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Family Plays

BLOODY JACK

A thriller based on the murders
of Jack the Ripper by
Tim Kelly



BLOODY JACK

Bloody Jack has the rare distinction of being a triple-crown winner in the playwriting sweepstakes. The play received the Colonial Players Original Script Contest award, the Forest A. Roberts Playwriting Award and the David Nederlander Playwriting Award. Prior to publication, it was presented (as *The Whitechapel Horror*) by a community theatre, the Colonial Players of Annapolis, Md., and by two colleges—Northern Michigan University at Marquette and Wayne State University in Detroit.

“It’s the best full-length I’ve worked on for years.”
(Kathy Mead, St. Cedd’s Players, Romford, England)

“A fine, literate thriller.” (Stage Review)

“The epitome of the well-made play.” (Contest judge commentary)

“Will be remembered as one of the season’s strong points.”
(Elwood Theatre Co., Australia)

“The play is excellent.” (After Hour Players, Minot AFB, N.D.)

Murder mystery. By Tim Kelly. Cast: 4m., 4w. Who was Jack the Ripper? For three months in 1888, death stalked the gloomy alleyways of a London slum. Seven women were brutally murdered; the bodies were horribly mutilated. The murderer was never caught or identified. The play offers theories. It takes place in the home of Dr. Thaddeus Sargeant. Each person who comes to visit him is a suspect. “In traditional mysteries,” Tim Kelly said, “the audience is supposed to guess *who*. In this play to get the *who*, you have to establish the *why*.” Carefully constructing his plot, Kelly throws suspicion on each character, with the final revelation coming as a surprise. *The action of this two-act play takes place in the parlor of Dr. Thaddeus Sargeant’s house in the Whitechapel district of London’s East End. The year is 1888. Costumes are the usual requirements of the Gaslight Era. Approximate running time: 120 minutes. Code: BJ5.*

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Bloody Jack

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A Thriller Based on the Murders of Jack the Ripper

in 2 Acts

by

TIM KELLY

Winner of the Nederlander Playwriting Award

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TIM KELLY

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(BLOODY JACK)

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ABOUT THE PLAY

Newspaper clipping: "London, Sept. 30, 1888—This morning the whole city was again startled by the news that two more murders had been added to the list of mysterious crimes that have recently been committed in Whitechapel . . . The two victims, as in the former cases, were dissolute women of the poorest class."

Who was Jack the Ripper? The world's fascination with that question has resulted in innumerable books and films offering possible answers. For three months—from August to November, 1888—death stalked the gloomy, gaslit alleyways of the slum-like Whitechapel district in London's East End. Seven women—all prostitutes—were brutally murdered within an area about one-quarter of a mile square. The bodies were horribly mutilated. One newspaper account went into gory detail: "The body of the unfortunate woman had been disemboweled, the throat cut and the nose severed. The heart and lungs had been thrown aside and the entrails were twisted into the gaping wound around the neck." The police received a letter—ostensibly from Bloody Jack himself—with the kidney of a victim enclosed.

London police worked furiously to catch the killer, even calling upon fortunetellers for help. The eyes of one of the victims were photographed in hope that the face of her murderer might be etched on the retinas.

The murders ended abruptly with the death of the last victim on Nov. 9, 1888. Why did they stop? No one knows. Jack the Ripper was never identified, and during the century that has passed, an unending list of suspects has been offered, and discussed, and discussed again. Names of doctors, abortionists, prostitutes, a well-known barrister, and even a member of Queen Victoria's family have been suggested, with supporting evidence. George Bernard Shaw advanced the theory that the murders were committed to draw attention to the evil condition of Whitechapel.

In this play Tim Kelly offers his theories. "In traditional mysteries," Kelly said, "the audience is supposed to guess 'who.' In BLOODY JACK, to get to the 'who,' you have to establish the 'why.'" Each of the characters in this play is a possibility as the murderer. Carefully constructing his plot, Kelly throws suspicion on them, one by one, with the final revelation coming as a surprise.

A GUESSING GAME FOR THE AUDIENCE

One of the producers capitalized on the mystery aspect of the play by letting audience members guess "who done it." On a table in the lobby were red-painted cans. On each can was the picture of one of the cast members identified by character name. The program contained a "ballot" which the audience member could sign and drop in the can of his choice during the intermission. The winner, drawn from the proper can, received a copy of the play autographed by all cast members.

BLOODY JACK

CHARACTERS (In Order of Appearance)

Morgan, Dr. Sargeant's orderly—sly, an ex-felon
Mrs. Hiller, the housekeeper; Morgan's sister
Inspector Flanders, of the London police, investigating the
Whitechapel murders
Dr. Sargeant, a physician
Ellen, his daughter
Stephen Barrows, an intern
Margaret Derry, a parlormaid
Lady Flora Chilton, a trustee of Dr. Sargeant's clinic
and
"Bloody Jack"

Characters in Optional Prologue

Woman Young Sailor

Synopsis

The action of the play takes place in the parlor of Doctor Thaddeus Sargeant's house in the Whitechapel district of London's East End. The year is 1888.

