choice do we have? Roderick has our book, and a very tedious story to tell; the Chief Inspector has a gun. We have nothing - only our story - why not tell it, and in my real accent?

RODERICK

I told you so, Cottage - didn't I tell you?

CHIEF INSPECTOR COTTAGE

Lady Anthea, I'm...I'm...

RODERICK

At a loss for words, for once. Get the man a drink.

ANTHEA

Scotch, Chief Inspector?

CHIEF INSPECTOR COTTAGE

Aye.

ANTHEA

Gunther?

(GUNTHER throws open the drinks cabinet, revealing dozens of bottles.)

CHIEF INSPECTOR COTTAGE

D'you have Llaporhiagorgleniddich?

(Gunther grabs a bottle.)

GUNTHER

Yah.

RODERICK

Is that a single malt?

CHIEF INSPECTOR COTTAGE

Aye. It derives its distinctive flavor and amber hue from being steeped in peat moss and haggis.

RODERICK  
I'll have a double.

ANTHEA  
Absinthe for me please Gunther.

GUNTHER  
To make your heart grow fonder?

RODERICK  
She has no heart, just a shard of ice where a heart should hop.

(GUNTHER holds out a neat glass of scotch to the chief Inspector.)

GUNTHER  
Ice?

CHIEF INSPECTOR COTTAGE  
Ah...no.

(GUNTHER hands out the drinks, taking a healthy slug himself from a bottle. ANTHEA settles herself into a chair with her glass.)

ANTHEA  
Our story begins in the murky mists of time, then leaps ahead to the 16th century, 500 years ago, almost to the day.

GUNTHER  
Not *almost to the day*. Two months to go.

ANTHEA  
I'm using poetic licence.

GUNTHER  
Less, actually.

ANTHEA  
Do you have to be so literal?

GUNTHER  
I am a man. Most of the time. It is for women to need a poetry license, but for the man - the truth!

CHIEF INSPECTOR COTTAGE  
Two months until what?

GUNTHER  
More like six weeks. Is now November.



CHIEF INSPECTOR COTTAGE

Six weeks until what?

(Pause.)

GUNTHER & ANTHEA

Until the curse comes true, and the spell is permanent.

CHIEF INSPECTOR COTTAGE

Curse?

RODERICK

Spell?

ANTHEA

Yes. A long, long time ago, when the Great Goddess ruled the world and all its people, an ancestor of ours committed a crime against nature -

RODERICK

You mean - young boys? Sheep?

ANTHEA

No. He killed an animal - legend says it was a pregnant doe - not for her flesh or hide, but for the sheer joy of killing, to satisfy a lust for spilling blood.

RODERICK

You mean hunting.

ANTHEA

Not the way it used to be, when god was female, and revered all life. In her fury at our sadistic ancestor, the High Priestess of the Goddess shackled our family with a terrible curse: at each full moon we are in thrall to an insatiable blood lust. And we transform, yes, in order to quench our thirst. We were to be released from the curse, 500 years ago -

GUNTHER

Almost 500 years ago -

ANTHEA

- but the sacred Book of Spells which had the power to set us free was stolen, and the curse transformed. Our family now had another 500 years to find the book, and cast the counter spell, or we would become full time beasts forever. Once a month? All right. All the time? Exhausting.

GUNTHER

Bloody exhausting.

ANTHEA

And I would miss being a human.

CHIEF INSPECTOR COTTAGE  
Aye, I'd miss that too. Your being a human.

ANTHEA  
(THEY look at each other; a moment.)  
Really?

CHIEF INSPECTOR COTTAGE  
(abashed)  
Well...

GUNTHER  
So we came here, to find the book.

RODERICK  
Took you long enough.

ANTHEA  
(the moment is over)  
People get used to things the way they are, and our backward but loyal countrymen have long learned to lock their doors on full moon nights.

GUNTHER  
And we didn't know where was Book.

ANTHEA  
No, not until I read a tattered old copy of *English Country Life* which had found its way to our country.

