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Dramatic Publishing

A Mystery-Comedy in Three Acts

by

GENE DONOVAN

I Was a Teen-Age Dracula



THE DRAMATIC PUBLISHING COMPANY

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(I WAS A TEEN-AGE DRACULA)

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I Was a Teen-Age Dracula

A Mystery-Comedy in Three Acts

FOR SIX MEN, NINE WOMEN AND TWO EXTRAS

CHARACTERS

SUE MARSHALL	.....	<i>a modern miss</i>
PETE	.....	<i>her brother</i>
ENID PURDY	.....	<i>her aunt</i>
CLYDE PURDY	.....	<i>her uncle</i>
AUDREY	.....	<i>her girl friend</i>
TERMITE	.....	<i>Pete's pal</i>
MARLENE	.....	<i>the maid</i>
STEVE DRACCA	.....	<i>from Transylvania</i>
DR. COLE	.....	<i>a visitor</i>
MRS. ERSKINE	.....	<i>a neighbor</i>
STEINBECK	.....	<i>a policeman</i>
DODO	}	.....<i>dear "ghouls"</i>
JACKIE		
LOLA		
BATTY	.....	<i>???</i>
TWO ATTENDANTS	.....	<i>extras</i>

PLACE: *Dark Cedars, a country home near a small town.*

TIME: *The present. Spring.*

SYNOPSIS

ACT ONE, Scene One: *The living room at Dark Cedars. Friday evening after dark.*

Scene Two: *A short time later.*

ACT TWO, Scene One: *Saturday evening after dark.*

Scene Two: *A short time later.*

ACT THREE: *That same night, near dawn.*

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NOTES ON CHARACTERS AND COSTUMES

BATTY: She is a woman of uncertain age, white-faced, with long strands of hair hanging over her eyes. She wears a wispy gray robe and a gray chiffon scarf, half tied over her head, half floating free. Her eyes are wild, frightened, haunted.

MARLENE: Marlene is a good-natured young girl with a vivid imagination who watches too many horror movies and TV programs. She considers herself not so much a maid as one who helps out. She wears a cotton dress and an apron, except in Act Three, when she appears in pajamas, a gaudy robe and slippers, her hair done up in curlers.

SUE: Sue is a very sweet, charming girl of sixteen. She wears a sweater and skirt. In Act Three she wears pajamas, robe and slippers.

PETE: Pete is a year or two older than Sue, light-hearted and full of fun. He wears casual sports clothes. During Act Two, Scene One, he appears as a white-robed figure, abnormally tall because the top of his white robe is flat and square, without any head. (His own head is concealed under the robe.) He wears white gloves. Behind his back as he enters he carries his "head," a Hallowe'en-type horror mask or head of plastic rubber. On one hand he wears a large glove, disguised as a false hand. In Act Three, he, too, wears pajamas, robe and slippers.

AUNT ENID: She is sweet-faced and middle-aged, a woman who seems to enjoy poor health. She speaks plaintively, and all her movements are slow, as if she were very tired. She wears a robe and slippers in Act Three, a spring dress during the other acts.

MRS. ERSKINE: She is an abrupt middle-aged woman, rather countrified, with a loud voice. She dresses plainly, and wears a button-down sweater over her dress, and a man's hat.

UNCLE CLYDE: He is round-faced and middle-aged, a friendly man but a little on the fussy side. He wears glasses.

He appears in a suit on his first entrance. Later, he changes to a casual jacket in place of his suit coat. In Act Three he appears in his trousers, pajama tops and slippers.

AUDREY: Audrey is sixteen, wide-eyed and gullible. She has a crush on Pete. She wears spring clothes. In Act Two, Scene One, she wears a pink sweater. She wears pajamas, robe and slippers in Act Three.

TERMITE: He is Pete's age, but small for his age. Termite is full of confidence in his own charm (especially with the girls). He wears sports clothes. During the first scene in Act Two, he appears in his version of a zombie—tattered pants of a sickly green and a loose, torn shirt of the same color. His facial make-up is ghastly, with streaks of "blood." His left hand is made up with long, claw-like talons. (This can be a glove which he wears over his hand.) In Act Three he wears pajamas, robe and slippers.

DR. COLE: He is a pleasant, friendly, middle-aged man. He wears a dark suit.

STEVE: Steve is nineteen, a dark-haired chap with a very serious manner. His way of speaking is just a trifle stilted, as if he had not always spoken English, but he has no accent. His manner is more formal and polite than that of most American boys. He wears a dark suit throughout the play.

