

A Gothic Tale

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ACT I

Scene 1

Music - Twinkle Twinkle

Centre Stage is completely blank, no angels, no bed and piano to the side but out of view. Blackout, 20 seconds of music playing before anything begins, sound escalating.

Music - Twinkle Twinkle Bioshock

When the glitches in the music are heard this is a strobe light is synced with the music.

A loud scream is heard from the EX-WIFE while in darkness.

During the strobe light sequences we will see the EX-WIFE being thrown into the bloody chamber with other bodies around her, all masked and in different positions. We will see the COUNT throw her in, a brief glimpse of his silhouette also.

There will be 5 sequences of strobe lighting and the actors positions should be as follows.

Strobe 1: dead bodies in the chamber.

Strobe 2: dead bodies in the chamber and silhouette of the COUNT

Strobe 3: Scream from the EX-WIFE and the COUNT dragging her through the chamber

Strobe 4: EX-WIFE alone with the bodies, beginning to mumble to herself, agitated, head in her hands trying to avoid looking at the bodies.

Strobe 5: EX-WIFE laying downstage centre, eyes wide open staring into the audience.

END SCENE

Scene 2

Music - Classic Fairytale Opening Music

The HOUSEKEEPER enters in fine dress with nicely styled hair. We see the set being physically brought on as the HOUSEKEEPER would like it.

The Angels come on first and we are not hiding the fact that we are using stage hands. The bed then follows. The classic fairytale props are last i.e hairbrush, mirrors.

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Whilst this is happening the HOUSEKEEPER is conducting the stage hands who are moving in the sequence.

As the set comes together, the mood changes as the stage hands then begin to bring on dead plants, bramble, broken mirror, wonky pictures, broken china etc.

The HOUSEKEEPER frantically begins to attempt to fix everything and put it all right. As she does this the stage hands begin to tear at her clothes and mess up her hair.

The scene ends when the song concludes and the HOUSEKEEPER is DSC surrounded by a decayed and corrupt set.

END SCENE

Scene 3

The curtain opens to reveal a castle's boudoir, the COUNTESS and HOUSEKEEPER are in the boudoir. The COUNTESS is sat on the chair in the middle of the room.

HOUSEKEEPER

Oh you look beautiful; such a wonderful bride.
(laughs) You're so lucky, if I may say so.

HOUSEKEEPER carries on brushing COUNTESS' hair

Silence

HOUSEKEEPER

He will look after you, he has much to give! You'll enjoy living here: there's even a room put aside for you because he knows how much you love music. But you didn't hear that from me! (pause) Isn't he a good man.

COUNTESS

(surprised)
My own music room?

HOUSEKEEPER

(overexcited)
Oh yes! (laugh) He will dote on you as you are beautiful! The Master can never resist a pretty face. (Strokes her face and carries on brushing her hair)
Oh I wish I could find a suitor like him: charming, handsome (pause) and wealthy. You're so lucky.

COUNTESS

(without believing what she is saying)
Yes. I am.

(CONTINUED)

The COUNT enters

Silence

HOUSEKEEPER

Doesn't she look beautiful? Oh you make such a fine pair! I know you'll remember this for the rest of your lives. I know it's just going to be perfect

COUNT nods, staring

COUNT

Is she ready?

HOUSEKEEPER

Is she ready? Of course she is! (COUNT exits) Aren't you dear?

The COUNTESS nods

Good! Now...oh. Where's he got to? Just a moment dear I'll go check.

HOUSEKEEPER exits for a few moments. She walks back on stage and grabs the chair the COUNTESS is seated on.

Come on dear! We don't want to keep you husband waiting!

The COUNTESS stands up and the HOUSEKEEPER almost drags her off stage in a hurry to get her to the wedding.

Music - Wedding bells.