(underscoring from "As Time Goes By" / "Casablanca" begins -)

*It opened up a whole beautiful world full of knowledge and thoughts and ideas. Everything I knew or wanted to become was changed because of it. And I looked up to it and - sorry, wrong story.*

(music stops)  
Where was I?

GUNTHER  
The letter.

ANTHEA  
Yes. There was a letter in this magazine, written by you, Roderick.

RODERICK  
The one about treating equine bone spavin?

ANTHEA  
No, not that one.

RODERICK

The one about the superiority of a number seven speckled grackle hatcher dry fly versus a russet Wulff tippet wet fly for catching brook trout at dusk?

CHIEF INSPECTOR COTTAGE

I fancy a number three Royal fluffer myself.

RODERICK

Really?

ANTHEA

A letter about the glory days of Empire, in which you cited a light-fingered, peripatetic ancestor of yours, and the things he brought back from his travels.

(ANTHEA reaches for The Book.)

ANTHEA (Continued)

May I?

(ANTHEA takes the Book.)

ANTHEA (Continued)

When your rapacious ancestor stole our sacred book -

RODERICK

I say, *Rapacious* is a bit thick.

CHIEF INSPECTOR COTTAGE

Rather. Although he was a rascally sort renegade, I gather.

ANTHEA

And a rake.

CHIEF INSPECTOR COTTAGE

A roue.

ANTHEA

Rather a rogue.

GUNTHER

He was thief.

RODERICK

The statute of limitations surely runs out after 500 years.

CHIEF INSPECTOR COTTAGE

Not my bailiwick, that arm of the law. So this ancestor of yours comes to Batvia -

ANTHEA & GUNTHER

Ah, Batvia!

(Music starts; they dance.)

CHIEF INSPECTOR COTTAGE

Right. And there he commits an act of larceny, id est:  
taking this book out of the aforementioned land of Batvia -

GUNTHER & ANTHEA

Ah, Batvia!

(The folk music starts up again,  
very fast, GUNTHER and ANTHEA dance  
to it, very fast.)

CHIEF INSPECTOR COTTAGE

Right. A book which Lady Anthea claims rightly belongs in  
and to this land of Ba -

(GUNTHER tackles the Chief  
Inspector.)

CHIEF INSPECTOR COTTAGE (Continued)

Ooof!

GUNTHER

No more! No more! I can't take it anymore!

ANTHEA

I can't either! No more!

(ANTHEA yanks open the curtains;  
moonlight streams into the room  
through the French doors. Her eyes  
grow large and demented, her lips  
snarl slowly back over her teeth,  
her hands curl into claws.)

ANTHEA (Continued)

(hissing and gesticulating)

Gunther!

GUNTHER

What? But - Oh! Yah. Yah!

(GUNTHER snarls, and starts  
transforming as well.)

RODERICK

Good god! They're about to - no! No!

(RODERICK grabs the cricket bat  
from the wall and waves it at them.)

RODERICK (Continued)

Back! Back I say, you powers of Satan!

(ANTHEA and GUNTHER back up, snarling. ANTHEA snatches the Book. GUNTHER leaps through the French doors; ANTHEA stands, staring woefully at Cottage. GUNTHER reaches back and yanks Anthea through the doors, out into the night. RODERICK and COTTAGE are left standing alone in the library.)

CHIEF INSPECTOR COTTAGE  
Lady Anthea?

RODERICK  
Damn, they defenestrated.

CHIEF INSPECTOR COTTAGE  
Aye. She did.

(A beat)

RODERICK  
Only - I don't hear anything, do you?

CHIEF INSPECTOR COTTAGE  
I don't take your meaning, Lord Roderick.

RODERICK  
We should be hearing the dismal howl of a lone wolf and the hideous cry of a great cat.

CHIEF INSPECTOR COTTAGE  
Perhaps they're not bestial Batvians after all, but only book burgling brigands.

RODERICK  
No no no, the moon was full last night, when Bodger and Dora were killed.

CHIEF INSPECTOR COTTAGE  
Aye, so it was.

