

I ONLY HAVE FANGS FOR YOU

A COMEDY-MELODRAMA IN TWO ACTS

By Craig Sodaro

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Heuer Publishing LLC, Cedar Rapids, Iowa

ISBN: 978-1-61588-078-2

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PUBLISHED BY

HEUER PUBLISHING LLC

**P.O. BOX 248 • CEDAR RAPIDS, IOWA 52406
TOLL FREE (800) 950-7529 • FAX (319) 368-8011**

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CAST OF CHARACTERS

(3 MEN, 3 WOMEN, EXTRAS)

GRETA BELLENECK (f) A winsome heroine. (205 lines)

AUNT CHATTERBIT (f) Her chaperone and confidant. (143 lines)

COUNT FRITZ FANGFUL (m) A villainous vampire. (195 lines)

IGOR (m) His faithful assistant. (107 lines)

ABLE ABE (m) The heroic plumber. (80 lines)

LOTTA PAYNE (f) A mysterious visitor. (62 lines)

LOTUS SHMORGUS (f) Another campus sharpie. (Non-Speaking)

Note: There is plenty of room in Rattrap Manor for extras as ghouls, ghosts, hotel guests or even old bats may be added to this cast of 3 men and 3 women.

STAGE SET

The play takes place in the main hall of Rattrap Manor, a crumbling old castle built by an eccentric on the banks of the Mississippi. The room is dominated by a large French window up left reached by ascending a stairway to a low balcony. A large fireplace, up center, is crowned with a portrait of Dracula or any drab sketch of a tombstone or cemetery will do. An old couch is down right towards center and a hope chest is along the right wall. Above the hope chest is a shield surrounded by swords should be imitations and not made of dangerous material. This completes the necessary furnishings. Worn chairs, torn curtains, cobwebs, torches, a suit of armor all lend those nice spooky touches the story conjures up!

SPECIAL EFFECTS

Rabbit

Tie fishing line to rabbit and place downstage. Run line across downstage. On cue, pull line and the rabbit will move across the stage. It will, of course, look silly, which is the point. Place rabbit and run line after ACT TWO, SCENE 1. Warn actors to avoid downstage during the first part of ACT TWO, SCENE 2, so as not to entangle themselves in the fishing line.

Bat

Tie fishing line across stage, with one side secured higher than the other. Hook bat to fishing line by means of rings sewn onto the bat's back. The bat should slide easily if the angle is high enough. If a high angle cannot be achieved, tie an additional length of fishing line to the bat and pull across.

Hope Chest

Build the hope chest against the right wall in which there is already a hole prepared—the same length and height as the hope chest. In a way, the chest is only three sided. If the interior wall of the hope chest can be seen by the audience at any time, simply use a piece of black fabric to disguise the exit. Design the chest so that there are three holes in the top so that Greta can plunge the swords into it. Be sure the holes are disguised by an elaborate painted pattern on the top.

COSTUMES

Traditional turn-of-the-century costumes for all actors. Even though there are modern references in the play, it will work best if the actors use a stylized approach, including their clothing.

ACT ONE, SCENE 1

Lightening flashes through the open French window of the room. The ragged, dusty curtains fly in the wind as thunder rumbles far off. A bat flies across the stage, its wings are heard flapping against the wind. Perhaps, we hear organ music trembling with fear.

A moment later, voices from off right.

AUNT: *(Off right, nervously.)* Don't make me go in there, Greta! This place is sending shivers up my spine!

GRETA: *(Off right, cheerfully.)* Why, Aunt Chatterbit, that's just the li'l ole spider crawling up your back.

A scream. From right Aunt Chatterbit races in, dropping all of the suitcases with a thud, twisting and turning, trying to get rid of the spider. Greta Belleneck enters gracefully behind.

AUNT: Is it off? Is it off, child?

GRETA: Yes, he's gone on his merry little way.

AUNT: *(Catching her breath.)* Why I ever said I'd come along with you here to this...this...spook house, I'll never know!

GRETA: But this house, this wonderful old mansion, is my only legacy from my dear Great Uncle Pierpont Belleneck III.

AUNT: Child, he was weird as a three dollar bill, what with makin' a fortune in pork bellies then turnin' into a hermit way up here overlookin' the mighty Mississippi.

GRETA: Do you think its true he never married and saw no one during the forty-five years he lived in this— *(Looking around, taking a deep breath with a large smile on her face.)* marvelous mansion?

AUNT: That's what I heard, he saw no one but his valet Val.

GRETA: His valet Val?

AUNT: Faithful to your Great Uncle as an old coon dog. Died the day after your uncle did...of a broken heart.

GRETA: Boo-hoo, bow-wow.

A loud crash of thunder is heard as lightening strikes through the window.

AUNT: *(Frightened.)* And now that we've seen this hole in the ground that you call a marvelous mansion, let's high tail it back to town where we can find a decent, comfortable bed, warm fire and lock on our doors!

GRETA: *(Walking around the room.)* But Aunt Chatterbit, I find this place terribly charming.

We hear eerie spook sounds and humming noises from offstage and the sound of wind banging outside.

AUNT: Terrible's the word for it, child. Now, come to your senses!

GRETA: Now, now, Auntie...underneath its rough exterior, I see something unusual, beautiful...AND PROFITABLE. *(Trying to strike Aunt Chatterbit's "money" bone.)*

AUNT: Child, you're comin' down with the grip!

She dusts a seat for Greta, white powder flies everywhere.

GRETA: Don't you sense destiny in the air?

AUNT: Destiny? That's your allergies reactin' to all the creepy crawlin' things laying around here.

GRETA: Oh, Auntie...I never thought I would be able to put to use what I learned at Miss Grace's School of Divinity and Interior Design, but now I see my chance! I see all kinds of possibilities here! Don't you?!