END SCENE

Scene 4

The COUNTESS enters

COUNTESS

I wasn't sure about marrying him at first. I'm so young and he...But he could provide for me. What girl wouldn't want that? And Father will be able to live comfortably now. I won't have to worry about him anymore. He is a lot older than me but he's still very handsome. It takes my breath away when I look into those dark eyes of his. I seem to be mesmerized by them and I can't move. Why can't I explain it? I must be crazy; there's something about him and it just...I don't know. I could feel his lust. (pause) He had been married before; there's been talk in the village. His previous wife had died a few months ago and nobody seems to mourn her. It's almost as if she didn't exist. Nobody seems to remember her name, not that it matters now but it is strange. She just seemed to disappear and that was the end, no

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COUNTESS (cont'd)

questions asked. (pause) Today was beautiful; it almost seems too good to be true. (excitedly) I'm somebody's wife. (perturbed) I'm somebody's wife. I have so many questions and nobody to talk to: what if I make a mistake? What will he think? (silence) He's expecting so much. What can I do? How do you be a good wife? (pause) It was hard saying goodbye to everyone but I knew it had to happen. The wedding...it was all so rushed. I felt like it ended before I had time to understand what was happening. The Count doesn't have much time. Then it was all over and everyone left. Then it was just us...(pause) me and him.

The COUNT enters, marked by his silhouette from the doorway. he advances on her, she is still unaware that he is there.

COUNTESS

(shyly)

My lord, this room is amazing. The whole castle is amazing. I can't believe I live here.

COUNT

Yes.

COUNTESS

Yesterday was just beautiful, I loved every moment of it. I don't think anything will ever live up to that. I didn't expect my wedding day to be so wonderful and all the guests just loved every moment especially my father. He...

The COUNT retrieves a necklace from beside the table. He puts it on her and examines her.

(surprised)

What is this?

COUNT

A gift.

COUNTESS

Thank you, I don't have anything for you...

The COUNT takes a step back admiring the form of the COUNTESS, eying her lustfully in silence.

COUNT

Shh. Come.

The COUNTESS, lead by the COUNT, goes over to the bed. She turns to find the COUNT glaring at her body.

COUNTESS

(wary)

Is something wrong?

COUNT

(greedily)

Now take off your clothes

The COUNTESS stutters

Take off your clothes.

The COUNTESS stares at the COUNT. After a few moments she begins to take off her gown very slowly. In his impatience, the COUNT rips off her gown, leaving the COUNTESS half naked.

The COUNT takes off his shirt. He comes up behind her and begins to kiss her neck, biting gently as he does so. He seduces her. Initially she resists until she begins to enjoy it. She reciprocates until she catches a glimpse of herself in the mirror. She starts to cry, shaking as she does. The COUNT slowly backs away.

COUNT

I suggest a walk to clear our heads/

The COUNT picks up his shirt and begins dressing himself as he heads towards the door off stage. He stops and turns back round to the COUNTESS before he goes off. He stares at her for a few moments.

Get dressed; I'll expect you downstairs shortly.

*The COUNT leaves. The COUNTESS cries.**Blackout*

The door frame light fades up and her silhouette slowly forms in the light taking in the place of the COUNT coming towards the mirror. She looks at herself in the mirror smiling wryly and begins to put on her make up.

*Fade to black.*END SCENEScene 5

The COUNT and COUNTESS are walking through a forest hand in hand. The COUNTESS looks puzzled and wanting to explain something to the COUNT but she does not know how to. The COUNT is looking at the snow in his own thoughts.

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COUNTESS

I'm sorry about...It's just I've never...

COUNT

Shh.

COUNTESS

But you must understand that I...

COUNT

My darling do be quiet. It doesn't matter.

The COUNTESS looks upset as the COUNT has not let her talk/explain. The COUNT is still looking at the snow.

Isn't this beautiful? I've always enjoyed a walk through the forest. My father used to bring me here and he would tell me so many stories.

COUNTESS

You've never mentioned your father before.

COUNT

(smiles)

He loved the forest. He always used to talk about the snow. I didn't understand before but there is something so pure about an untouched blanket of snow.

COUNTESS

(jokingly)

Yes, it is beautiful but I do hope you don't think its more beautiful than me...

The COUNTESS stops and stands in front of the COUNT and begins to kiss him. It is a moment to show she is not scared of him anymore due to the previous scene.

SNOW CHILD

Help me. Anyone. Please

COUNT

Stop. (*The COUNT pushes the COUNTESS back and they stop kissing. He looks around but can't see anyone.*)
Did you hear that?

COUNTESS

What are you doing? (*She tries to grab his hand but he pulls away from her*)

COUNT

I said quiet.

COUNTESS

Excuse me. I'd rather you not talk to me like that I am your wife.

COUNT places and over COUNTESS' mouth

SNOW CHILD

Someone please. Please help me.

COUNT

Can you hear that? (*He moves his hand away from her mouth*)

COUNTESS

Who do you think you are...

COUNT

Hush.