RODERICK  
They tricked us, Cottage, and they got away.

CHIEF INSPECTOR COTTAGE  
Justice will prevail, Lord Roderick. We'll go after them.

(Reprise of JUSTICE MUST PREVAIL  
music as curtain falls.)

END OF ACT 2; SCENE 1

ACT 2; SCENE 2

(The curtain is down, leaving a bare apron or thrust stage in front of the flats for the scene to play. It is late, late afternoon, in a land of high, snowy mountains, represented by several large, flat-sized paintings of high, snowy mountains which are slowly carried in from SL by sets of legs in hiking boots and lederhosen, seen beneath the bottom edge of the flats. We hear a plangent Batvian folk song, sung OS by GUNTHER, with ANTHEA joining on OH THE COLD WINDS OF BATVIA - OOH, as the mountains enter and settle.)

GUNTHER

AN ILL WIND IS BAD NEWS FOR ALL,  
BLOWING DOWN FROM THE BLEAK WINTER PEAKS.  
MY LOVE WENT OUTSIDE WITH ONLY HER SHAWL,  
CAUGHT A COLD, AND WAS DEAD IN TWO WEEKS.

NO NOISE WHEN I ENTERED OUR HUT.  
SHE LAY STILL, SO I THOUGHT SHE WAS TIRED.  
WHEN I SAID "WHERE'S MY FOOD?"  
HER EYELIDS STAYED SHUT,  
AND THAT'S HOW I KNEW SHE'D EXPIRED.

OH THE COLD WINDS OF BATVIA  
BLOW THROUGH SCHNACKELVURST PASS,  
AND MY LOVE BREATHES NO MORE,  
SING ALACK AND ALAS.  
OH THE COLD WINDS OF BATVIA - OOOOH...  
OH THE COLD WINDS OF BATVIA - OOOOH...

I'M HUNGRY; THE CUPBOARD IS BARE.  
BOTH MYSELF AND THE DISHES ARE DIRTY.  
ROOT CELLAR EMPTY; POTATOES AREN'T THERE,  
NO KASHA, NO CABBAGE, BUT IF THERE WERE,  
I'M UNABLE TO COOK WITHOUT HER,  
AND SHE DIED, AT ELEVEN THIRTY.

OH THE COLD WINDS OF BATVIA  
BLOW THROUGH SCHNACKELVURST PASS,  
AND MY LOVE BREATHES NO MORE,  
SING ALACK AND ALAS.  
OH THE COLD WINDS OF BATVIA - OOOOH...  
OH THE COLD WINDS OF BATVIA - OOOOH...

(ANTHEA and GUNTHER enter from SR, running in slow motion. They wear old fashioned Tyrolean winter wear: felt hats with feathers in the brim; big Nordic sweaters; mittens; hiking staffs or ice axes, haversacks, knickers, boots. They look exhausted. When they line up with the painted mountain vistas Gunther flings himself to the ground.)

GUNTHER (Continued)

Ach! I can't take another stair!

(The flats stop too and are put down, hiding the feet.)

ANTHEA

(Batvian accent)

Step.

GUNTHER

Steps, stairs - who cares? It's the last day before the curse comes true forever - we'll never make it home in time to cast the counter spell. And you know what? I don't care. I like being a wolf.

ANTHEA

That is the tiredness talking. Come on. I think we're almost there.

GUNTHER

You've been saying that for six weeks.

ANTHEA

But now it's true. Smell the air.

(GUNTHER sniffs)

GUNTHER

Schnacklevurst?

ANTHEA

I think.

GUNTHER

Then we are almost in Ba -

(ANTHEA clamps a mittened hand over his mouth. A few notes of the folk melody play; their feet do a few half-hearted steps in the air as they sit there.)

ANTHEA

Please. I am too tired for dancing.

GUNTHER

Yah. Me too. So tired.

ANTHEA

But we must get over the border to enact the spell -

GUNTHER

- by sundown, yah yah. Like breaking record you are.