Act I

Scene 1: An October evening
Scene 2: Night, one week later
Scene 3: An afternoon of the following week

Act II

Scene 1: The next evening
Scene 2: A few days later; afternoon
Scene 3: That evening

Bloody Jack was first produced (as *The Ripper*) at the Forest Roberts Theatre, Northern Michigan University, Marquette, Michigan, under the artistic supervision of James Panowski, directed by James Rapport, with the following cast:

Morgan	Andrew Mellen
Mrs. Hiller	Elizabeth Nelson
Inspector Flanders	James Ball
Dr. Sargeant	Stephen B. Greer
Ellen	Gwen M. Gautsch
Stephen Barrows	Keith H. Aldred
Margaret Derry	Barb Legler
Lady Flora Chilton	Mary Gillis

The present version was first produced during the 1981 season by Wayne State University at the Hillberry Theatre in Detroit, under the direction of Robert McGill, with the cooperation of the Nederlander Producing Company of America.

'TRIPLE CROWN' WINNER

BLOODY JACK has the rare distinction of being a triple-crown winner in the playwriting sweepstakes. The play received the Colonial Players Original Script Contest award, the Forest A. Roberts Playwriting Award, and the \$5000 Nederlander Playwriting Award. Prior to publication it was presented (as *The Whitechapel Horror*) by a community theatre, the Colonial Players of Annapolis, Md., and by two colleges—Northern Michigan University at Marquette and Wayne State University in Detroit.

OPTIONAL PROLOGUE

The Hillberry Theatre, site of the Wayne State production, has a large stage which enabled the set to include not only the interior scene called for in the script, but also a section of a Whitechapel street. A special Prologue, written especially for this production, showed one of The Ripper's murders taking place in this street scene. The Prologue is included in this book as an option for those with the technical facilities—and the desire—to stage it.

Scotland Yard is still baffled by the Ripper murders. But audiences fortunate enough to see this play will be convinced that they know the identity of Bloody Jack.

Newspaper Reviews and Critical Comment

“Adroit construction . . . suspicion flickers from one to another like summer lightning . . . Kelly lets each of the characters take turns tantalizing us.”—*Detroit News*

“A fine, literate thriller . . . audience has the time of its life trying to guess the killer.”—*Stage Review*

“Bound to become a successful play. It has all the qualities to be a first-class mystery thriller.”—*Marquette Journal*

Comments from judges of the playwriting contests:

“An imaginative and suspenseful version . . . a mainstream play . . . keeps you guessing until the final curtain.”

“The epitome of the well-made play . . . a cliffhanger . . . will be a great deal of fun to watch and to play.”

“It is a first-rate audience show and should become one of the most popular new mystery-thrillers.”

PRODUCTION NOTES

Properties

Set & Trim Props: Fireplace with diplomas, degrees, academic honors hanging on the wall above (or standing in frames on the mantel). Pipes and tobacco jar on mantel. Desk and desk chair, occasional chair. Usual props on desk—papers, pens, some books, box for cigars. Table with medical books and jars. Skeleton on standing hook (a skull on the table can be substituted for full skeleton). Bookcase with books. Bell cord for servants. Small table with decanter of brandy, glasses. Souvenirs of Dr. Sargeant's army career—small shield, some daggers and scabbards, etc. (may be displayed on the table or hanging on wall above it). Window with drapes on either side. Sofa, table. To these basic stage properties should be added logical stage dressing that emphasizes the overstuffed Victorian era—rugs, wall pictures, sconces, more small tables and chairs, etc. (See floor plan, page 56.)

Hand Props:

ACT I, Scene 1 — Kerosene lamp (Mrs. Hiller); pocketwatch (Dr. Sargeant); notebook (Inspector Flanders); tea tray with tea things (Mrs. Hiller); Gladstone or medical bag (Stephen)

Scene 2 — Ledgers (Ellen); newspaper clipping and reading glasses (Mrs. Hiller); medical bag (Dr. Sargeant); small sofa pillow (Mrs. Hiller)

Scene 3 — Flowers in a vase (Margaret); clipboard (Ellen); silverware (Mrs. Hiller); autopsy papers (Inspector Flanders); notes (Dr. Sargeant); tea table and cover cloth (Margaret); pocketknife (Morgan); tea tray and tea things (Mrs. Hiller)

ACT II, Scene 1 — Dustcloth (Margaret); medical bag (Stephen); umbrella (Lady Chilton)

Scene 2 — Handkerchief (Ellen); medical bag with small bottle of fluid, scalpel (Dr. Sargeant); newspaper clippings (Morgan)