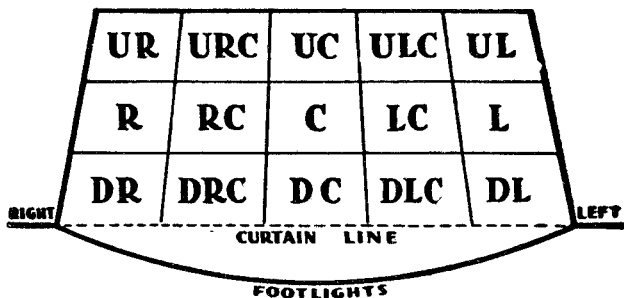
DODO and JACKIE: They are teen-agers, normally very pretty. However, in the play, they have made themselves up to look like the "Un-Dead." Their faces are unnaturally white, the eye make-up emphasized. Their hair streams down over their faces (or they wear wigs), and they are dressed in fluttering robes.

LOLA: She is a cute teen-ager. She wears casual clothes.

STEINBECK: He is a police officer, dressed in uniform.

TWO ATTENDANTS: They wear dark trousers and white coats.

CHART OF STAGE POSITIONS

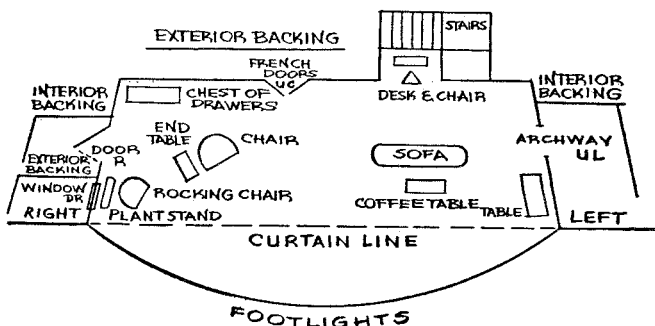


STAGE POSITIONS

Upstage means away from the footlights, *downstage* means toward the footlights, and *right* and *left* are used with reference to the actor as he faces the audience. R means *right*, L means *left*, U means *up*, D means *down*, C means *center*, and these abbreviations are used in combination, as: U R for *up right*, R C for *right center*, D L C for *down left center*, etc. One will note that a position designated on the stage refers to a general territory, rather than to a given point.

NOTE: Before starting rehearsals, chalk off your stage or rehearsal space as indicated above in the *Chart of Stage Positions*. Then teach your actors the meanings and positions of these fundamental terms of stage movement by having them walk from one position to another until they are familiar with them. The use of these abbreviated terms in directing the play saves time, speeds up rehearsals, and reduces the amount of explanation the director has to give to his actors.

STAGE CHART



PROPERTIES

GENERAL: Small desk and chair; telephone on desk; drapes or curtains on window and on either side of French doors; plant stand with potted plants; sofa and coffee table; chair and end table; rocking chair; chest of drawers and mirrors; occasional table; ash tray on coffee table; lamps on chest, occasional table and desk; Act One, Scene One: newspaper on sofa; piece of knitting or embroidery in rocking chair; chest (carried in by Pete and Termite); Act One, Scene Two: thermos bottle and newspaper on end table by chair R C; dirt in Steve's chest; Act Two, Scene One: newspaper on end table by chair R C; large pair of scissors and small mirror in desk drawer; Act Two, Scene Two: pillow on sofa; bandage (band-aid) for Uncle Clyde; piece of Batty's gray scarf on back of chair R C; Act Three: club for Black Figure; pillow and blanket on sofa; newspaper on desk.

MARLENE: Dish towel and small saucepan, hymn book, large cooking pot, pile of magazines, tray with glass of milk, sandwich and a piece of chocolate cake, folded towels, dust-cloth, narrow green wreath of greenery, thermos bottle, umbrella.

SUE: Wrist watch, bottle of pills, flashlight, watering can, dustpan and small brush.

PETE: Aunt Enid's sweater, stalk of celery, suitcase (Steve's), flashlight, wrist watch, tennis racquet.

TERMITE: Overnight case, box (Steve's), small notebook.

DR. COLE: Car keys.

MRS. ERSKINE: Dog's leash and muzzle.

AUDREY: Overnight case, wrist watch.

UNCLE CLYDE: Brief case, package containing African violet plant in small pot, large ring on finger, violet plant now in larger pot.

AUNT ENID: Book, light blanket.

STEVE: Small flashlight, gold chain or necklace, opened bottle of Coke and a glass.

NOTE: Steve's chest should have handles on each end for ease of handling. There should be some disguised openings in the chest to make it more comfortable for Sue, who must spend some time concealed inside it. A theatrical supply house can supply you with the materials necessary to create the effect of the mist coming through the French doors.

PRODUCTION NOTE

Nothing adds more to the polish of a production than the quick picking up of cues. Unless there is a definite reason for a pause, train your actors to come in with their speeches "on the heels," so to speak, of the preceding speeches. When a production lags, audience interest likewise will lag.

It is always advisable during the last week of rehearsals to hold one or more sessions during which the actors merely sit around in a circle and go through lines only, with the express purpose of snapping up cues.