(GUNTHER gets up, and the flats rise up as well, again revealing the legs in hiking boots and lederhosen. The flats start moving very slowly SR as GUNTHER and ANTHEA hike slowly SL, giving the illusion that they are passing the mountains.

In front of them, from underneath one of the mountains a roll of wide black cloth tape unspools along the floor, across their path towards the orchestra. Or perhaps it is already there.)

ANTHEA

Look! It is the border!

GUNTHER

Yah!

ANTHEA

Oh but look! The sun is starting to make her swift, unrelenting descent down the sky - Come, we must cross the border and set up for the spell.

(ANTHEA and GUNTHER step over the border and sit in Batvia, SL. They reach into their rucksacks and begin removing and arranging things for the spell: the Book, bones, stones, herbs, a goat skull, a golden knife, etc. Consulting the book, ANTHEA lays objects in a circle as:

LORD RODRICK RECLUSE and C.I. COTTAGE enter SR. THEY are riding ancient bicycles, laden with supplies and guns. )



(THEY dismount, and COTTAGE inspects the ground where GUNTHER was sitting. There is a bulge in Cottage's overcoat pocket.)

CHIEF INSPECTOR COTTAGE

I see evidence of rock scrape-age, moss mashing, and laterally distressed lichen. I'd say they stopped here for two minutes at most.

RODERICK

You can see all that from looking at this bare, bleak bit of barren mountainside?

(COTTAGE takes a pair of binoculars out of his pocket.)

CHIEF INSPECTOR COTTAGE

Nae, I watched them through my binoculars.

(Looking SL through his binoculars)

We can afford to rest for a wee bit, if you'd like. They're not very far ahead, sitting down. They won't get away from us now. Care for a spot of tea, Sir?

(COTTAGE proffers a flask)

RODERICK

I wouldn't say no.

(RODERICK takes several glugs.)

RODERICK (Continued)

Gah!

CHIEF INSPECTOR COTTAGE

RoamingintheGloamingfiddich. Single malt.

RODERICK

I'll have a double.

(HE drinks again.)

RODERICK (Continued)

Gad that's revivifying. Or perhaps it's this foreign mountain air. I tell you, it's ripping to be on the hunt again. Will you look at that incipient sunset? Of course it's not a patch on a good English sunset, but still, a damn fine sight. A new sight. It's good to get out of the house, Cottage. I was in a rut, a veritable furrow of routine. But now -

BLOOD IS RUNNING THROUGH MY VEINS,  
I CAN ALMOST HEAR THE HUNTING HORN,

(MORE)

RODERICK (Continued)

WIND IS RUNNING THROUGH MY HAIR,  
PREY IS RUNNING FOR ITS LIFE,  
AND I'M FEELING LIKE A MAN REBORN.

YES I'M ON THE HUNT AGAIN,  
I COULD EVEN TRACK A UNICORN,  
STALK A WERECAT TO HER LAIR  
- YES I KNOW SHE WAS MY WIFE -  
BUT I'M FEELING LIKE A MAN REBORN.

SO FAR FROM ENGLAND  
THE AIR IS BRACING  
MY HEART IS RACING  
AS OUR PREY RUNS ON IN TERROR...

I FEEL YOUNG ENOUGH TO SOAR!  
I COULD SCAMPER UP THE MATTERHORN!  
THIS OLD BOY'S NOT FINISHED YET,  
BRING ON OYSTERS AND CHAMPAGNE,  
CAUSE I'M FEELING LIKE A MAN REBORN.

I'M A BACHELOR ONCE MORE!  
STATE OF MATRIMONY NOW FORESWORN!  
GAVE IT UP WITH NO REGRET,  
I FIND BLOOD SPORTS MORE HUMANE,  
NOW I'M FEELING LIKE A MAN REBORN,  
MAN REBORN, MAN REBORN, REBORN!

So. What's our plan of action from hereon, now that the prey  
is in our sights?

CHIEF INSPECTOR COTTAGE

Arrest them and bring them back to England.