AUNT: *(Quickly responding.)* Huntings...arson...MURDER! Yes, I see all sorts of possibilities here, Greta!

GRETA: No, no, no! I see a hotel, a grand hotel, where people from all over the country come to rest their weary bones!

AUNT: Yeah...FOREVER!

GRETA: Why, this will be the lobby. The rooms will be upstairs...and there will be a dining room and...and...*(She races up to the window and looks down.)* AHHHHHHhhhhh! *(Weakly backing away from the window)* I never realized the Mississippi was so far down there!

AUNT: *(Helping Greta down.)* Come away from that window 'fore you tumble out head first and end up a splatt on the river bank.

GRETA: Oh, Aunt Chatterbit, this house is a dream come true!

There is a clap of thunder, as lightening flashes through the window.

AUNT: It's a nightmare, child, and we're headin' back to Devil Junction right this minute!

GRETA: I can't leave, Auntie.

AUNT: I always knew you were a stubborn child, but this is ridiculous. You know what your poor ma and pa would say to all this?!

GRETA: Oh, poor Ma! Poor Pa! If only they'd seen that out-of-control wagon comin' down the village street! If only they hadn't stopped to pick up Pa's tie!

AUNT: No use cryin' over spilt silk.

A low, wicked laugh far off.

GRETA: Why, listen, Auntie!

AUNT: Told you...the place is HAUNTED!

GRETA: That's silly! Probably just some leaky pipes.

AUNT: I think YOU have a leaky pipe or two!

GRETA: You're so silly, Auntie! Come! Let's go explore my newfound fortune.

AUNT: Greta, you ain't earnest!

GRETA: Of course I'm not Earnest. I'm Greta, soon to be proprietess of River Bend Resort...the finest hotel west of the Mississippi.

AUNT: Greta, we're on the EAST side of the river.

GRETA: We'll cross that bridge when we come to it. Let's start over here!

Greta exits down right.

AUNT: *(Aside.)* I do believe the child's brain cells are misfiring at a terrible rate. But what can I do?

Aunt exits down right. A moment later, a brief blackout as thunder sounds. When lights come up, Fritz Fangful stands in the window.

FRITZ: Ah! Home, sweet home! No place like it, eh Igor? Igor? *(He looks around him, then down behind him.)* Igor! Get up here! *(Igor crawls up onto the window ledge.)* What took you so long?!

IGOR: Master...I can't fly.

Igor is filthy. As always, he breathes heavily and often slobbers when he speaks. He is squirmy, has a crooked walk, but is for the most part liked by everyone, especially the audience.

FRITZ: *(Entering room.)* Sorry, I forgot everyone can't turn into a bat *(Snapping his fingers.)* ...like that!

IGOR: Did you enjoy your flight, Master?

FRITZ: I would have been better if I hadn't run into a magpie who fell head over claws for me. Every time I'd try and slip in for a nightcap, she'd caw and wake the entire house up.

IGOR: Oh, Master, you must be starving. I'll go heat up some Type O.

FRITZ: Type A tonight. I'm feeling frisky. *(Spots suitcases.)* But wait! What's this?!

IGOR: Master! Are we going somewhere?

FRITZ: *(This passage must be completely understood by the audience.)* You know we cannot leave this house, Igor. The dirt from my native Transylvania forms the floor of the cellar here, and I must rest on my own soil.

IGOR: *(Igor eyes open, wide, as he sniffs the suitcases.)* Master! These suitcases contain...perfume.

FRITZ: Perfume! Then they belong to...

IGOR: *(Panting loudly.)* WOMEN!

FRITZ: I get the beautiful one.

IGOR: Master, beauty is only skin deep.

FRITZ: That's all I care about. Perhaps one of them has come to fulfill the prophecy!

IGOR: What prophecy, Master?

FRITZ: You, stupid, ingrate! The prophecy which sent me here in the first place! *(He pulls scroll from shelf and opens it, reads.)*

Roses are red, violets are blue.
There's a girl just waiting for you.
Her skins like silk, hair like gold,
Drink her blood, you'll never grow old.

IGOR: But, Master, you look as young as you did three hundred years ago when we first met!

FRITZ: You fool! I've got crows feet...I've found several gray hairs...and lately when I get out of my coffin, my knees are killing me!

IGOR: They can't kill you, Master, you're already dead!

FRITZ: Igor?

IGOR: Yes, Master?

FRITZ: Did I ever tell you you're not only ugly, but your jokes stink, too?

IGOR: Many times, Master.

FRITZ: Just checking.

Greta enters from left.

GRETA: Oh, Auntie...isn't it all too wonder...(Aside)...Oh, my...I wonder who these two are?

FRITZ: (Aside.) Indeed, a rare beauty! And what a neck! (To Greta.) Ah, my dear lady...welcome to my humble abode.

GRETA: YOUR humble abode?

Aunt enters left.

AUNT: Couldn't get much more humble than this dump! (Aside.) Them two look like they could use a little vitamin C!

FRITZ: Allow me to introduce myself. I am Count Fritz Fangful, late of Transylvania. And this is my...associate...Igor.

GRETA: Ever so pleased to meet you, Count Fangful. I've never met ROYALTY before.

FRITZ: (He kisses her hand.) It is I who is charmed!

IGOR: Me, too, toots!

He grabs Aunt's hand to kiss it, but she hits him over his head with her purse and anything else she can get her hands on.

AUNT: Watch it, Bud...I don't cotton to fancy lace manners.

IGOR: *(He sticks out lower lip, pouting.)* Master she hurt me.

FRITZ: Poor Igor. How many times do I have to tell you, keep your hands off the guests. Now be a good boy and go dig up a bone or something.

Igor moves back to fireplace. He pulls bone from fire and gnaws on it.