Scene 3 — Medical bag (Stephen); carpetbag (Mrs. Hiller); small bottle of fluid (Dr. Sargeant); revolver (Stephen)

Costumes

The usual requirements of the "Gaslight" era. The following costumes are listed specifically because, in some way, they serve a plot function:

ACT I — Soiled white jacket (Morgan); topcoat and hat (Flanders); topcoat, silk hat (Stephen); shabby jacket and cap (Morgan); medical smock (Ellen); white jacket (Dr. Sargeant)

ACT II — Strikingly beautiful gown (Lady Chilton); topcoat, hat, male trousers, medical bag, black leather gloves (Ellen); shawl (Margaret); coat and hat (Stephen); travel clothes (Mrs. Hiller)

Sound Effects

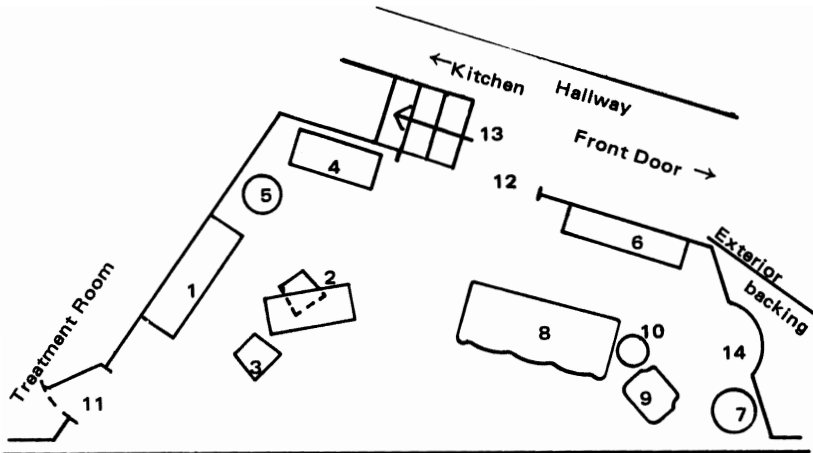
Doors opening and closing; carriage passing in the street; doorbell; police whistles; violin music; music of barrel organ or song of a street singer; rain; thunder

Suggestions

"Atmosphere," of course, becomes a character in any stage thriller. Keeping this in mind, the technicians should pay special attention to the lighting—never too bright except for the one scene that calls for sunlight streaming through the window. The glow from the outside street lamp, the fog at the window, shadows,

music from the barrel organ—all add suspense to the mounting terror. Be careful about having any light in the theatre auditorium itself. The audience should literally "be in the dark," its focus of attention riveted to the one source of light—the parlor of Dr. Sargeant's Whitechapel home.

The Set



Scale: 1/8"=1'

- | | |
|-------------------------|---------------------------|
| 1—Fireplace | 8—Sofa |
| 2—Desk and chair | 9—Chair |
| 3—Chair | 10—Table |
| 4—Table or corner shelf | 11—Door to Treatment Room |
| 5—Skeleton on stand | 12—Archway |
| 6—Bookcase | 13—Stairs or step unit |
| 7—Table | 14—Window |

Add additional tables, chairs, drapes, and trim props as desired.

About The Ripper

The killer known as "Jack the Ripper," from all accounts, began his crimes in August of 1888. A few months later, November, he murdered his last victim. The case, one of the most famous in crime annals, has never been solved.

BLOODY JACK

By Tim Kelly

OPTIONAL PROLOGUE

[A section of the stage represents an alleyway. A street lamp is positioned by the entrance, its gaslight casting a creepy glow into the swirling fog. From nearby comes the SOUND of a BARREL ORGAN or the SONG of a STREET SINGER. A WOMAN comes from the fog. She is not young; she is tired, dressed in shabby garb and heavily rouged. She takes up her watch at the street lamp. A YOUNG SEAMAN saunters by, a seabag over his shoulder. The WOMAN stifles, smiles]

WOMAN. 'Allo, luv. Want to come with me? Have a bit of fun?

YOUNG SEAMAN. With you? I'd sooner go with something that walked out of the cheese. Go home, granny. You need your rest. *[He laughs, disappears into the fog. The WOMAN is furious]*