ACT ONE

Scene One

SCENE: *The living room at Dark Cedars, a rather old-fashioned country home. This is a bright and pleasant room, although the furnishings are far from new. In the L wall, upstage, an archway leads to a hall and the front door (off-stage). In the back wall, U L C, stairs lead to a small landing, then turn right and continue upstairs. In the alcove formed by the stairs and landing are a small desk and chair. On the desk is a telephone. French doors U C open on to a terrace with a view of shrubbery and a garden. There is a door in the R wall at center, leading to the kitchen and other rooms downstairs. A window is in the R wall, downstage of the door. There are drapes or curtains on the window, and on either side of the French doors. In front of the window is a stand holding several potted plants. There is a sofa at L C, facing the audience, with a coffee table in front of it. At R C is a comfortable chair, with a small end table right of it. There is a rocking-chair by the window D R, a chest of drawers against the back wall U R, with a mirror on the wall above it, and an occasional table against the wall D L. There are several lamps about the room—on the chest U R, the occasional table D L, and perhaps on the desk. This is not at all the sort of room where you would expect the weird or unnatural to happen—and yet . . .]*

BEFORE RISE OF CURTAIN: *A mournful howling sound is heard. It could be a dog baying at the moon—or it could be a wolf—coming closer.]*

AT RISE OF CURTAIN: *It is after dark on a Friday evening in spring, and the lamps are lit. Newspapers are scattered on the sofa. The howling sound is heard again. A sudden gust of wind blows open the French doors, making them bang against the wall. In a moment they blow shut again.]*

SUE [*calling from offstage U L*]. Marlene! . . . Marlene!

. . .

[*A gust of wind again blows the doors open. At first only the terrace is seen, dimly lighted. Then a figure appears and stands framed in the doorway U C. This is a woman of uncertain age, white-faced, with long strands of hair hanging over her eyes. She wears a wispy gray robe and a gray chiffon scarf which is half tied over her head, half floating free in the strong breeze which blows from behind her. Her eyes are wild. The dog howls again, and she gives a soft moan, not unlike the same sound. This woman is referred to as BATTY.*]

SUE [*offstage U L*]. Is that you, Marlene? [*BATTY leaves doorway and disappears U C. Doors bang shut again.*]

[*MARLENE enters R. She has a dish towel in her hand, and a small saucepan which she is drying.*]

MARLENE [*calling*]. Did you call me?

[*SUE appears on the stairs.*]

SUE. What's all that banging?

MARLENE [*who has paused near chair R C*]. I wasn't banging nothing. [*French doors clatter a little bit but do not fly open.*]

SUE. Oh, those doors again! [*Comes down stairs, going toward doors.*]

[*Just then, PETE comes in U L.*]

SUE [*turning*]. Pete, see if you can fix these doors.

PETE. Do I have to do everything around here? [*Crosses toward doors.*]

SUE. Any sign of Uncle Clyde's station wagon?

PETE [*looking at door catch*]. Not yet.

SUE. He's late.

MARLENE. I can't keep things hot no longer. Him and that young fellow will just have to make do with cold stuff.

SUE. They won't mind. [*To PETE.*] Well?

PETE. The catch is broken. I'll get a new one in town tomorrow. [*Dog howls again.*]

MARLENE [*with a shiver*]. There it goes again!

PETE. Just somebody's dog howling at the moon.

MARLENE. You know that old TV set I have up in my room?

Well, last night I saw this movie——

SUE [*teasingly, coming c*]. On the late show?

PETE [*joining SUE*]. The late, late, *late* show?

MARLENE [*earnestly*]. In this movie, it all started with a howling dog. Only he wasn't a dog at all. He was a *wolf*!

SUE. Stop watching those silly horror pictures, Marlene. [*Begins to pick up newspapers from sofa.*] Who scattered these papers in here? I had everything so neat.

MARLENE [*persisting*]. You know why he howled? Because the zombies were coming!

PETE [*singing to tune of "The Campbells Are Coming," or some other appropriate tune*]. The zombies are coming, ah-ooo! Ah-ooo! [*Makes wailing sound.*]

MARLENE. The fellow in the movie laughed, too. But he didn't think it was so funny when they reached out their long bony hands——

SUE. Somebody's bony hands will get slapped if they leave any more papers around. [*Looks at paper.*] I see our team won last night's game.

PETE [*moving toward her*]. Oh, sure, sure!

SUE. Do you suppose Steve will like baseball?

PETE. Maybe they don't play baseball over there.

SUE. It must seem strange, leaving your own homeland and coming to a new country where everything is different.

PETE. He was born in this country. He'll get used to things in no time.

SUE [*as she puts papers on coffee table*]. What's keeping Uncle Clyde so long? [*Glances at her watch.*] Steve's train should have been in a couple of hours ago.

PETE [*crossing to French doors, glancing out*]. Long before dark.