GRETA: You seem very charming, Count Fangful. But I'm afraid there is something of a mistake. This house did belong to a Pierpont Belleneck, did it not?

FRITZ: But yes!

GRETA: He was my great uncle.

FRITZ: He was? *(Aside.)* Can't imagine him GREAT at anything!

GRETA: And in his will, he left me this property.

FRITZ: *(Aside.)* Curses! I never know that old toad had drawn up a will! If I'd know that, I'd never would have made limeade out of him!

GRETA: My Aunt Chatterbit here and I have come to take possession.

FRITZ: Well we're delighted, aren't we, Igor?

Igor mumbles and slobbers, with his mouthful.

FRITZ: Don't talk with your mouth full, Igor. It will be so good to have a woman's touch around this place *(Aside.)* especially her neck!

AUNT: If I had MY way, we'd be on the first buggy back to Devil Junction!

Fritz moves to Aunt and takes her hand.

FRITZ: *(Oozing charm.)* But, it is so lonely out here...and you've seen what kind of housekeepers Igor and I are. I'm sure you can warm up the fires of this old place.

He kisses her hand.

AUNT: *(Weakly.)* You think so, Mr. Count?

GRETA: *(Nervously.)* Perhaps you're right, Auntie, maybe we should be on our merry little 'ole way.

AUNT: *(Angrily.)* Hush up, child, now maybe this place DOES have possibilities!

GRETA: Count Fangful, I take it you knew my uncle?

FRITZ: Knew him?!!!! We were like...BLOOD brothers!

GRETA: So he wasn't alone when he died?

FRITZ: I assure you Igor and I were at his side. *(Thunder roars and lightning flashes.)* I do hope we will be allowed to stay on until we can find ourselves other...suitable quarters.

IGOR: *(Whining loudly.)* But, Master—I

FRITZ: *(Quickly bringing Igor's mouth to a halt)* Shut up, Igor! I take it you have plans to live here, Miss Belleneck? *(Aside.)* What a delicious name!

GRETA: Yes...and what's more, I plan to turn this old manor into RIVER BEND RESORT.

FRITZ: A resort! Did you hear that, Igor? *(Sarcastically.)* Won't that be delightful?

IGOR: But, Master—I

FRITZ: *(Glaring at Igor.)* Shut up, IGOR!

GRETA: This will be the lobby...and, of course, the rooms will be upstairs. The dining room is grand, and that wonderful cellar will be our game room!

FRITZ: *(With a panic-stricken look.)* A game room?!

GRETA: Yes, we'll throw away those old CRATES and boxes out, cement the floor and fill it with billiard tables, ping pong tables, air hockey—

IGOR: But, Master—

FRITZ: Shut up, Igor! He'll be the death of me yet. *(Aside.)* Actually, SHE will be with these INSANE plans!

GRETA: In the morning I intend to call a plumber to get the work started.

If the director wishes to add additional characters, this would be an excellent place in the play to begin. It could be easily accomplished by extending Greta's list of those she needs to call in the morning to include carpenters, construction workers, professional painters, etc.

AUNT: But for now, it's time to find a room with a clean bed. C'mon, Greta...that might take some lookin'.

GRETA: It's been a pleasure, Count Fangful. I will see you tomorrow.

AUNT: Yes, we'll look forward to it Count.

FRITZ: Well, actually we'll be gone quite early and won't return 'til dark. But perhaps we'll see you later for a bite?

GRETA: I'd like that.

AUNT: Good night, Count Fangful.

Greta and Aunt take their suitcases, Aunt stumbles out the door awkwardly, while Greta prances out a little more gracefully.

FRITZ: Please, ladies, Igor will do that for you.

IGOR: I will?

FRITZ: (Definitely.) You will.

IGOR: My contract doesn't say anything about carrying suitcases.

FRITZ: Igor, stop being an imbecile and carry the suitcases up for the ladies.

Igor sniffs and snorts, grabs the suitcases disgustedly Greta and Aunt exit left.

IGOR: I may be an im-be-cile (Has extreme difficulty pronouncing "imbecile."), but at lease I can sleep under a ping pong table if I decided I want to. (Sticks out his tongue at Fritz.)

Igor proudly struts around as if he really got even with Fritz and then exits left.

FRITZ: He's right! I can't allow this to happen! A man's house is his castle, and I don't want my castle redecorated! And yet if she is the girl of my NIGHTMARES, I cannot leave here without her. There must be a way I can have my cake and eat it too! Hahahahah!

Fritz's laugh echoes throughout the mansion. Thunder and lightening flash as Fritz twirls up in his cape. If possible, a puff of smoke should

engulf Fritz while he's twirling, but this is not necessary. One spot light on Fritz flickering on and off would give the same mystifying effect leaving your audience in complete awe. Blackout.

ACT ONE, SCENE 2

The following night.

The scene is the same, although we can already see some changes wrought by the artistic creations of Greta. Several bouquets of flowers sit atop tables, including one of roses. A pastoral landscape now hangs over the fireplace.

AT RISE:

Greta and Aunt are whistling as they are taking down the curtains by the French window. Greta stands on a step stool precariously close to the edge of the cliff.

GRETA: They're almost down, Auntie!

AUNT: *(Picking up a book from the table.)* Just don't you come crashing down with 'em child. Don't see why you had to charge in 'n fetched in town today. "Startn' a Business the Right Way."

GRETA: *(Stopping her work.)* But I did read some of it, Auntie. For example, I read Chapter Three on advertising. To quote, "A business minus ads adds up to zero."

AUNT: Child, it's gotta be the altitude.

GRETA: Nonsense! That just means we must advertise if we want River Bend Resort to be successful.

AUNT: First, you gotta have somethin' to advertise.

GRETA: I hadn't though of that. Anyway, I placed two ads in the Devil Junction Gazette. You can see for yourself...they're in tonight's edition.