WOMAN. Go to hell, you nasty little bloke! I hope you drown next time you ship out! *[A step after him]* You hear me? I hope you drown! *[The laughter of the YOUNG SEAMAN fades in the distance. The WOMAN fusses with her ratty feather boa, a pathetic attempt to make herself attractive]* I'd only be wasting myself on the likes of him. *[At first she doesn't notice the FIGURE that comes from the shadows like an evil spectre. Because of the fog and the general dimness we can barely make the figure out. It wears an Inverness coat, a hat that conceals most of the face, and carries a Gladstone bag. The FIGURE doesn't move. The WOMAN suddenly notices, suppresses a gasp]* Oh! *[Recovers]* Gave me quite a start you did, sir. Didn't see you there in the fog. *[Steps toward him]* You're a gentleman, I can tell. Don't get many down here in Whitechapel. I'm a great favorite with gentlemen. You come along with me, luv. We'll have us a good time. *[Instead of moving toward her, the FIGURE steps back into the alley, waving her to follow]* Down there, sir? In the alley? *[Shrugs]* If you say so, luv. *[She follows the figure into the gloom. The MUSIC ends. We can catch only a glimpse of the duo. They've stopped. He moves in front of her, opens the bag, and removes some object]* What's that you got? Here, now. Why are you looking at me so funny? *[Her voice betrays her alarm]* What are you going to do? Not going to do me any harm, are you? *[The FIGURE raises its fist. The object it holds is a knife or something very deadly and sharp]* No . . . please, sir, no! *[Down comes the knife . . . and up . . . and down . . . again and again. The WOMAN falls to the cobbles]*

stones, terrible screams of agony piercing the night] Murder! Murder! M . . . u . . . r . . . d . . . e . . . r . . . [The FIGURE drops to one knee, a final swift cut and the FIGURE stands, runs off into the fog. From some adjacent street or bypath we hear the TWEET/TWEET/TWEET of a constable's POLICE WHISTLE. The LIGHTS fade]

END OF PROLOGUE

BLOODY JACK

By Tim Kelly

ACT I

Scene 1

[SETTING: The parlor of what was once a handsome house in the Whitechapel section of London's East End. Over the years the house, along with the rest of the neighborhood, has fallen on shabby times. During its declining years the house has passed from one owner to another with little thought to preserving any of the structure's original elegance. The present owner is Dr. Thaddeus Sargeant, a man of considerable reputation. The parlor under his occupancy has a divided function. It serves as a combination study and consulting chamber. Down Right is a door that leads into Dr. Sargeant's Treatment Room and laboratory. At Right is a rather handsome fireplace and above, on the wall, are diplomas, citations, degrees, academic honors—all attesting to Dr. Sargeant's skill as a physician and research scientist. In front of the fireplace, Right Center, is his desk and chair, with another chair in front of the desk. At Up Center is an archway with a hallway beyond, showing stairs that lead to the upper floors. The entrance into other parts of the house, the unseen kitchen, dining room, etc., is through the hallway toward Stage Right. The door into the hallway from the outside street is off Stage Left. In the parlor, right of the archway, is a table with medical books, assorted jars containing nasty-looking fluids, medical furnishings. Right of the table is a skeleton on a standing hook.

The drawing-room aspects can be found at Stage Left. There's a bookcase set into the wall left of the archway, a bell-cord to the right of bookcase. A small table is placed against the wall Down Left, with decanter and glasses. On the wall above this table (or displayed on the table) are a few souvenirs picked up during Dr. Sargeant's stint as an army doctor. Daggers and scabbards, a small shield, various weapons, that sort of thing. At Stage Left is a window, almost on street level. Drapes on either side.

To these basic stage properties should be added logical stage dressing that suggests the Victorian era—rugs, wall pictures, sconces, occasional chairs, et al. The room is neat and orderly enough, but it has a museum quality about it—a room that time has passed by. Still, considering the run-down condition of most houses in Whitechapel, Dr. Sargeant's home is highly respectable and comfortable, as well. It is October, 1888.

AT RISE: The hallway is in dim light. We hear a CARRIAGE pass in the street. The night is foggy. Only an occasional dull glow from some street lamp can be seen through the window. MORGAN enters Down Right from the Treatment Room. He wears a soiled white jacket. Morgan is a sly fellow, not the sort to inspire confidence. He talks, over his shoulder, to DR. SARGEANT, who remains inside the Treatment Room]

MORGAN. I'll find me sister in no time, Doctor, and she'll put the kettle to the boil.

DR. SARGEANT. *[Offstage]* Thank you, Morgan.

MORGAN. *[Closes the door and starts across the room for the archway. Halfway there, he stops, looks back at the door. A crafty grin crosses his face as he envisions something pleasing. Guardedly, he crosses Down Left, takes the top from the decanter and puts the vessel to his lips, sips]* Tasty. *[He puts down the decanter, replaces the top. He takes a step from the table, stops. He rubs his chin, his eyes return to the decanter, then dart to the door of the Treatment Room. He decides to risk another go. Repeats business. As he drinks, his sister, MRS. HILLER, the housekeeper, enters Up Right carrying a freshly cleaned kerosene lamp. When she sees her brother, she stops in the archway, horrified]*

MRS. HILLER. *[Whispers]* Morgan, have you gone daft?

MORGAN. *[Swallows hard, returns the decanter to the table, replacing top]* Nothin' to go scoldin' about.

MRS. HILLER. *[Moves to the table behind sofa, puts down lamp]* If he should catch you.