RODERICK

Really? We'll have to tie them up at night, you realize; feed  
them; make, you know, sanitary arrangements and such. Bloody  
bother. Wouldn't it be simpler to shoot them?

CHIEF INSPECTOR COTTAGE

Sir Roderick! I could never shoot an unarmed prisoner,  
especially not one as...as, well, as beautiful and witty as  
Lady Anthea.

RODERICK

Pretty is as pretty does. Tally ho, what?

(THEY start crossing slowly to SR,  
making an elaborate pretense of  
creeping up on Anthea and Gunther  
as they draw near them, guns drawn. )

(ANTHEA and GUNTHER have finished their set-up, and assume tranced-out devotee positions. Music up.)

ANTHEA

SPEAK TO ME, OH EVER PRESENT GODDESS OF THE PAST -

RODERICK

Put a sock in it!

(Music stops)

ANTHEA

Roderick! And Chief Inspector Cottage.

CHIEF INSPECTOR COTTAGE

Lady Anthea.

(GUNTHER growls.)

And Gunther. I'm afraid you'll have to come with us, back to England.

ANTHEA

But we've come so far and it's been such hard going. Now that we're finally here - let us cast the counter-spell. Oh please!

CHIEF INSPECTOR COTTAGE

That would be highly irregular.

ANTHEA

Indulge me in this, Chief Inspector - I mean really, what have you got to lose? Especially as I suspect you don't believe in our curse. So what's the harm?

CHIEF INSPECTOR COTTAGE

Well...

ANTHEA

And on the off chance that it is true, wouldn't it be prudent to let us enact a spell that will avert the prospect of having to escort two full time beasts all the way back to England? Hmm?

RODERICK

She's got a point.

CHIEF INSPECTOR COTTAGE

She's right: I do think it's all hokum and bunk, but I suppose we can do with a rest. Go ahead, Lady Anthea, cast your spell.

ANTHEA

Oh Chief Inspector, you are a dear.

CHIEF INSPECTOR COTTAGE

Lady Anthea...forgive me, but could you say that again, in an English accent?

ANTHEA

(English accent:)

Oh Chief Inspector, you are a dear.

(THEY look at each other for a beat. AN ARPEGGIO OF ROMANTIC RECOGNITION MUSIC.)

ANTHEA (Continued)

(Back to her Batvian accent:)

I've thought so from the moment we met. Sorry Roderick. Well, here goes.

(Music starts)

ANTHEA (Continued)

Wait.

(Music stops)

ANTHEA (Continued)

And whatever happens once the spell is cast, I want you to know, Roderick, that we were never really married.

RODERICK

What?

ANTHEA

You were inebriated. And quite possibly there was something in your whiskey to ensure that you were comatose as well.

RODERICK

But I woke up that morning with you, ahem, beside me in my bed, a ring on my finger, a white dress crumpled on the floor, and, and...well, damn it all, there was blood on the sheets.

ANTHEA

It was a full moon that night.

RODERICK

Then I'm - I'm - good gad. Not married.

ANTHEA

No.

RODERICK

Well I'm chuffed! Not married!

ANTHEA

Never was, and never will be, I'm sure. All right - are we ready?

GUNTHER

I guess so.

(Music starts)

CHIEF INSPECTOR COTTAGE

Actually, before we start, I've got something to say as well.

(Music stops)

CHIEF INSPECTOR COTTAGE (Continued)

I have to bring you in, Gunther; you killed a woman after all. But it may interest you to know that Dora was the Hammerpate murderer, or murderess, as t'were.

ANTHEA

Dora killed her own husband?

CHIEF INSPECTOR COTTAGE

I found a written confession after her death. Apparently he was constantly critical of her cooking. They'd gone to the moors for peat cutting and a picnic; he cast aspersions on her aspic and there was a hammer in the hamper. Who knows, a judge may be lenient with you. Right then, carry on.

(Music starts.)

GUNTHER

To hell with lenient! I don't want to go back!

(Music stops)

CHIEF INSPECTOR COTTAGE

Right. But justice -

GUNTHER

- must prevail, yah yah. But you must bring my sister in too, no? She killed dog.