SNOW CHILD

Sir. Sir, please. Please help me.

COUNTESS

I think we should leave. this could be a trick. I've heard rumours about people like this and they steal...

COUNT

QUIET!

The COUNTESS is taken aback at how she is being spoken to.

I can hear you. Where are you?

SNOW CHILD

Sir, sir I am here.

The COUNT notices the SNOW CHILD on the floor.

The COUNT runs to the SNOW CHILD and strokes her head and grabs her hand. The COUNTESS walks over to the SNOW CHILD but does not bend over as she is showing her status.

COUNT

She is like ice.

COUNTESS

She looks fine. She is just a little cold. Come.

COUNT

My child are you okay?

SNOW CHILD is unable to talk. She looks in to the COUNTS eyes and they stare at each other.

COUNTESS

What are you doing? Don't touch her.

(CONTINUED)

COUNT

How long have you been out here? (*he cradles SNOW CHILD*)

COUNTESS

My darling something is not right here. We must go. Leave her.

COUNT

Can you not see this child is ill? What is wrong with you?

COUNTESS

She looks fine. Can you not see that this could be a trick? We are out here alone and you are looking after a strange child.

COUNT

Do not be foolish. This child is sick. Give me your coat

COUNTESS

What?

COUNT

Give me your coat. She is freezing.

COUNTESS

I shall do no such thing. This is hand made and was a wedding gift. The girl shall not come anywhere near it. Look at her! She is a disgrace.

COUNT

(glares at the COUNTESS. Cold and viciously)

Give me your coat.

COUNTESS reluctantly gives her coat to COUNT. COUNT wraps COUNTESS coat around SNOW CHILD.

COUNT

Here, this should warm you.

SNOW CHILD

I was sent to collect fire wood. Our cottage is so cold and...

COUNT

Shh I understand. I'll take care of you. I will make sure you get warm.

The SNOW CHILD looks up at the COUNT in to his eyes and he looks back in to hers. He strokes her face.

COUNTESS

I think we should leave darling she will be fine now she has my coat.

COUNT

She will not. She is ill. I will look after her.

COUNTESS

But darling I am getting cold. Surely you would want to keep me warm? Lets go home.

COUNT

No. I said I am caring for the child.

COUNTESS

What?

COUNT

Go. I shall be home soon.

COUNTESS

No, I will wait with you. I'm sure I will be able to help.

COUNT

Go.

COUNTESS

Darling?

COUNT

I said GO!

COUNTESS jumps up and walks off towards the castle. She walks off in disbelief and mumbles to herself.

COUNT

Where is your cottage?

SNOW CHILD

It is in the next village. It's too far. I don't think I will be able to walk back.

COUNT

No. You won't be going back my child. I couldn't let you.

SNOW CHILD

Thank you sir...I...

COUNT

Sshh. Don't talk. Save your strength. I will take you back to my castle and will care for you. I will do anything to make you better. I'm glad I found you when I did. I couldn't see you for the snow. You almost blended in to the blanket of it as you are so

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COUNT (cont'd)

white. (*The COUNT kisses the SNOW CHILD head and lifts her into his arm. She places her head on his shoulder.*) My child...You are simply the most beautiful thing I have ever seen. (*Pause*) My love

The COUNT exits.

The COUNTESS returns but is representing her being further on in the woods having walked off. EX-WIFE is on stage collecting twigs.

COUNTESS

How dare he tell me to go. I am his wife. I do not know who he thought he was talking to. How dare he choose a child over me. Especially after I said that...

The COUNTESS walks in to the EX-WIFE
Oh I'm sorry. I didn't see you.

EX-WIFE

Yes, yes. I see, I see

COUNTESS

Sorry? I don't understand what you...

EX WIFE

Understand? (*Laughs*) No. No. I don't understand. Why? Why? Why there? Why?

COUNTESS

Are you okay? Is everything okay?

EX WIFE

Okay? Okay? What is okay? Never okay. Not after....
Not after. (*She puts her face in her hands*)

The COUNTESS walks towards her and goes to touch her back to comfort her
(*The EX WIFE sees her approaching through her hands*)
NO! (*She takes her hands off her face*) Do not touch. Never touch. Not again. Do not touch.

COUNTESS

Woman... Look at me. Are you okay? Is there anything I can do?

EX WIFE

Can do? Can do? Too late. Too late. I've seen it now. I've seen it now. I've seen everything. You don't understand you never will

The EX WIFE looks up at the COUNTESS

EX WIFE
You.