MORGAN. He won't. *[They speak like conspirators in the dark, glancing at the door, afraid Dr. Sargeant will interrupt them]*

MRS. HILLER. You can't afford to lose this job, remember that.

MORGAN. I ain't goin' to lose it.

MRS. HILLER. Sure of yourself, ain't you, Morgan.

MORGAN. Little sip I took, that's all. Why the fuss?

MRS. HILLER. You know what happens when you drink.

MORGAN. *[Defensive]* I didn't drink. I sipped.

MRS. HILLER. There's not much difference where you're concerned. *[Sound of DOORBELL]*

MORGAN. You want me to get that?

MRS. HILLER. You'd better get back to the doctor. You have no business in here.

MORGAN. He wants some tea.

MRS. HILLER. All right. Go along.

MORGAN. *[Crosses back to the door, turns]* I don't know about his

tea, but his brandy's the best. [*He enters Treatment Room. MRS. HILLER stares after him, shaking her head. DOORBELL again. The sound takes MRS. HILLER from her thoughts and she moves upstage*]

MRS. HILLER. Coming, coming. [*She enters hallway, turns toward Stage Left. A moment passes. Sound of front DOOR being opened. The voices of MRS. HILLER and FLANDERS are heard offstage*] Oh, it's you, Inspector Flanders.

FLANDERS. Is Dr. Sargeant at home?

MRS. HILLER. He is, sir.

FLANDERS. I wonder if I might see him.

MRS. HILLER. I expect he can spare a few moments. He's very busy, you know. Like always.

FLANDERS. I won't stay long. [*Sound of offstage DOOR being closed. They continue to speak offstage*]

MRS. HILLER. Follow me, Inspector. [*A moment passes and MRS. HILLER, followed by INSPECTOR FLANDERS of the City Police, enters. She moves in front of the desk. FLANDERS stands in the archway*] I was about to fetch the Doctor some tea.

FLANDERS. I'll be as brief as possible. [*FLANDERS is a middle-aged man, pleasant enough for a policeman. He wears a topcoat, holds his hat in his hand*]

MRS. HILLER. Surely, you'll be able to chat a bit with me? In the kitchen? I need your advice about some small investments. [*She fusses at her hair in a vampish gesture that's not too successful. It's quite clear that she fancies the Inspector*]

FLANDERS. I don't know much about the investment world, Mrs. Hiller. Few policemen do.

MRS. HILLER. In that case we'll just have tea and talk. I've got some of those biscuits you're so fond of. Bought special.

FLANDERS. I do enjoy coming to your kitchen, but sometimes I'm afraid I intrude.

MRS. HILLER. Nonsense. Being a widower is a lonely occupation, Inspector Flanders. It's good that we become friends. Two lonely souls as it were.

FLANDERS. I don't wish to appear rude, but my business is rather urgent.

MRS. HILLER. [*Frowns*] There hasn't been another one, has there?

FLANDERS. Another what? [*He steps into the room*]

MRS. HILLER. [*Uncomfortable*] You know—another one of them—[*as if the words tasted bad in her mouth*] Ripper things.

FLANDERS. Things?

MRS. HILLER. Murders. [*Moves toward bookcase*]

FLANDERS. I am happy to say—no.

MRS. HILLER. That's a relief. Imagine someone going about in the night doing the kind of things he does. [*She relishes the sensationalism of the murders more than she cares to admit*]

FLANDERS. Since the journalists call the killer "Jack," we must assume our friend is male, is that it?

MRS. HILLER. He's no friend of mine. [*Puzzled*] They wouldn't call him "Jack" if he wasn't a man, now would they? Besides, murdering like he does—no woman could do such a thing.

FLANDERS. You must come and visit the Black Museum down at the Yard sometime. I'll show you what some women are capable of.

MRS. HILLER. Eh?

FLANDERS. Jessica Willow, for example. They called her the "Wind-sor Vampire." Her murder weapon was unusually sharp teeth. Filed to a razor point.

MRS. HILLER. [*Worried*] You don't have her teeth in a jar, or something 'orrible like that?

FLANDERS. You must have read about "The Dark Angel of Mercy"—Sybil Fisher. Over a period of ten years not a single patient survived.

MRS. HILLER. Lord bless us!

FLANDERS. Old Mother Conforth? Murdered her six grandchildren for the insurance money. Grisly mementos, all attesting to the capabilities of the female mind, are yours for the viewing, Mrs. Hiller. I'll be your personal guide to the Black Museum.

MRS. HILLER. Wouldn't you rather take me for a walk some Sunday? [*Shudders*] Wouldn't catch me in a place like that. I'm no heathen. "Female" mind? Criminal mind, you mean.

FLANDERS. You did say Dr. Sargeant was at home?