MARLENE. In this movie, the zombies were under the control of one man, and they called him "Master." And all he had to do was stretch out his hand——

PETE [*singing again*]. The zombies are coming, ah—oooo! Ah—oooo! The zombies are coming, boo-hoo, boo-hoo! [*Telephone rings, and SUE goes to answer it.*]

MARLENE [*to PETE*]. You're just being silly.

PETE. I'm being silly?

SUE [*on telephone*]. Hello. . . . Oh, hi, Audrey. . . . Steve hasn't come yet. . . .

[AUNT ENID *comes slowly down the stairs.*]

AUNT ENID. Is it your uncle?

SUE [*on telephone*]. Just a minute. [*To AUNT ENID.*] No, it's Audrey.

AUNT ENID. I hope he hasn't had trouble with the car. [*As scene continues she moves to plant stand, where she stands, snipping off a few leaves.*]

PETE. Now, Aunt Enid, stop worrying.

SUE [*on telephone*]. What's keeping you so long? I thought you were coming right after dinner. . . . Oh. . . . Well, call him and tell him to hurry. . . .

PETE [*joining SUE at telephone*]. Is Termite going to pick her up? [*MARLENE, also interested in telephone conversation, moves U C, half-heartedly drying saucepan as she listens.*]

AUNT ENID [*reprovingly*]. Marlene, you didn't water my plants again today.

MARLENE. I forgot—all this getting ready for company. [*Starts R.*] And now, the food getting cold on the stove—and I ought to be leaving for choir practice. [*Goes out R.*]

SUE [*on telephone*]. Oh, he's nineteen, I guess. [*To AUNT ENID.*] Steve Dracca is nineteen, isn't he?

AUNT ENID. That's right. [*Sadly.*] Why doesn't she water my plants? It's little enough to ask, when I'm not feeling too well. Pete, will you run up for my sweater, like a good boy? I think there's a draft here by the window. [*Sits in rocking chair D. R.*]

PETE. Sure. [*Goes upstairs.*]

SUE [*on telephone*]. How do I know if he's good-looking?
. . . Or rich, either? You'll have to ask Uncle Clyde. . . .

Okay, then, Audrey, we'll see you. [*Hangs up and turns to*
AUNT ENID.] Did you ever meet Steve Dracca's father when
he was in this country? [*Comes D R C.*]

AUNT ENID. Just once, long ago. Mr. Dracca was an odd, re-
mote sort of man. From an odd, remote sort of country.

SUE [*thoughtfully*]. Transylvania. Now what does that re-
mind me of?

AUNT ENID. I think Steve's father was some sort of minor no-
bility over there.

[*PETE comes down the stairs with a sweater for his aunt. He*
moves D R.]

SUE [*interested*]. Really? Pete, did you hear that? Steve
Dracca's some sort of nobility, maybe.

PETE. No kidding? [*Puts sweater around AUNT ENID's shoul-*
ders.] A prince? A baron?

AUNT ENID. Nothing so important as that. Seems to me it
might have been a count.

SUE. Then Steve would be Count Dracca! [*Thoughtfully.*]
That seems sort of familiar to me, too.

PETE [*arranging sweater*]. Okay, now?

AUNT ENID. Yes, Pete, and thank you. I feel so ashamed,
sometimes, the way all of you have to wait on me. [*Takes*
up piece of knitting or embroidery from behind her in
chair.]

PETE [*giving her a pat on cheek*]. You're my best girl, aren't
you? [*Goes out R. There is a knock on French doors.*]

SUE [*starting U C*]. Who could that be!

AUNT ENID. Wouldn't you think people would come to our
front door?

[*SUE opens the French doors and MRS. ERSKINE is seen in the*
doorway. In her hand are a dog's muzzle and a leash.]

SUE. Why, it's Mrs. Erskine!

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MRS. ERSKINE. Hello, there. Hope I didn't alarm you?

SUE [*politely*]. Oh, no. Come in.

MRS. ERSKINE [*stepping just inside door*]. Can't stay Just stopped to ask if you've seen him.

SUE. Seen—— [*As MRS. ERSKINE holds up muzzle and leash.*]

Oh, your dog. Why, no, I haven't.

AUNT ENID. He's lost?

MRS. ERSKINE. Had him tied outside and he broke loose. First time it's ever happened.

[*PETE comes in R, eating a stalk of celery, and followed by MARLENE.*]

MARLENE [*as they enter*]. Look at him, eating up all the food!

What's going to be left for company, I'd like to know?

SUE. Have either of you seen Mrs. Erskine's dog? [*PETE crosses U C, MARLENE above chair R C.*]

PETE. I haven't seen him lately.

AUNT ENID. He's that great big police dog, isn't he?

MRS. ERSKINE. That's the one.

MARLENE. I wouldn't want to meet *him* in the dark.

MRS. ERSKINE. Gentle as a poodle—if he knows you.

MARLENE. Him and me haven't been introduced!

SUE. I hope you find him.