COUNTESS
Sorry? Do I know you?

EX WIFE
You. (*The EX WIFE stands up and the COUNTESS begins to back away. The EX WIFE begins to laugh*) You. (*She stops laughing*) Your the new one aren't you? The new one? Yes, yes I've heard. I've heard all about you. The new one. The new one.

COUNTESS
What new one? What are you talking about?

EX WIFE
His new one. His new one.

COUNTESS
If you are talking about the count then yes I am his new wife. I am not the 'new one' though. He loves me and would do anything for me. (*She is trying to persuade herself here due to what happened with the snow child*)

EX WIFE
(*She begins to walk towards the COUNTESS and goes to touch her face. The COUNTESS backs off as she walks closer. She laughs*) I was the new one. I was the new one. Him. Him. I see him. I see it. I see him. He does not love you. HE DOES NOT LOVE YOU.

COUNTESS
(*Angry*) How dare you! You do not know what you are talking about. He loves me. (*Pause*) What do you mean you were the new one?

EX WIFE
The new one? Yes. Yes. I was the new one once. I see him all the time. I see what he did. All the blood. All the blood.

COUNTESS
You... You were married to the Count? But, I thought all of his wives had passed. I... I don't understand. (*Pause*) The blood?

EX WIFE:
The blood. The blood. I'm sorry. I'm sorry. Don't put me back please. So much blood. I'm sorry! The blood.

The COUNTESS begins to walk away but the EX wife grabs her and looks her right in the eyes

COUNTESS:

(Panicked) Let go of me.

EX WIFE:

He will do it again. He will get you. Leave. Leave him now. Leave. He will do it again. LEAVE.

COUNTESS:

(Scared) Please let go

EX WIFE:

He has secrets. Secrets. It will happen again. So many secrets. *(Pause)* The angel! The angel!

COUNTESS:

I don't know what you're talking about. Please let go of me.

EX WIFE:

(Said as if possessed as this is the only time she speaks in full sentences. She almost looks down/through the countess) I escaped but he will get you. He will. I escaped but he is in my head and so is what he did. I see it all the time. I see it flashing across my eyes. I see them women. I see the blood and I smell that smell. It will never leave me and I will never stop till everyone knows what he is. What he does. He is a monster. He does disgusting things to the young and beautiful. He will get you. Do not stay. Leave. Now.

COUNTESS breaks free and runs off. EX WIFE is still shouting 'Leave'.

END SCENE

Scene 6

'A Dream'

The COUNTESS at the end of Scene 3 is still in the woods heading back to the castle. There will be a huge shift in action during this scene from a bleak setting to a dream sequence. This is signalled to the audience through the beginning of 'Mr. Sandman' playing, it will seem so out of place it is almost comical. This is reverting back to a glimpse of a fairy tale setting, where the trees/statues will come alive, moving together with a pleasant atmosphere.

Smiling and waving to the countess, handing her flowers etc as she walks through the forest. She then finds the COUNT who is also acting out of character and like the traditional prince charming. This is representative of the life she could have had.

As the COUNT and the COUNTESS are waltzing

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through the forest the music will suddenly start to change, the same song but incredibly slowed down to represent the corruption and unreliability of fairytales. Very carnival. . The trees/Statues will start to close in on the COUNTESS as the COUNT disappears, circling and enclosing the COUNTESS symbolising her feeling of entrapment. This will escalate until the COUNTESS finds it unbearable and the trees and statues claim her - resulting in the countess herself becoming almost puppet like and a part of the forest, like the previous wife she has met. Scene ends with the trees back in original SCENE 3 positions, THE EX-WIFE, SNOW CHILD and the COUNTESS are now all part of the forest covered in dead plants and disfigured imagery.

END SCENE

Scene 7

We see the PIANO TUNER attempting to tune a piano in the music room. The HOUSEKEEPER enters the room and looks around and she spots the PIANO TUNER on the floor looking for a tool.

HOUSEKEEPER
Hello.

PIANO TUNER
(he stands up)
Hello?

Throughout all of this conversation there is a sense of the housekeeper feeling uneasy. She is constantly straightening the room, adjusting furniture and speaking with an air of almost forced positivity. She is almost fooling herself she is still in a fairy tale.