MRS. HILLER. [*She has no intention of dropping the grisly subject. She moves Center*] I won't step outside the door at night. Streets of Whitechapel ain't safe. Woman steps outside the door, next thing she knows, she's a victim. Name splashed all over the papers. I tell you it ain't Christian.

FLANDERS. My time is limited, Mrs. Hiller.

MRS. HILLER. I bet you're here about Margaret. Imagine floating belly up in the Thames. I'd say it was disgusting if it wasn't so tragic. Never cared for the girl myself. Uppity. Never put a dustcloth to a piece of furniture.

FLANDERS. [*His patience is exhausted*] Will you please inform Dr. Sargeant I'm waiting.

MRS. HILLER. [*Offended*] No need to woof at me. [*She gives him a cold shrug, crosses to door, knocks*] Dr. Sargeant, sir. It's Inspector Flanders. From the City Police. [*Knocks again*] Dr. Sargeant?

DR. SARGEANT. *[Offstage]* All right, Mrs. Hiller. One moment. *[MRS. HILLER crosses upstage. FLANDERS takes a volume from some bookshelf]*

MRS. HILLER. I'd like to know what the police are going to do about these terrible murders. That's what I'd like to know.

FLANDERS. *[Flips a page]* You echo the sentiments of all London.

MRS. HILLER. I do? *[Pleased]* Fancy that.

[She enters hallway, exits Stage Right. Sound of another CARRIAGE passing. FLANDERS steps to the window and looks out. DR. SARGEANT enters, putting on a coat over his shirtsleeves and vest. He is a distinguished man with a wry sense of humor and a certain lightness about his manner. Steps behind desk. Between Sargeant and Flanders there's a warm camaraderie]

DR. SARGEANT. What brings you out at this hour, Inspector? He hasn't struck again?

FLANDERS. You sound like your housekeeper. It's in the fog of Whitechapel. It's all people can think about. Jack the Ripper. The newspaper hound that tagged our killer with that name will have a lot to answer for.

DR. SARGEANT. I wouldn't hold the papers responsible, Inspector Flanders. After all, the crimes have been particularly grisly. The public is bound to be fascinated by the uncommon. *[Holds out cigar box]* Cigar?

FLANDERS. No, thank you. *[Returns book]* With tobacco I don't do anything but cough.

DR. SARGEANT. Can't be too careful. *[He sits]*

FLANDERS. I'm well aware that you protect me, Dr. Sargeant. It's kind of you and I'm grateful.

DR. SARGEANT. I'm sure I don't know what you mean.

FLANDERS. If my superiors knew the true condition of my health I would be given early retirement.

DR. SARGEANT. You object to that?

FLANDERS. *[Flashes anger]* I want to find this killer! If I could I would punish him myself. With my own hands. Gladly!

DR. SARGEANT. I'm not altogether certain it's wise for you to continue on a case as "provocative" as this one. Standing in all kinds of weather, sleeping poorly. The constant tension. You're killing yourself.

FLANDERS. If I must leave the force I want to go with a feather in my cap. I'm low man on this investigation. But I know the streets. My superiors don't think much of my ideas. *[Scoffs]* Most of my "superiors" are politicians. What do they know of back alleys and dark deeds?

DR. SARGEANT. Much—if we're to believe the editorials in the "Times."

FLANDERS. [*Laughs. The intensity mellows*] Right you are. But back to the condition of my health, my annual physical report was due weeks ago.

DR. SARGEANT. Yes. Routine procedure.

FLANDERS. I have no wish to put you in an awkward position, but if you could—I don't wish to say "falsify" the report—

DR. SARGEANT. I could never do that, Inspector.

FLANDERS. No, of course. I had no right to ask. Desperation is my only excuse.

DR. SARGEANT. I could, perhaps—that is—

FLANDERS. [*Eager*] Yes?

DR. SARGEANT. Continue to delay the report. I don't know for how much longer—

FLANDERS. Just long enough for me to trap my quarry.

DR. SARGEANT. I'll do what I can. [*FLANDERS is relieved, relaxes*]

FLANDERS. A fine library you have here. Really don't understand why you remain in Whitechapel.

DR. SARGEANT. You're a snob, Inspector.

FLANDERS. It's the worst area in all of London.

DR. SARGEANT. I can recite the litany of misery as well as you. Overcrowding, poverty, ignorance, disease. What would you have me do? Move far away from my clinic and hospital, treat society ladies? I'm far too restless for that.

FLANDERS. Surely, your daughter would prefer more genteel surroundings?

DR. SARGEANT. There's nothing frivolous about Ellen.

FLANDERS. I'd hate to think of Whitechapel without you. It would be hell, indeed.

DR. SARGEANT. Sit down, Inspector. You haven't come here to discuss the social ills of East London.

FLANDERS. [*Sits in front of desk*] Indirectly, perhaps I have.

DR. SARGEANT. It is about Jack.