MRS. ERSKINE. All of a sudden he started acting strange. Maybe it's the full moon. Or maybe that mist that's coming up out of the valley. You ever see mist come the same night as a full moon?

AUNT ENID. Now and then it happens.

MRS. ERSKINE. Makes me feel uneasy, and I'm not one to get the shivers. Been feeling uneasy ever since that doctor opened up that sanitarium over there. [*Nods R.*]

AUNT ENID. Oh, you mean Dr. Cole's Rest Home?

MRS. ERSKINE [*with emphasis, moving down to C*]. Want to know what kind of people he's got over there? [*Taps her forehead significantly.*] That's the kind!

MARLENE. Oooh!

PETE. Sure hope they're all locked up.

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MRS. ERSKINE [*moving U C again*]. Now you see why I want my dog?

SUE. We'll let you know if we see him.

MARLENE [*suddenly*]. Must be him we heard howling.

MRS. ERSKINE. Then he can't be far away.

PETE. What's his name?

MRS. ERSKINE [*about to go out U C*]. I just call him Wolf.

[*Howling sound is heard. She tilts her head alertly.*]

There's Wolf! [*Gives a quick wave and goes out U C.*]

AUNT ENID. Why do you suppose she calls him Wolf?

[*The French doors open suddenly and MRS. ERSKINE is there again.*]

MRS. ERSKINE. Excuse me. I hope you don't have any windows open. There's something flying around here that looks like a big, black bat!

AUNT ENID. Good heavens! There's a window open upstairs in my room.

SUE. In mine, too! [*MRS. ERSKINE leaves, closing French doors.*]

PETE. Don't push the panic button. [*Goes to stairs.*] I'll close the windows. [*Goes upstairs.*]

MARLENE. I don't like this. [*Comes D R C.*] And I was so happy to be going to choir practice. [*Takes small hymn book from apron pocket.*] Had my hymn book all ready.

SUE. It does give you a funny feeling. [*Shivers.*] A bat! Bats don't really come after people. [*Uncertainly, coming D C.*] Do they, Aunt Enid?

AUNT ENID [*uneasily*]. I'm not too sure.

MARLENE. In this TV movie I saw once—it was called "Vampires in the Vestibule"—there was an enormous black bat—[*Spreads out her arms to illustrate.*—]and he was really a vampire, and one night when the girl was sleeping—

[*PETE comes down the stairs.*]

PETE [*coming D C, to SUE*]. Windows closed. All under control.

MARLENE. There was a good one called "Date with Dracula"—he came as a bat sometimes. And he called to all the other vampires in the graveyard, and all the zombies, and the wolves—— [*Dog howls again.*] Oh, my glory gracious!

AUNT ENID. That will do, Marlene.

MARLENE. Yes, ma'am. But it's a fact. And there was another one called "Minnie the Mad Monster——"

PETE. I'll bet that was a dilly. Did she have two heads? [*Makes "monster" sounds, advancing on MARLENE, who retreats.*]

AUNT ENID [*reprovingly*]. Peter!

MARLENE. Laugh at me—go ahead and laugh! But I'm not going outside this house! I'll just miss choir practice tonight. [*Puts hymn book back in apron pocket.*]

SUE [*turning, sitting on sofa*]. Stop thinking about those movies and you'll be all right.

MARLENE. How can I help thinking about them? [*In an eerie tone.*] The wolf is howling. The bat is here. Dracula will come!

PETE [*amused, sitting on right arm of sofa*]. Does this go on and on?

SUE [*teasingly, to MARLENE*]. I suppose you'll recognize him the minute you see him?

MARLENE [*in an eerie voice*]. He always comes in a cloud of mist. His face is pale and his teeth are very white, and sort of pointed. His hair is dark, and his eyes are dark, too. But sometimes they blaze like red coals! He sleeps by day and he walks by night, but never does he eat any food. He only drinks. [*Significantly.*] You-know-what.

SUE [*with a shiver*]. No more, please.

MARLENE. Usually he's good-looking in an awful sort of way, but he won't ever go near a mirror. Vampires don't show any reflection in a mirror! He can put the whammy on you just by looking!

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AUNT ENID. Marlene, I simply won't let you go on like this.

[*There is an offstage sound, L, as of a car door slamming.*]

SUE [*excitedly*]. Uncle Clyde! [*Hurries to French doors to look out.*]

PETE. Now we'll see what this Steve character looks like.

SUE. Oh, I hope he's nice!

[*A door offstage U L opens and closes. They all look toward the hallway U L, waiting. But only UNCLE CLYDE PURDY comes into the room. He carries his brief case and a package.*]

SUE. Where's Steve?

PETE. Isn't he with you?

AUNT ENID. Dear me, is something the matter?

UNCLE CLYDE [*coming left of sofa*]. He just simply didn't show up!

SUE [*coming c*]. Oh, no!