CHIEF INSPECTOR COTTAGE

And that's another thing. The autopsy showed that Bodger actually died of a heart attack.

RODERICK

So she frightened him to death! It's still murder.

CHIEF INSPECTOR COTTAGE

Hard to prove sequence of events in a court of law. He was an old dog, you must admit, and may have died of natural causes, after which something savaged his corpse.

ANTHEA

Do you mean to say that he may have already been - ? Ew. Well, let dead dogs lie and let's get on with it. The sun is empurpling the sky with roseate bars of pre-sunset grandeur as we speak.

CHIEF INSPECTOR COTTAGE

Right. Carry on.

ANTHEA

Right. Goat's skull - check. Salamander spawn - check. Hyssop, fibula, the four corners of the universe - check, check and check.

(Music up. Lights begin to change, blinking like northern lights. ANTHEA finishes arranging the strange objects in a circle. SHE walks around it three times, singing. )

ANTHEA (Continued)

SPEAK TO ME  
OH EVER PRESENT GODDESS OF THE PAST,  
HIGH PRIESTESS FROM BEFORE THE RULE OF MEN.

SPEAK THROUGH ME,  
AND TELL US HOW OUR FATE CAN BE RE-CAST,  
SO WE CAN SHED OUR SKINS, BEGIN AGAIN.

SPEAK NOW,  
WHILE DUSK IS BALANCED ON THE CUSP OF NIGHT,  
FOR IN THIS LULL BETWEEN  
THE DARKNESS AND LAST LIGHT,  
BETWEEN THE KNOWN WORLD AND UNTRAVELED LANDS,  
THE ANCIENT WAYS AND WHAT WILL COME TO PASS,  
LIES POSSIBILITY.  
SPEAK.

(The music changes; the lights change: the Goddess is appearing! Anthea's voice deepens as she channels the Goddess.)

ANTHEA (Continued)

CHOOSE.  
CHOOSE WITHOUT DELAY WHAT YOU WILL BE  
NOW THAT THE TRANSFORMATION SPELL'S BEGUN.

(MORE)

ANTHEA (Continued)

STEP BACKWARDS WITH BOTH FEET  
WHILE FACING EAST:  
STAY ON TWO FEET 'TIL ALL YOUR DAYS ARE DONE.

IF YOU STEP FORWARDS  
YOU'LL REMAIN A BEAST,  
AND ON FOUR LEGS FOREVER YOU WILL RUN.  
CHOOSE.

(More music. ANTHEA and GUNTHER  
have disappeared behind a mountain.)

CHIEF INSPECTOR COTTAGE

Lady Anthea! Lady Anthea! I don't believe in any of this,  
but just in case, I beg you - stay human! Stay here! Stay  
with us - with me.

(ANTHEA and GUNTHER reappear,  
transformed: ANTHEA is wearing a  
tweed skirt, twin-set, sensible  
shoes, flowered hat, and carries an  
umbrella. GUNTHER is in full  
Scottish regalia: kilt, sporran,  
argyle knee socks and ghillies,  
etc.)

(BOTH look surprised, but not as  
surprised as Cottage.)

RODERICK

THOUGH I'M NOT ONE TO GLOAT AND CROW:  
SEE THERE, COTTAGE, I TOLD YOU SO!  
THESE TWO TRAFFIC IN THE EVIL ARTS,  
BLACK MAGIC FROM THEIR BLACKER HEARTS.

ANTHEA

(English accent)

GOOD GRACIOUS! SOMETHING'S GONE AWRY!  
ALTHOUGH WE DID TRANSMOGRIFY  
IT SEEMS I'M ENGLISH, BLOODY HELL.  
AT LEAST I'M HUMAN, I GUESS. OH WELL.

GUNTHER

THEY'LL PAY ATTENTION TO ME NOW,  
OR TO MY KNEECAPS, ANYHOW.  
BUT IF I HAVE TO END UP FOREIGN,  
THE LADIES LIKE A KILT AND SPORRAN.