FLANDERS. We're going back over every detail, anyone or anything that might possibly connect to the murders.

DR. SARGEANT. I take it you're referring to Margaret Dutton.

FLANDERS. As Mrs. Hiller put it—"belly up in the Thames."

DR. SARGEANT. You can't blame every unsolved crime in London on this lunatic killer.

FLANDERS. With luck, a few unsolved murders might be laid to his hand. The murders of unattached females.

DR. SARGEANT. I think you're approaching it from the wrong angle.

FLANDERS. Why do you say that?

DR. SARGEANT. Apart from my other duties, I'm the police pathologist in Whitechapel. I performed the autopsies on the murders attributed to Bloody Jack.

FLANDERS. That doesn't mean he couldn't be the killer of Margaret Dutton and many others.

DR. SARGEANT. Her death was weeks before the first Ripper killing.

FLANDERS. [*Disappointed*] Frankly, I don't know where to turn. [*DR. SARGEANT stands, moves to skeleton*]

DR. SARGEANT. In any case, let us hope we see no more signatures of Jack.

FLANDERS. Signatures?

DR. SARGEANT. He signs his evil work as uniquely as you and I would sign a letter.

FLANDERS. [*Indignant*] Hardly.

DR. SARGEANT. Like a grim poet. His pen is a cruel, sharp weapon.

FLANDERS. We've been over that enough, all of us at the Yard. A butcher's cleaver, a tough's stiletto, a surgeon's scalpel—

DR. SARGEANT. [*Touch of sarcasm*]—Ah, yes, mustn't forget that. No telling what these doctor fellows are up to. Jack does have knowledge of anatomy.

FLANDERS. Slaughterhouse anatomy. The intent was not to kill but to mutilate. The women weren't merely stabbed, they were disemboweled. Left on the bloody cobblestones like dead haddocks.

DR. SARGEANT. You only prove my point. Margaret Dutton's death was quite different. Strangled and tossed in a river. My guess would be a jealous lover. If Jack strikes again, he will finish off his victim as he did the others. His method of murder is his identity. The basics don't change. A killer with a strong arm—and from the angle of the cuts undoubtedly left-handed. [*FLANDERS takes out a notebook, turns back the cover, holds up a page to Dr. Sargeant*] What have you there?

FLANDERS. The names of nine women murdered in this area in the last year. Killer or killers unknown. Not one of these murders, as far as I can determine, has any connection with Jack. It was a vain hope, I'm afraid.

DR. SARGEANT. In Margaret's case, at any rate. [*FLANDERS pencils out her name*]

FLANDERS. I have one more call to make this evening and then I can put down the night's work as a complete fiasco.

DR. SARGEANT. You're too hard on yourself.

FLANDERS. Not hard enough. *[Sighs]* Forgive me, Dr. Sargeant, I'm tired.

DR. SARGEANT. You take things far too seriously. Remember, we all meet the same fate. Yorick.

FLANDERS. Yorick?

DR. SARGEANT. *[Indicates skeleton]* This is Yorick.

FLANDERS. *[Startled]* You give a name to that string of bones?

DR. SARGEANT. It had a name when it was alive. Why not one when it's dead?

FLANDERS. At least it died natural. With our killer's victims it's murder most horrible.

DR. SARGEANT. "Murder most foul" is the way the Bard phrased it.

FLANDERS. *[Stands]* Who, Doctor?

DR. SARGEANT. Shakespeare.

FLANDERS. Oh, him. Clever chap. I'll find my way out. *[Steps into archway]*

DR. SARGEANT. What was the book you were holding when I came in?

FLANDERS. A book of Greek battles.

DR. SARGEANT. It's a recent translation from the German.

FLANDERS. Hobby of mine. Studying about ancient times and battles. The heroes, even the old gods. In those days a man could make his mark on history. Not easy to leave your mark these days, is it? Lost in the mob, that's most of us. Little more than gray specks. Alexander, Caesar—we don't forget them.

DR. SARGEANT. We don't forget Attila, either. Or Torquemada. De Sade. But I'd hardly call their contributions "admirable."

FLANDERS. It's the ancients I'm interested in. I don't know much about them other gentlemen.

DR. SARGEANT. In that case—*[Crosses to bookcase]* Just the thing to get your mind as far away from Whitechapel as possible. My advice is to hop into bed and read it. *[He takes the book down]*

FLANDERS. That's most kind of you, Doctor. I don't want to impose.

DR. SARGEANT. Nonsense. Books are meant to be read, not decorate parlor shelves. *[He hands the book to FLANDERS, who is obviously delighted]*

FLANDERS. I do thank you. I'll be on my way now.

DR. SARGEANT. I am concerned about your lungs. I would like a listen.

FLANDERS. Perhaps you'll have time tomorrow at the clinic?

DR. SARGEANT. Drop in about midday.

FLANDERS. I'll do that. Good night, Dr. Sargeant.