UNCLE CLYDE. I waited for the last train. [*Puts his things down on left end of sofa.*] Now what do you suppose can have become of that boy?

PETE. You're sure you wrote him exactly how to get here?

UNCLE CLYDE. Of course I'm sure. He's my ward now, and I'm responsible for him [*Checks items on his fingers.*] Fly in to Idlewild Airport, I wrote him. Take a train to— [*Names a nearby city.*] Send us a telegram—which he didn't do, confound him! And then change trains for our little village.

AUNT ENID. Maybe he did send a telegram.

UNCLE CLYDE [*coming D R C*]. No, he didn't. I checked.

SUE. Poor Steve!

UNCLE CLYDE. Poor me! Sitting around that station for hours. I'm tired and hungry!

AUNT ENID. Marlene saved something for you.

MARLENE [*gloomily*]. It's cold.

UNCLE CLYDE. Cold will do fine. [*MARLENE goes out R.*] The boy can't stay lost. We'll hear from him. [*Crosses back to*

left end of sofa.] Enid, my dear, I've brought you something.

AUNT ENID [*pleased*]. Oh, Clyde!

UNCLE CLYDE [*coming D R with package from sofa*]. How do you like it? [*Takes paper off his package and reveals an African violet in a small pot.*]

AUNT ENID. It's lovely!

SUE [*moving D R, admiring it*]. So sturdy! [*Starts to take pot from him, then stops suddenly.*] Why, Uncle Clyde, you've got a new ring!

UNCLE CLYDE. Not new—I've had it for years. [*Hands pot to AUNT ENID.*]

SUE. I've never seen you wear it before.

UNCLE CLYDE. I don't wear it all the time.

SUE. It looks just like the one Daddy used to wear. [*Turns to PETE.*] Doesn't it, Pete? [*PETE crosses D R to look. UNCLE CLYDE brings his hand down abruptly.*]

UNCLE CLYDE. I don't remember your father's ring.

AUNT ENID. I just love my African violets. But such a skimpy little pot! The roots must be terribly crowded.

UNCLE CLYDE. Don't fret. I'll put it in a bigger pot with some fresh dirt. [*Takes it from AUNT ENID and sets it on plant stand by window.*] But not now. I want to wash up first and eat a bite.

AUNT ENID [*getting up*]. And tomorrow morning you and Pete will mow the lawn?

UNCLE CLYDE [*patiently*]. Yes, Enid. And I'll get after all that crabgrass and wild garlic.

AUNT ENID [*going R*]. You won't forget?

UNCLE CLYDE. I won't forget. [*AUNT ENID goes out R. UNCLE CLYDE goes to stairs and turns.*] Oh, something else. I have Steve's things out in the station wagon.

SUE. What things?

UNCLE CLYDE. Stuff he had shipped here. A large suitcase and a box, and something that looks like a cedar chest. [*To PETE.*] Help me carry them in later?

PETE. Sure, Uncle Clyde. [*UNCLE CLYDE goes upstairs.*]

SUE. If his suitcase got here, and a chest, then why didn't Steve?

PETE. Maybe he got off at the wrong station. [*Doorbell rings.*
PETE starts U L.] Hey, maybe—

[*Before PETE can go to the door, AUDREY and TERMITE come in U L. Both carry overnight cases.*]

AUDREY. Here we are! [*SUE moves C.*]

TERMITE. Fast as the law allows! [*To SUE, as he, PETE and AUDREY come in front of sofa.*] Glad to see me, doll-face?
[*Moves to her, tipping her chin with his finger.*]

SUE. Back to the woodwork, Termite.

AUDREY. Where's this wonderful Steve?

SUE. Audrey, we just don't know.

PETE. He didn't show up. But some of his things came to the station. Say, Termite, maybe you and I can carry them in.

TERMITE. Okay by me. [*Follows PETE U L, leaving his overnight case by sofa.*]

[*MARLENE comes in R. She has a large cooking pot this time, drying it.*]

MARLENE. I heated the coffee. [*Comes D R C.*]

SUE. Uncle will be down in a minute. [*AUDREY joins SUE at C.*]

TERMITE. What country is this Steve coming from?

SUE. Transylvania.

MARLENE. W-what? [*Her mouth flies open.*]

TERMITE. What's his last name?

SUE. Dracca. [*MARLENE gives a little shriek and drops cooking pot she is drying.*]

TERMITE. You nuts, or something? [*He and PETE go out U L.*]

MARLENE [*moving to C*]. Don't let him come here!

SUE [*taking hold of MARLENE's arm*] Is this more of your mad movie ideas?

MARLENE. Steve Dracca. Dracca. From Transylvania. Don't you understand?

SUE. I certainly do not. What's wrong with Transylvania?

MARLENE. That's *his* country!

AUDREY. Whose?

MARLENE. You know.

SUE. What is she talking about?

MARLENE. His name. Dracca. He's changed it just a little bit.