ANTHEA

I THOUGHT I CAST THE SPELL CORRECTLY,  
EACH DIRECTION DONE DIRECTLY;  
PLACED THE FIBULA PRECISELY,  
(MORE)

ANTHEA (Continued)  
WALKED AROUND THE CIRCLE THRICELY -

CHIEF INSPECTOR COTTAGE  
(inspecting the circle)  
- Lady Anthea, I am for once speechless. Almost. This kind of thing does not happen in Scotland. However, I think I see the problem. Bringing to bear my encyclopedic knowledge of forensic osteology, I see that this is nae a fibula, but a tibia.

ANTHEA  
Oh! Then if I take this bone - a tibia, yes?

CHIEF INSPECTOR COTTAGE  
Aye, 'tis a tibia.

ANTHEA  
And switch it with the fibula - then the spell will work as we wish?

CHIEF INSPECTOR COTTAGE  
I canna tell. But I have enough words in me to ask you - to beg and implore you - not to transform again. You are quite perfect as you are.

ANTHEA  
(melting)  
Oh.

GUNTHER  
(Scottish accent)  
Aye, but what about me? I don't really fancy wearing a skirt. And to have to eat haggis? The sun is going down, rearrange the wretched bones - hurry hurry!

ANTHEA  
But, but - I think I choose to stay English.

GUNTHER  
And eat English food?

ANTHEA  
There are worse things. And I'm actually rather fond of shortbread.

CHIEF INSPECTOR COTTAGE  
Would that be - Scottish shortbread?

ANTHEA  
It would.



CHIEF INSPECTOR COTTAGE

If you'll remain English then redo the spell - your brother makes a damn poor Scotsman.

ANTHEA

You're right, he is better as a Batvian. So if I just -

(ANTHEA alters the placement of one of the bones in the pentagram, steps backwards. A MUSICAL ARPEGGIO.)

ANTHEA (Continued)

(hand on her heart)

Oh! The oddest feeling. Like coming home.

GUNTHER

I too am going home.

(HE starts to step forwards across the border)

ANTHEA

No, no! You'll be -

(GUNTHER completes his forwards steps)

GUNTHER

(Batvian accent again)

Yah. Beast forever. Is what I want.

ANTHEA

But - I'll never see you again!

GUNTHER

Maybe no, maybe so. There could be sequel.

ANTHEA

What a daunting idea. Well. Brother. Take care of yourself. Promise me you'll eat the occasional vegetable.

GUNTHER

Yah. You too. Sister.

(They embrace. The sun sets and GUNTHER tears off his Scottish garb. Maybe some very hairy limbs are revealed.)

GUNTHER (Continued)

THE DAY IS DONE; THE MOON WILL RISE  
AND SOON I WILL...DE-NORMALIZE.

YOU'VE BEEN THERE TOO; IT'S NO SURPRISE  
WHAT A LITTLE TOO MUCH MOONLIGHT CAN DO.

(MORE)

GUNTHER (Continued)

AT FIRST I MAY BE TRAUMATIZED  
BUT ONCE THE CHANGE IS FINALIZED  
I KNOW I'LL FIND IT THRILLING -  
THE FUR, THE FANGS, THE CLAWS, THE KILLING;  
THE BLOOD, THE GORE, THE CRUNCH OF BONES,  
THE SCREAMS, THE SHRIEKS, THE CRIES AND MOANS.

OH SUCH A LOT TO LOOK FORWARD TO!  
SO MUCH - SO MANY - TO PURSUE!

YOU'VE BEEN THERE TOO; IT'S NO SURPRISE  
WHAT A LITTLE TOO MUCH MOONLIGHT CAN DO.

YOU'D BE ADVISED TO REALIZE  
I FEEL THE CHANGES FINALIZE;  
I MUST, SO MAYHEM WON'T ENSUE,  
BID YOU A HASTY AND HEARTFELT ADIEU!

(GUNTHER runs offstage, with his  
final note becoming a triumphant  
howl.)