Aunt moves to table and picks up newspaper.

AUNT: What'd you say about this? For a good scare stop by anytime?

GRETA: I couldn't say that. Besides, this isn't a scary house at all.

AUNT: You sure moaned and screamed a lot in your sleep last night.

GRETA: That wasn't me Auntie.

Suddenly, we hear eerie noises and spooky sounds vibrate throughout the mansion.

AUNT: I rest my case. *(Finds ad in newspaper.)* Oh, child. How could you?!? *(Reading.)* Unrestrained beauty? Unequalized tranquility?! Wherever do you think anyone could possibly find tranquility here? Rest your mind, body and heart at River Bend Resort. Child, you make it sound like an infirmary! And where in tarnation did you find a picture like that? *(Reading on.)* One of our many splendid suits. There's nothin' that nice for three hundred miles in any direction!

GRETA: The newspaper man had lots of pictures. I picked the prettiest.

AUNT: And what if someone wants THAT room?

GRETA: The newspaper gentleman said just to tell them that it's occupied.

An odd sounding Doorbell or persistant knocking is heard, then Able Abe enters right, he doesn't wait for anyone to welcome him in.

ABE: Ahe hem?? Tis I, Able Abe, the plumber.

Greta turns and looks at Abe. We hear the tinkle of bells as they each melt.

ABE: *(Continued. Aside.)* Why I'm struck dumb. She's prettier than a new soldered joint that don't leak!

GRETA: *(Aside.)* Oh, my goodness, what a hunk of prime plumber he is! *(Batting her eyelashes, Greta suddenly begins losing her balance. She waves her arms about wildly.)* Oh...help...help!!!

AUNT: Hang on, child.

Abe charges up the steps to where Greta is barely hanging on and grabs Greta by the waist.

ABE: You're in good hands now, li'l lady. (*Looking over edge.*) My, but, you could have taken quite a spill.

GRETA: (*Looking into his eyes.*) I'm afraid I already have.

Abe lifts her high into the air and gently sets her down.

ABE: (*Aside.*) I know I'm hard to resist, but this is ridiculous. (*To Greta.*) I don't believe we've been properly introduced.

AUNT: You're a bit beyond that, if you ask me!

GRETA: Now, now, Auntie. (*Very sweetly.*) Now I don't believe we were asking you, dear. (*To Abe.*) I'm Greta. Greta Belleneck...the new owner of River Bend Resort.

ABE: Where's that?!

GRETA: Why, right here. (*Gleaming with pride.*)

ABE: You mean you're gonna be livin' here in Rattrap Manor?

GRETA: We're changing it. See?!

ABE: Why you sure are makin' it a bit more homey, Miss Belleneck...I think. But are you sure you're doin' the right thing?

GRETA: I know it's what Great Uncle Pierpont Belleneck III would have wanted.

AUNT: Son, you'd sooner be able to talk sense into a mule than this girl.

ABE: I like a girl with determination.

GRETA: And I like a plumber who knows what he likes. (*Flashes Aunt a dirty look.*)

ABE: (*Conceitedly.*) There ain't a job too big for Able Abe, M'am.

AUNT: You haven't seen the leaks in this place, son. Could take you weeks...maybe months...years to plug 'em all!

GRETA: Oh, but auntie, what's the rush?

ABE: (*Staring at Greta.*) Any job doing is worth doing well.

AUNT: And I can take a hint. (*Aunt moves left.*)

GRETA: Where are you going, Auntie?

AUNT: Thought I'd go set FIRE to the kitchen.

GRETA: (*Dazed.*) That's fine.

AUNT: (*Aside.*) I've heard of fellers with a quick line, but this one moves faster than spit on a hot griddle.

Aunt exits left.

ABE: Your aunt?

GRETA: I think so.

ABE: What do you want me to do first?

GRETA: *(Sitting coyly on couch.)* Why, gracious, I am not what one would call an aggressive female, Mr. Able. *(Stands up, grabs Abe by the shoulder, and pushes him down so he's sitting next to her on the couch. Throws her hands in her lap not once taking her eyes off him...all in one swift movement.)* You choose.

ABE: I mean plumbing.

GRETA: Oh, that. Well, goodness, you can start from the top and work your way down or start from the bottom and work your way up. *(Greta motions with her arms as Abe lifts and drops his head with her arms.)*

ABE: When I was just a lad, my Pa said to me, "Abe, there never was any use for lookin' down in the world. All you gotta do to get anywhere is look up."

GRETA: Was your Pa a smart man?

ABE: *(Walking around to the back of the couch.)* I do not think he ever wished to kiss a girl as pretty as you, dear Greta.

Abe closes his eyes, and leans over the couch to kiss Greta, who looks out at the audience.

GRETA: *(Aside.)* Gracious! My virtue at stake! What shall I do? *(Pauses.)* Give in when I've known the feller only a few minutes...or wait until I am sure.

She rises and steps away. He falls over the couch in his attempt to land a peck.

(Continued.) Better safe than sorry! *(To Abe, helping him off the floor.)* I do hope that knocked some sense into you!

ABE: Oh, Miss Belleneck, where you are concerned, there IS no sense! But I shall in the future remain honorable and my intentions shall be nothing but the purest.

Aunt appears at left.

AUNT: *(Aside.)* Shucks, that could make this situation pretty darn boring!

Aunt exits left, Greta picks up Abe's tool box.

GRETA: Then, Mr. Abe, I shall take you to the cellar where you may commence plumbing. *(Aside and to the audience.)* You see, girls? It isn't hard to control your man!

Greta exits left.

ABE: *(Aside.)* But look who's carrying the tools?

Abe exits right. The front door opens. Igor enters suspiciously.

IGOR: *(Looking around the room.)* Coast is clear, Master! No one here!