HOUSEKEEPER
Hello dear, I'm the housekeeper. (She reaches for the PIANO TUNER'S hand and lifts it from his side to shake it)Just thought I would introduce myself. The master said you would be coming. Sorry I left it like this I've been busy preparing for the countess' arrival. I'm glad you found your way to the room. We have far too many in this castle.

PIANO TUNER
The master showed me up earlier as he wanted the piano fixing for his new bride. I'm William by the way.

HOUSEKEEPER
Yes, he said to expect you. She will be happy you're sorting the Piano. She's been asking me for days when

(MORE)

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HOUSEKEEPER (cont'd)

she will be able to play. I've never known one woman be so passionate about music. (Pause) Are you from the village dear?

PIANO TUNER

Yes, I am. How did you know?

HOUSEKEEPER

I thought as much. The master tries to get his staff as close as he can as he thinks they are more reliable. He has strange ways that one. Do you live with family there dear?

PIANO TUNER

Yes, my father lives in the village and I hope to be able to visit him soon, he taught me everything I know about pianos. He was in the business himself you see.

HOUSEKEEPER

(looks at him sympathetically)

I've heard you're nothing but the best dear. That's why we simply had to have you.

The PIANO TUNER looks embarrassed.

PIANO TUNER

Thank you, miss. That means a lot. *(He smiles to himself.)* I shall tell him that when I see him next. *(Long Pause)* Do you have family in the village too?

HOUSEKEEPER

Oh no my dear. I have worked for the master for as long as I can remember.

PIANO TUNER

You must be the best as well then.

HOUSEKEEPER

Well he likes things a certain way and expectations are always met when it comes to me. I'm a bit of perfectionist and like to keep things in order... and often do if I say so myself. It is very important to the master to have things in an exact order and everything cleaned in an exact way. The castle must always be ship shape as who knows who may pop in *(She smiles)*.

There is a moment of realisation on the HOUSEKEEPERS face, a sense of not belonging in this story. She loses herself in her own thought until PIANO TUNER strikes a not on the piano and she snaps back into action, cleaning and moving furniture.

The master took me in at a very young age you see dear and has looked after me ever since. I owe him so

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HOUSEKEEPER (cont'd)

much as he has helped me a lot. I guess he is like my family.

PIANO TUNER

I am sorry miss. I didn't know that you don't have...

HOUSEKEEPER

That is perfectly fine dear. I don't mind sharing my story. He's been good to me and is such a good man. I couldn't have wished for a better (*she gives a small smile to herself. Pause.*) if you don't mind me asking...(*hesitantly*) how did you lose your sight.

The PIANO TUNER hesitates, but reluctantly talks. He is emotional

PIANO TUNER

I was like this from birth. There were complications and my mother passed (*contemplative*) ... it was hard for us but we managed. That's why I don't want to be far from my Father. He's alone now and I must care for him. That's why I got this job. He gave me everything I have and I want him to know how important he is to me.

HOUSEKEEPER

(*Pause. Walks up to the PIANO TUNER and stands next to him*) I'm really sorry to hear that. I can't imagine how hard that would have been for you. You will get to see your father do not worry about that. The master will understand, he had a special bond with his father. You'll be happy here I know you will and if not, you come and see me.

PIANO TUNER

Thank you.

HOUSEKEEPER walks forward light fades out on the piano and PIANO TUNER, she carries on cleaning. The COUNTESS storms in SR angry from her encounter with the EX WIFE

HOUSEKEEPER

(*completely oblivious*)
Oh hello dear, did you have a nice walk?

COUNTESS

(*built up in anger*)
JUST STAY AWAY FROM ME.

HOUSEKEEPER

(*startled*)
Oh, I'm sorry dear. I'll leave you.

HOUSEKEEPER leaves, the COUNTESS is alone in the bedroom angry, pacing and trying to calm herself down. Moments later the PIANO starts playing and COUNTESS hears the music.

END SCENE

Scene 8

The COUNTESS is SR in the bedroom still angry from her confrontation sequence with EX WIFE in the forest.

She hears a piano tune down the hall SL and storms over to stop the noise but is taken aback by the piano tuner and the music he is playing, reminding her of her of her old self.

She stands at the door for a few moments then slowly starts to walk over to him. He stops playing which instinctively halts the COUNTESS in her tracks. There is a pause.

PIANO TUNER

Who is there?

Another pause. The PIANO TUNER smile
It's okay. Don't be shy...what is your name?