RODERICK  
(brandishing his gun with excitement)  
Come on Cottage! After him!

CHIEF INSPECTOR COTTAGE  
I don't think I will, Sir Roderick. You go ahead.

RODERICK  
By gad, I will! Oh jolly thrill!

(HE runs offstage after Gunther.  
ANTHEA and COTTAGE are alone.  
Utter silence for a beat.)

ANTHEA  
Oh dear. There went my brother.

CHIEF INSPECTOR COTTAGE  
Yes. And your husband. Or - not your husband.

ANTHEA  
Yes. I mean no, not my husband. He went too. But...  
you...didn't. I thought you always had to get your man, Chief  
Inspector.

CHIEF INSPECTOR COTTAGE  
Call me Angus.

ANTHEA  
I thought you always had to get your man, Angus.

CHIEF INSPECTOR COTTAGE  
I'd rather get my woman. Anthea.

ANTHEA  
Oh Angus!

CHIEF INSPECTOR COTTAGE  
Oh Anthea!

(They kiss.)

ANTHEA  
OH PERFECT BLISS! TO END LIKE THIS:  
FINALLY A WOMAN.

COTTAGE  
OH PERFECT BLISS! TO SHARE A KISS  
WITH SUCH A WOMAN,  
THE ONE I'VE LONGED FOR -

BOTH  
I FEEL TRANSFORMED, AS IF EVERYTHING'S NEW -

ANTHEA  
NO MORE DARK NIGHTS, AND A TRUE LOVER TOO!

COTTAGE  
OH HAPPY DAY! WHAT CAN I SAY?  
SUCH WIT AND BEAUTY.  
OH HAPPY DAY TO END THIS WAY.  
I WAS DETERMINED  
TO DO MY DUTY.  
I GOT MY MAN; SHE'S MY WOMAN, MY DEAR.  
WE CAN BE WED, BECAUSE SHE'S IN THE CLEAR!

ANTHEA'S DESCANT  
I CAN'T BELIEVE I'M FINALLY REALLY TRULY FREE  
AND THIS NICE MAN'S IN LOVE WITH ME!

(RODERICK and GUNTHER reappear  
somewhere in the theater)

RODERICK  
OH JOLLY THRILL!  
I'M HUNTING STILL, A PIG IN CLOVER!

GUNTHER  
YES JOLLY THRILL! AGAIN TO KILL!  
IT WON'T BE OVER WHEN THE FULL MOON'S GONE.

BOTH

I FEEL TRANSFORMED BACK TO WHAT I SHOULD BE  
LIVING A LIFE THAT IS WOLFISH / MANLY AND FREE!

ALL

AND NOW THIS PART OF OUR JOURNEY'S ENDED  
AND WE EACH RECEIVED OUR HEART'S DESIRE  
AT THE VERY LEAST OUR LIVES CHANGED.  
I FEEL I'VE COME RIGHT ROUND RIGHT DOWN  
TO WHERE I DO BELONG AT LAST,  
I FEEL I'VE COME RIGHT ROUND RIGHT DOWN  
TO START AGAIN, AND A NEW SPELL IS CAST.

COTTAGE'S DESCANT

I CAN'T BELIEVE I'VE WON HER WINSOME HEART AT LAST;  
I JUST WON'T THINK ABOUT HER PAST...

ALL

AND NOW THIS PART OF OUR JOURNEY'S ENDED  
AND WE EACH RECEIVED OUR HEART'S DESIRE  
AT THE VERY LEAST OUR LIVES CHANGED.  
I FEEL I'VE COME RIGHT ROUND RIGHT DOWN  
TO WHERE I DO BELONG AT LAST,  
I FEEL I'VE COME RIGHT ROUND RIGHT DOWN  
TO START AGAIN AND A NEW SPELL IS CAST.  
HAPPY ENDING, A NEW SPELL IS CAST,  
HAPPY ENDING, HAPPY ENDING  
A NEW SPELL IS CAST.

(TO BLACK. END OF PLAY)