Fritz enters.

FRITZ: No sign of that wrenchingly water-logged plumber, Able Abe?

IGOR: Not a tool in sight.

FRITZ: I still owe the fool for unclogging the drain in the cellar.

IGOR: If he hadn't come so quick, you'd have floated all the way back to Transylvania, Master!

FRITZ: Yes, yes, yes. I'm in his debt, but let's not overdue this gratitude bit.

IGOR: Shall I go pay him, Master!

FRITZ: Come, come, Igor. You know me better than that. My last creditor ended up a prairie dog.

IGOR: I remember him. He was so cute. For years he lived on the grounds.

FRITZ: He'd dug more tunnels than Atchinson, Topeka, and Santa Fe. *(He looks around the room.)* But wait...something's wrong...

IGOR: Look, Master! Your favorite painting's gone!

FRITZ: What IS that ugly thing? It's enough to make my flesh crawl!
(His body shivers from the sight of the ghastly painting.)

IGOR: And look! The curtains are coming down.

FRITZ: It took a hundred years for those curtains to gain that certain raggy appeal.

IGOR: And flowers, Master! Bluucckkk!!

FRITZ: That's, it! Those are...ROSES!

Fritz begins gasping for breath and he rubs his eyes frantically.

Get rid...get rid...throw them out, now!!!

IGOR: Oh, Master. You poor, poor thing. *(Grabs roses as he rushes towards Fritz to console and comfort him.)*

FRITZ: Hurry, you idiot! Hurry up!

Igor tosses the roses out the French window and then waves goodbye to them.

FRITZ: *(Continued; catching his breath and dabbing his eyes.)* Oh, that's much better...

IGOR: Imagin' that, her putting roses in the house when she knows that you're a—

FRITZ: SHE DOESN'T KNOW, IGOR! She hasn't any idea. Miss Belleneck is as innocent as the petal of a daisy. Which makes her all the more...delectable. Pour me a cocktail, will you, Igor?!

IGOR: Certainly, Master...right away. *(From a decanter, He pours — "a red drink"—for Fritz.)* Type O negative. Very rare, sir.

FRITZ: A very old vintage, perhaps 1802?

IGOR: Aged to perfection!

Fritz downs the glass.

FRITZ: Aaaahhh...that's got a *(“Kick” comes out in a high pitched voice.)* kick. This fellow here is going to go out fighting. And now, Igor, I want you to take that insipid painting down and put mine back up. *(Igor does so.)* I can't allow Miss Belleneck to change a thing here. I'm happy with Rattrap Manor just the way it is!

IGOR: But how are you going to stop her?

FRITZ: I don't know. She is the most beautiful creature I have ever seen, so I don't want to smash her against the rocks.

IGOR: That would be a BLOW.

FRITZ: No...I would much rather add her to my...collection.

IGOR: She would make a nice addition, Master!

FRITZ: It shouldn't be too much trouble. I mean, with my charm and good looks, she'll fall for me like a ton of bricks.

Abe and Greta enter right, arm in arm, lost in one another's eyes.

GRETA: Oh, Abe.

ABE: Oh, Greta.

GRETA: Oh, Abe.

ABE: Oh, Greta.

GRETA: Oh, Abe.

ABE: Oh, Greta. That two-thirds inch double handled wrench is just outside in my wagon.

GRETA: Oh, Abe. I love it when you talk tools.

Abe and Greta exit through main door.

FRITZ: Did you see what I though I saw?

IGOR: *(Bring his hands over his chest, touched by what he saw.)*
Two people in LOVE.

FRITZ: That's disgusting! That's nauseating! That's unjust!

IGOR: Looked pretty real and just, to me, Master. *(Imitating Abe and Greta.)* Oh, Abe...Oh, Greta...

FRITZ: Shut up, would you mind? This can't be! The girl **MUST** be mine! According to the prophecy...she is my key to never aging. She is my key to happiness!

IGOR: Unfortunately, she's stuck in Able Abe's lock.

FRITZ: You think it's funny, Igor?! You make another stupid joke like that and you'll find yourself dangling above a roomful of cobras.

IGOR: Oh, Master. Don't tease me like that. You know how I love snakes!

FRITZ: Could it be that I'm...I'm all washed up? I no longer appeal to women??

IGOR: Oh, Master, no! You've very appalling. I mean appealing!

FRITZ: You're just saying that so I don't burn you alive.

IGOR: No, it comes straight from my heart.

FRITZ: I know you were LYING, you nincompoop! I took your heart out years ago!

IGOR: Master, you're still the Cassanova you once were. You're still the Don Juan of the Mississippi Valley. You're still the Romeo of Rattrap Manor!

FRITZ: I am? *(With determination.)* Yes, I am! No woman can refuse my charm.

Abe and Greta enter through the main door, as before. He holds a large wrench.

GRETA: Oh, Abe.

ABE: Oh, Greta.

GRETA: Oh, Abe.

ABE: Oh, Greta.

Abe and Greta exit right.

FRITZ: Hmmmmm...this could be harder than I thought.

IGOR: One bite and she's yours.

FRITZ: You're right.

IGOR: And her neck is so...vulnerable.

FRITZ: Stop it! You're making me hungry! But the lady must come to me of her own free will!

IGOR: She doesn't have a will.

FRITZ: There's only one thing we can do. Dispose of Able Abe the plumber.

IGOR: But they're attached at the hip!

FRITZ: You're right. And if I slice him apart in front of her, she might hold a grudge.

IGOR: I know, Master! Set up a rendezvous with Miss Belleneck. Lure her here at midnight...and then profess your undying love for her.

FRITZ: Undying is right! And for once, I think you might have come up with a good idea. *(Fritz walks over to Igor and tweaks his nose.)*

IGOR: *(Claps, and pats himself on the back, and jumps up and down in the air.)* Really, Master? Really?