DR. SARGEANT. Good night, Inspector.

[FLANDERS exits Stage Left. In a moment, sound of front DOOR opening and closing. DR. SARGEANT moves to the window, looks out. MRS. HILLER appears Up Center]

MRS. HILLER. Was that the Inspector leaving?

DR. SARGEANT. Yes.

MRS. HILLER. Thought he might like a cup of tea. It's almost ready.

DR. SARGEANT. He couldn't stay. Had another call to make.

MRS. HILLER. I don't envy him.

DR. SARGEANT. His task is not easy.

MRS. HILLER. I'll get the tea.

DR. SARGEANT. I'll have it at my desk in here, Mrs. Hiller.

MRS. HILLER. Wherever you like, Doctor. Don't see what you can capture out that window. Fog's thicker than the drapes.

DR. SARGEANT. Did my daughter say what time she'd be returning from the theatre?

MRS. HILLER. Suppose she and her friends will have a bite of supper after the performance. She's never late. You're not worried about her, are you? Not Miss Ellen? She's braver than most men. *[She exits Stage Right. DR. SARGEANT checks his pocketwatch. He notices the decanter has been moved. He steps to the table, pushes the decanter into proper position, studies it. He holds it up, checking the level. MORGAN, no longer wearing his white jacket, enters Down Right, cap in hand]*

MORGAN. I washed all them glass tubes, Doctor, and the floor's mopped down and the table scrubbed good.

DR. SARGEANT. Morgan, you wouldn't know who's been drinking my brandy?

MORGAN. Wasn't me.

DR. SARGEANT. You're always stealing something or other.

MORGAN. I ain't no thief.

DR. SARGEANT. Of course, you're a thief. A petty thief. A pen from my desk, a swallow from this decanter, a few shillings from your sister. Who knows what else?

MORGAN. *[Pouts]* I hadn't ought to be talked to like that.

DR. SARGEANT. You're like a dog that's a nuisance in the house.

MORGAN. You said I was the best orderly you ever had.

DR. SARGEANT. So you are—whenever you don't have to think about what you're doing.

MORGAN. *[Sullen]* Anything else?

DR. SARGEANT. I will thank you to remember that you're here in

this house at the request of your sister. You're a ticket-of-leave man, Morgan. On parole. I don't want any problems with you.

MORGAN. *[Like a petulant child]* I didn't sip much.

DR. SARGEANT. *[Puts down decanter]* That's hardly the point.

MORGAN. I can go?

DR. SARGEANT. Yes, go. *[MORGAN moves upstage]* One thing. *[MORGAN stops, turns]* Inspector Flanders was here asking questions about Margaret Dutton.

MORGAN. *[Concerned]* What did you tell him?

DR. SARGEANT. I didn't tell him that you knew Margaret, which is obviously what concerns you.

MORGAN. Thank you, Dr. Sargeant. I do appreciate that.

DR. SARGEANT. *[Coldly]* I want no trouble from you.

MORGAN. That's exactly what you'll get from me, sir. No trouble. *[Slavishly]* I'm grateful for all you done.

DR. SARGEANT. You're a hypocrite, Morgan.

MORGAN. If you say so, sir.

DR. SARGEANT. Where are you off to?

MORGAN. Thought I'd take a walk about.

DR. SARGEANT. To the nearest gin bar. Mind you. I want a clear head in the morning.

MORGAN. *[Backing off, twisting his cap]* Yes, sir. Whatever pleases you, Dr. Sargeant. I'm grateful. I swear it. *[He exits Left]*

DR. SARGEANT. *[Lightly]* Faith in humanity is a burden. *[Sound of front DOOR opening and closing as Morgan leaves the house]* Maybe the glass tubes are clean. Maybe they're not. *[He crosses to his Treatment Room, enters. Pause. Shadow of a MAN approaching the house passes the window, caught momentarily in the glow from the street lamp. Voice of MRS. HILLER offstage from hallway]*

MRS. HILLER. I put a buttered muffin on the tray, Doctor. You didn't eat much at dinner. *[She enters, looks around, realizes she's alone]* Talking to myself, that's what I'm doing. *[She crosses to desk and puts down the tray]* Is it any wonder with what's going on hereabouts. Visit the Black Museum? What a suggestion. *[Her musing is cut short by the shrill sound of police WHISTLES from outside. She tenses]* Whistles? Police whistles. *[Again, the shrill WHISTLES, followed this time by the sound of the front DOOR opening and slamming shut. MRS. HILLER is petrified]* Miss Ellen? Miss Ellen, is that you, dear? *[Pause. A MAN appears in the hallway, half hidden in the gaslight dimness. He wears an Inverness coat, a hat, and carries a Gladstone or medical bag. Appearing as he does, unannounced after the police whistles, terrifies MRS. HILLER]* Who . . . who . . . who are you?