SUE [*shaking her a little*]. Be sensible, Marlene. [*Front door, offstage U L, is heard to open.*]

[UNCLE CLYDE *appears on the stairs, and pauses.*]

MARLENE. This boy is—Dracula!

SUE [*annoyed*]. I never heard anything so utterly ridiculous!

PETE [*calling, offstage U L*]. Gangway!

TERMITE [*offstage U L*]. One side, people!

[PETE and TERMITE *comes in U L. They are carrying a long dark chest, like an old-fashioned cedar chest.*]

UNCLE CLYDE [*coming to foot of stairs*]. Need any help?

PETE. We can manage. [*They carry it U C. SUE and AUDREY move in front of sofa. MARLENE moves right of chair R C.*]

TERMITE. Why do you suppose he wants an old thing like this?

SUE. Put it down any place.

UNCLE CLYDE. Later you can take it down to the basement. Odd-looking chest, isn't it? [*MARLENE lets out a little cry, covering her mouth. They set chest down right of French doors.*]

MARLENE. It's not a chest. [*Points her finger at it.*] It's a coffin! [*There is a moment of shocked silence as all stare at chest. SUE and AUDREY move upstage to get a closer look.*]

AUDREY [*in a shaky voice*]. C-could it be?

PETE. Now *she's* starting!

UNCLE CLYDE [*crossing to chest*]. Absolute nonsense! It belongs to Steve. Here's his name stenciled on the side. [*Indicates a name stencil.*]

MARLENE. The zombies will come now. *He* will call them!

UNCLE CLYDE. No more of that talk! Next thing, you'll be

claiming he brought his coffin with him full of graveyard dirt.

MARLENE. You must have seen the same movie I did.

UNCLE CLYDE. Enough. [*Points R. MARLENE glances fearfully at chest, picks up cooking pot and scurries out R. Doorbell rings. It startles AUDREY so much that she leaps at PETE, clinging to him.*]

PETE. Don't strangle me!

TERMITE [*to SUE*]. You can strangle me if you want, doll-face.

SUE [*laughing*]. Thanks, some other time.

[*UNCLE CLYDE has gone out U L. He comes in with DR. COLE.*]

UNCLE CLYDE. This is Dr. Cole, our new neighbor. My niece and nephew, and their young friends. [*Comes in front of sofa with DR. COLE. The young people come C. Greetings are exchanged. The boys shake hands with him.*]

DR. COLE. I just stopped by to say hello.

UNCLE CLYDE. Glad you did, glad you did. Sit down, Dr. Cole. [*AUDREY sits down D R, and SUE sits on arm of her chair.*]

DR. COLE. For a minute or two. [*Looks around room carefully, then sits on sofa.*] Everything all right over here?

SUE. Of course. [*A little curious.*] Why do you ask?

DR. COLE [*lightly*]. No reason at all. [*Looks around again.*] Nice big house.

UNCLE CLYDE [*who has paused right of sofa*]. The one you've taken over is even bigger. I understand you're making a rest home out of it. [*TERMITE sits R C. PETE pauses behind his chair.*]

DR. COLE. Of a sort. [*After a pause.*] You know that I'm a psychiatrist?

UNCLE CLYDE. Why, no, I hadn't realized. Then your patients are——

DR. COLE. Yes. Mentally sick. [*As young people exchange glances.*] Don't be alarmed, please. I take only the very mildest of cases.

PETE. And you keep them locked up?

DR. COLE. Treatment of the mentally ill is far different from what it used to be.

AUDREY [*half afraid*]. Then they're *not* locked up?

DR. COLE. Come, come, now, don't cross-question me. I can assure you there's nothing to be afraid of.

UNCLE CLYDE. The mind is a strange thing. You must come across some very interesting cases.

SUE [*rising, moving C*]. Dr. Cole, *is* there such a thing as a vampire?

DR. COLE. You *have* surprised me! A bat, you mean? Yes, in some of the South American countries——

SUE. No, no, not a bat. A—well, a person. The kind they have in those awful horror movies.

PETE [*in an eerie tone*]. The Un-Dead! [DR. COLE *laughs*. After a moment others join in, but not very mirthfully.]

DR. COLE. That's just an old-country superstition.

AUDREY. And it couldn't possibly happen?

DR. COLE. A doctor or a scientist can never rule out anything as completely impossible. Let's just say that to the best of my knowledge and belief, it isn't so. Does that answer your question?

AUDREY [*after a pause*]. Y-yes. And thank you.

DR. COLE. You're very welcome. [*Gets up.*] Well, it's been nice talking to you all. Come to see me some time? [*They look at each other uncertainly. TERMITE has risen.* DR. COLE *laughs.*] You'll get used to having me around. [*Goes U L. UNCLE CLYDE follows.*]

PETE [*starting U L*]. We're on our way out, too. [*To TERMITE.*] More stuff to carry in. [*He and TERMITE go out U L.*]

UNCLE CLYDE. Glad you stopped by, Doctor. [*Shakes hands with DR. COLE.*]

[MARLENE comes to the door R.]