FRITZ: But don't let it go to your head! You know how it comes off if it gets a bit top heavy! Bring me some writing paper and my quill.

Igor does so. Fritz writes with a flourish.

FRITZ: (*Writing.*) My darling beauty...My love for you cannot be contained. My blood burns for you, my heart yearns for you. Meet me tonight at midnight. Allow me to say those things which I can no longer keep to myself! Your faithful servant, Count Fritz Fangful.

IGOR: Oh, Master, that's beautiful, so beautiful!

FRITZ: Go...find her room! Slip it under her door! And soon the virtuous Miss Belleneck shall be mine—FOREVER—Hahahahahaha!!! (*Laugh sinisterly. An odd-sounding doorbell is heard.*) Wait! Who can that be?! We must exit at once lest one pursuing us might find us!

Fritz and Igor slip out through the French window. Igor watches at center.

IGOR: Master! It's easy for you to get out this way! You can turn into a bat and fly!

The strange doorbell is heard again.

FRITZ: Igor, go deliver the message, at once!

Igor races off left as the doorbell and knocking continue. Greta enters right.

GRETA: Coming!

Greta opens door to reveal LOTTA PAYNE, who stands in a shawl, holding a hanky. She sneezes.

LOTTA: Excuse me, but I've got a cold!

GRETA: Well, come in and warm up.

Lotta enters room and looks around rather curiously.

LOTTA: *(Doubtfully.)* This is the River Bend Resort?

GRETA: It is, and I'm Greta Belleneck, owner and proprietress.

Have you come looking for a room?

LOTTA: Is it quiet here?

GRETA: Like a tomb!

LOTTA: Don't say that! It's bad luck.

GRETA: Well, it is very quiet here, Miss...Mrs...

LOTTA: Lotta.

GRETA: Lotta what?

LOTTA: Lotta Payne.

GRETA: Oh, I'm sorry, where does it hurt?

LOTTA: That's my name. And I've come looking for a very quiet place to rest. You see I just got out of the hospital.

GRETA: Oh, dear.

LOTTA: My nerves, you know. For years, for too, too many years, I worked in a school and taught small children.

GRETA: Are there any other kind?

LOTTA: Trust me...small children are the worst! They came to learn every nerve in my body and would strip them down daily. Eventually, I ended up a blithering dumbbell. The doctors say I'm cured now. They say I'm normal. They say I'll be just fine. But what do doctors know?

GRETA: Oh, dear...well, I can guarantee you peace and quiet. Why you don't have to talk to a soul if you don't want to.

A voice screams in distance.

LOTTA: *(Voice trembling.)* What's...what's that?

GRETA: *(Assuring Lotta that everything is under control and there is absolutely nothing to fear.)* Oh, the house is just a bit haunted.

LOTTA: *(Laughing weakly.)* Oh, what a cleaver JOKE. That's really very funny. Now, perhaps you can show me to a room?

GRETA: Oh, Aunt Chatterbit! *(Calling out again.)* Aunt Chatterbit!?

Aunt enters left, in apron.

AUNT: You know how many spiders I found---

GRETA: Auntie, this is Lotta Payne, a guest.

AUNT: (*Sarcastically.*) You've got to be kidding. (*To Lotta.*) You're going to spend the night here? What's wrong with you?

GRETA: Miss Payne's recuperating from a nervous condition. She needs peace and quiet. So be quiet. Would you show Miss Payne our selection of suites?

LOTTA: I want the one in your ad---

GRETA: Sorry, that one's occupied, isn't it, Ms. Chatterbit?! (*Greta takes elbow and nudges Aunt.*)

AUNT: This way...you poor thing.

Aunt and Lotta off left. Abe enters right.

ABE: Oh, Greta.

GRETA: Oh, Abe.

ABE: I've got to go fetch some duct tape.

GRETA: Duct tape?! Oh, dear. You wouldn't harm any of our fine feathered friends, would you?

ABE: What kind of plumber do you think I am. I shall be back before you can recite, "THE RISE AND FALL OF THE ROMAN EMPIRE."

GRETA: Oh, Abe, the minutes will seem like hours.

ABE: Reciting that they will! Au revoir, mon cherie.

GRETA: Oh, my, you speak French?

ABE: Only when it counts.

Abe exits through main door as Aunt enters with a note.

AUNT: Greta? Greta! (*Aside.*) He's turned her into a zucchini!
GRETA?!

GRETA: Yes, Auntie?

AUNT: Found this tacked to your door upstairs.

GRETA: (*Taking the note.*) To my love? Oh, dear sweet Abe not only speaks French, he can write, too! (*Read note.*) Count Fangful?! Oh, dear, me oh my Auntie! I am afraid my heart belongs to another! I cannot meet the Count for this romantic rendezvous.

AUNT: Well, now...that's really too bad, Greta. Perhaps I can deliver the bad news to the Count and save you the terrible pain.

GRETA: Oh, would you, Auntie? I would be ever so grateful.

AUNT: You just leave everything to me!! *(Turns, winks slyly at the audience. We hear the tinkle of bells as Aunt Chatterbit contemplates her rendezvous with the Count.) (The curtain falls.)*

ACT ONE, SCENE 3

Midnight. Haunting organ music is vibrating throughout the mansion. Darkness shrouds the stage, with exception of a blue moonlight cutting through the French window.

AT RISE:

Fritz enters left. He carries a mirror and comb. Lights slowly increase as Fritz speaks.

FRITZ: *(Aside.)* Tonight is the night! The beautiful princess shall be mine and I will remain young forever and ever! I knew coming to America would pay off in the long run!

Fritz primps as Igor enters right.

IGOR: Master...what are you doing?

FRITZ: *(Staring into mirror.)* I AM a handsome devil!