MARLENE. Coffee's getting awful cold.

UNCLE CLYDE. Coming! [*Goes R.*]

DR. COLE. See you again. [*Goes out U L. UNCLE CLYDE goes*

out R. MARLENE goes upstage and walks past chest, eying it warily. Then, quickening her step, she goes upstairs. AUDREY has moved to chest, as does SUE.]

AUDREY [*looking at chest*]. That is a funny-looking chest.

[*At the same time, PETE and TERMITE come in U L, carrying a large suitcase and a smaller box. SUE and AUDREY go out R.*]

TERMITE. Where do we put these things?

PETE. Might as well take them upstairs to his room.

TERMITE. I hope this guy appreciates all we're doing for him

[*As PETE and TERMITE go upstairs, DR. COLE quietly comes U L and looks in. Seeing the room empty, he hurries in. From his manner he appears to be looking for something, or someone. He crosses to the French doors and opens them, looking out. Then he closes them again and goes quickly to the foot of the stairs, looking up. SUE comes in R, and PETE appears on the stairs.*]

SUE. Did someone——

PETE [*at same time*]. I thought I heard——

DR. COLE [*smoothly*]. I dropped my car keys in here. [*Takes his hand from his pocket, showing car keys.*] 'By, now.
[*Goes quickly out U L.*]

SUE. Car keys?

PETE. You saw them, didn't you?

SUE [*slowly, moving R C*]. M'm. Yes. [*PETE goes back upstairs. SUE is about to go out R when French doors bang a little. She glances toward them but they are still. She goes out R.*]

[*Now the French doors open and BATTY stands there.*]

BATTY [*in an other-world voice*]. Master! [*Comes a few steps into room.*] Master! Where are you?

[*MARLENE starts down the stairs with a pile of magazines on her arm. As she shifts them from one arm to the other, some*

of them drop at the foot of the stairs. Her attention is on these, not on the French doors.]

MARLENE. Oh, gumdrops! [*Stoops to pick them up. Sound of her voice has alarmed BATTY. She flits quickly behind chair R C, then stoops down. MARLENE picks up magazines and comes R C, where she pauses. BATTY pops up from behind chair, then flits behind sofa and stoops down. MARLENE, having caught just a sound, looks around quickly, but sees nobody. She crosses in front of sofa. BATTY flits quickly to stairs and goes up. MARLENE turns again, but too late. She crosses to door R.*]

[*SUE and AUDREY come in R just as MARLENE is about to go out.*]

MARLENE [*as door opens in her face*]. Eek! [*Steps back, dropping all the magazines this time.*]

SUE. I'm sorry. [*Helps pick up magazines, putting them on chair D R.*]

AUDREY. What's she so scared about?

MARLENE. Something was in here just now! I just *felt* it.

SUE [*teasingly*]. Minnie the Mad Monster, maybe?

MARLENE [*offended*]. Never mind. [*Takes a few steps toward chest, then stops and points to it.*] Does that have to stay in the living room?

SUE. Just for now. [*Goes closer to chest, looking down at it.*]

AUDREY [*joining SUE*]. Did you ever see a chest that was so—long?

MARLENE. I know why it's so long.

SUE. Marlene, please!

MARLENE. Steve Dracca, he calls himself. From Transylvania. How can all of you be so *blind*?

[*PETE and TERMITE appear on the stairs as she says this.*]

PETE. The second show's starting.

TERMITE. This is where I came in before. [*Laughs.*]

MARLENE [*raising her voice*]. Why do you think he wasn't on

the train? Why do you think he sent this coffin from his homeland?

SUE. Stop it!

MARLENE. He'll come at night, the way he did in the movie.

There was a sweet, innocent young girl, and he got her to fall in love with him. And then when she was sleeping, he came to her window—like a big, black cat—and his red eyes looked at her soft white throat——

AUDREY. Make her shut up!

PETE [*clowning, as a zombie, coming downstairs*]. Ah-ooo!
Ah-ooo!

MARLENE. I'm warning you. He'll come!

TERMITE [*following PETE*]. Ah-ooo! Ah-ooo!

[*But suddenly none of them are laughing. The French doors blow open, and from the terrace a mist comes swirling in until it fills the doorway. SUE and AUDREY freeze. PETE and TERMITE stop abruptly, at the foot of the stairs, staring. MARLENE puts her hand over her mouth. From out of the mist a figure comes forward. It is STEVE DRACCA, a dark-haired young fellow who wears a dark suit. His hands are extended a little to each side, and he looks toward them with a strange expression. The mist swirls through the doorway around him. Again the dog howls.*]

MARLENE [*hysterically, pointing to him*]. He's here! [*All action is suspended, as:*]

CURTAIN