IGOR: Master...you have no reflection.

FRITZ: So? I use my imagination. Is the bridal suite ready?

IGOR: Oh, yes, Master! I raked the dirt, tidied the cobwebs, and sprinkled spiders in your lady's coffin.

FRITZ: How romantic! You did select the proper coffin, didn't you, Igor?

IGOR: The dark oak lined in satin.

FRITZ: You dimwit. That's just the guest coffin! I want you to find the dark oak lined in silk...red silk. THAT is the bridal coffin. Now hurry! Midnight is fast approaching and my love will be here soon!

IGOR: Yes, Master...I'm sorry, Master...it won't happen again, Master.

FRITZ: If it does, I'll have your liver for a week. *(Licks his lips.)*

IGOR: No, not that again, Master!

Igor races off right.

FRITZ: *(Aside.)* Poor Igor...he just comes by it so naturally. But I guess it's all my fault. I could have used the brain of a physicist but didn't want that kind of competition. So I picked up his brain at a blue light special. *(Pauses, then remembering.)* Oh! How could I have forgotten to brush my fangs!

Fritz races off right. Greta and Abe enter left, arm in arm.

GRETA: Oh, Abe.

ABE: Oh, Greta.

GRETA: Oh, I love the way you sealed that joint!

ABE: It won't leak again in our lifetimes!

GRETA: Seal another one for me!

ABE: But, Greta, my sweet, it's nearly midnight.

GRETA: Midnight?! Oh, Pshaw!

ABE: If I want to be worth my washers tomorrow, I will leave at once, grab four hours of sleep, then put in two to three hours at the gym before starting my rounds.

GRETA: You take my breath away.

ABE: Don't say that, Greta...I couldn't bear hurting you.

GRETA: You will come tomorrow?

ABE: I will count the seconds.

GRETA: Oh, Abe.

ABE: Oh, Greta.

Abe slips through the main door as Aunt enters. She has fixed herself up, wearing her nicest dress.

AUNT: That boy sure puts in the overtime!

GRETA: Oh, Auntie. How can you tell you're in...*(Appears bashful.)* love?

AUNT: Love? You just met the feller, child!

GRETA: But, Auntie...I'm ether in love or I'm sick.

AUNT: Oh, dear. Your heart beats like butterfly wings when you're with him?

GRETA: (*Staring off into space.*) Uh ha.

AUNT: You can't get him out of your mind when he's not around?

GRETA: Uh ha.

AUNT: You know you'd climb up to the top of the pyramids and jump off for him if he asked you?

GRETA: Uh ha.

AUNT: (*Dryly.*) Sounds like the beginning of lumbago, child. Take a nice warm bath in Epsom salts.

GRETA: (*Snapping out of her trance.*) It's not lumbago and it can't be solved with Epsom salt, Auntie. It's just what Anna Cherry Kramer wrote in my favorite poem. (*Reciting grandly.*) You'll know when you have found him. You'll feel your heart beat fast. For him, you'd sail the seven seas and climb up any mast. Each hour with him passes by as if it were a minute...But when he's gone you're sure each second has an hour in it.

AUNT: She's a poet, who doesn't know it, but her feet show it...they're Longfellows!

GRETA: Are you happy we came now, Auntie? But alas...I have been only thinking of myself. You haven't found anything here but cobwebs and dust.

AUNT: Well, now, child, at my age...

GRETA: Yes, I suppose you should be used to those things. Are you sorry you came with me?

AUNT: (*Aside.*) And missed out on a chance to hook a Count? Are you off your rocker, kid? (*To Greta.*) Child...I promised your Ma and Pa that if anything ever happened to them, I'd watch out for you. And I'm gonna keep that promise forever.

GRETA: Oh, Auntie. You're...you're swell. But isn't there anything I can do to repay you?

AUNT: Well, now, Greta, my dear...I have been admiring that beautiful bow you're sporting...and that lovely jacket.

GRETA: These old things?

AUNT: You know how I'm partial to antiques.

GRETA: Then they're yours. Here, Auntie! This bow will look so fine in your old, gray hair.

AUNT: You sure do know how to make a gal feel good!

GRETA: And what this jacket won't do for your slumped shoulders.
(Greta puts bow in Aunt's hair and helps her put the jacket on.)
There! Now you look positively stylish!

AUNT: I guess just a bit like you!

GRETA: Let's not go that far. Well, Auntie...I must retire. Tomorrow
Abe is coming by to plug more leaks!

AUNT: Sleep well, child.

Greta moves left.

GRETA: Oh, Auntie...I won't be able to sleep a wink...all my dreams
have come true! *(Greta exits left.)*

AUNT: *(Aside.)* She's lost it plain and simple! *(Midnight chimes out.*
Aunt sits in chair, tries different poses, finally settles on a
dramatic pose which she holds.) Okay, Count...come and get me!

Fritz enters right. If possible, apprehensive, villain music is heard for
Fritz's melodramatic entrance. He cautiously approaches Aunt. He
stops, takes a breath spray from his pocket, music pauses, he sprays
a bit in his mouth, music begins again, then he moves in for the kill.

FRITZ: Oh, my darling...my princess...tonight is ours, all ours! And
after tonight we will both live forever...and never ever age
another single day! *(He tips Aunt's head so he can get a clear*
view of her neck. He kneels.) From the moment I saw you...I
wanted your beautiful porcelain neck...why it's so tempting I can
see your pale blue veins just under your pure, white skin...I can't
stand another moment of waiting! I've got to have a bite! *(Fritz*
delivers the bites to Aunt's neck. We see a violent reaction from
her. After a moment, Fritz comes up for air.) My, but I didn't think
you had such tired blood, Greta.

Aunt is visibly zombie now, speaking in flat tones, moving in stilted
fashion.

AUNT: Greta? No, no, I'm not Greta, loverboy.

Fritz recoils in horror as Igor enters right playing the “Wedding March” on a Kazoo, or if a kazoo is not available whistling will have the same effect. He tosses dead leaves on the couple.

FRITZ: What?!

AUNT: Come here, loverboy!

Aunt grabs Fritz, drops him into a dip and tries desperately to hug him. He struggles free.

FRITZ: Stop it! Stop it! How could this have happened?!

IGOR: (Obliviously.) Congratulations, Master!

FRITZ: (Grabbing Igor.) Igor! Protect me!

Aunt moves slowly towards Fritz.

AUNT: Come to me, my darling!

IGOR: Master, that’s not...oh, boy! You goofed!

FRITZ: I KNOW that, Igor. And make another smart remark and your liver goes!

AUNT: Come, my cuddly Count! We shall live forever!

FRITZ: Well, now, my dear...I have a few appointments.

AUNT: Tut, tut, tut, Count Fangful. You’re mine now...and I’m not letting you out of my sight!

FRITZ: Igor...do something!

IGOR: But, Master...what?

Fritz is gradually backing his way up the stairs to the French window.

FRITZ: You must find my copy of “The Vampire Primer.”

IGOR: And where will you be?

FRITZ: A cave! She won’t be a full vampire until the next full moon...so she can’t follow me!

IGOR: But the next full moon is tomorrow night!

FRITZ: I know you’ll think of something!

IGOR: Master!

The lights flash off for a second. When they come up, Fritz is gone. A "bat" flies across the stage. With a little practice the Stage Crew Operator will be able to control all of the bat's movements. See Production Notes for special effects suggestions.

IGOR: (*Cont'd. To Bat.*) But, Master! What can I do?

AUNT: You can find your Master for me now!

IGOR: I don't have to listen to you, you old bag of wind!

AUNT: Oh, no?!

Aunt raises her arms and lifts her head. Suddenly, there is a tremendous clap of thunder and then lightening. Igor falls to the floor.

IGOR: All right already! You don't have to break my eardrums! Find Master! Find him now!

IGOR: (*Haughtily.*) Yes, your highness, right away your highness. (*Under his breath.*) You old bat!

Aunt raises her arms. Thunder and lightening sends Igor racing off right as fast as his legs will move him. Lotta Payne enters left, holding her head.

LOTTA: Oh, oh gosh.

AUNT: What is wrong, Miss Payne?

LOTTA: I can't sleep. The thunder, lightening, voices...gosh, if I didn't know better, I'd say this place is haunted.

AUNT: HAH, what a laugh!

LOTTA: You got anything for a headache? (*Lotta sits.*) Mine is just killing me. (*She sneezes.*)

Aunt picks up a large hammer from behind the couch, advancing to Lotta.

AUNT: Yes...I have just the thing for a headache.

LOTTA: Good. It feels like an ax got me right between the ears.

AUNT: Sounds like fun.

Lotta rises. Aunt brings hammer down at the moment Lotta stands.

LOTTA: (*Moves to bookshelf.*) Gosh, I didn't realize there were some books here. Maybe a nice, boring story is all I need to put me to sleep. (*She selects a ratty old book from one of the shelves and reads the title of the book out loud. It is important that Lotta emphasizes the title of the book to the audience.*) Hmmmmmm..."Diary of Pierpont Belleneck III." Now that sounds like a real snoozer!

AUNT: Pierpont Belleneck?

LOTTA: 'Night. And maybe next time I'll hit you up for your headache remedy.

Lotta exits left.

AUNT: Count? Oh, where are you, Count? Where's my great big, cuddly set of fangs? Count? (*Aunt opens the main door peeking outside.*) Are you out here, woochy poochy? (*Aunt Exits through main door, as her search continues. Igor sneaks on right holding a bat.*)

IGOR: Coast is clear. She went outside.

Fritz's voice is offstage. Igor talks to the bat.

FRITZ: Good! Now, the "Primer" is quite clear. If I can drink of the princess's blood before the full moon at midnight tomorrow, I will again retain my youth.

IGOR: If, not, you'll age and age and age. (*Igor wrinkles his nose with the thought.*)

FRITZ: I get the picture! But she is far too taken with that plumber to come to me of her own will!

IGOR: So? Fire the plumber.

FRITZ: That's it! That's perfect! We get rid of Able Abe...and make sure she thinks—oh, this is perfect, Igor! You are a genius!

IGOR: Gee, Einstein and me!

FRITZ: Don't get so heady. Now...here's what we've got to do!

IGOR: (*Suddenly.*) Someone's coming!

FRITZ: Quick...onto the balcony!

Igor and bat exit through French window. Lotta enters left.

LOTTA: Oh, gosh! Oh, gosh!

Aunt enters through the main door.

AUNT: What is wrong, now, Miss Payne?

LOTTA: This diary...it's by the guy who built this place! Oh, gosh!

AUNT: And?

LOTTA: He was murdered! He says on page 213..."I feel something terrible is going to happen. The Count has taken over more and more of my home...and now has me captive in my own room. I fear for my life." And the last entry is written in...in...blood!

AUNT: How delicious!

LOTTA: "The Count...he's...a...a...vampire!" We've got to tell somebody what's going on here!

AUNT: A very good idea.

LOTTA: Your niece must know...and maybe that plumber...*(Aunt takes the large hammer again and moves behind Lotta.)* then we ought to call the sheriff, the U.S. marshals...and maybe even the FBI!

Aunt hits Lotta over the head. Note: The hammer could be made of rubber or similar type of soft material.

LOTTA: Aye, yi, yi!

Lotta crumples to the floor.

AUNT: Now that's what I call a splitting headache! *(The curtain falls.)*

BY CRAIG SODARO

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