At this point the PIANO TUNER starts to look more uncomfortable from the silence. He starts playing the piano again. The COUNTESS, now sure that there is something wrong with the PIANO TUNER speaks up.

COUNTESS

Your piano doesn't sound right.

PIANO TUNER

Yes. I know. It's my task to tune it. I don't believe we have made acquaintance, Miss...?

COUNTESS

(with air of importance)
I am no Miss, I am the Counts wife.

PIANO TUNER

Oh beg your pardon ma'am. I did not mean to offend.
(uncomfortably) I will mind my place.

COUNTESS

Oh no, I did not mean to sound like that.
(embarrassed) I am still getting used to the role myself.

PIANO TUNER

Thank you ma'am

The PIANO TUNER looks towards the COUNTESS, slightly off to one side which is when the COUNTESS notices his disability

COUNTESS

Will you play something for me?

PIANO TUNER

Certainly ma'am

COUNTESS

Please do not call me ma'am. My name is Elizabeth

PIANO TUNER

Certainly. Elizabeth

He plays the piano. He makes a mistake, becomes flustered and starts apologising - the COUNTESS is confused and tries to reassure him

I'm sorry its out of tune.

COUTNESS

(breathless)

That...that was beautiful. Will you teach me?

The COUNTESS sits down next to the PIANO TUNER

PIANO TUNER

(happy)

It would be my pleasure Elizabeth. It is nice to have someone to teach. The Count isn't fond of playing himself. I expect he only keeps me around for when he holds parties.

*pause**(nervously)*

May I see you?

The COUNTESS seems confused at first but when the PIANO TUNER raises his hands in the air she understands what he means

COUNTESS

Yes you may

The PIANO TUNER gently touches the COUNTESS' face and starts to smile

At this point the COUNTESS removes his hands from her face

Please don't, I am the counts wife and...

The HOUSEKEEPER withdraws offstage

PIANO TUNER

Oh no, ma'am I didn't mean to...

COUNTESS

No please, I'm just...I'm sorry

PIANO TUNER

Tell me what is wrong...please

COUNTESS

I don't really know myself

PIANO TUNER

Try

COUNTESS

I..I met this woman in the forest

PIANO TUNER

Who?

COUNTESS

She was filthy...not just her appearance, the things that were coming out of her mouth were, they were...

PIANO TUNER

What was she saying? ? Tell me.

COUNTESS

Lies..I'm not sure, she seemed hysterical. She mentioned a room that was in the castle and said some awful things about the count.

PIANO TUNER

Oh. (*Pause*) Elizabeth... I must tell you that I've heard rumors about this room before from people in the village. They say a woman often shouts and screams about it. No one is sure if she is speaking the truth or if she is mad but she is scared from something.

COUNTESS

What? She says about a room that no one is allowed to enter? Other people know about this?

PIANO TUNER

Yes. But we do not know if it is true.

COUNTESS

I'm so confused. She was so scared and angry. Whatever she saw ...it broke her mind. I think I need to find her. If what you say is true and you have heard of this room too what if she is telling the truth? Maybe she will tell me about what she saw if I can calm her.

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PIANO TUNER

Elizabeth, you must be careful.

COUNTESS

(She stares at the PIANO TUNER) You... You are so kind. Why do you care for me?

PIANO TUNER

Thank you, Elizabeth. Because you are beautiful. I can tell. Please do be careful though... You do not know what she is capable of. *(Pause. The PIANO TUNER stands up and takes the COUNTESS' hand)* I do not want you to get hurt.

COUNTESS

I won't. I'll come back to you. I promise. *(Small kiss)*

END SCENE

Scene 9

Bright, blinding lights flood the stage and the audience for 10 seconds. A gradual fade slowly reveals the PIANO TUNER standing downstage centre we see him looking out into the audience - the light is on him long enough for the audience to recognise who is before fading into darkness.

Blackout

Silence for 5 Seconds

Actors move out into the audience x 2

Actors appear on the gallery x 2

Actor Downstage x 1

Actor Upstage x 1

Background Noises - Ex Wife Laugh starting off normal turning into the corrupt laugh she has in the play.

Tinkling light Piano Noises

Snapping of Twigs, crunching of leaves

Rattling of chains very lightly echoed in the beginning foreshadowing the end of this scene.

The Dialogue in this scene is reflective of both the past and the present for the Piano Tuner.

Village Resident 1: Have you seen her recently?

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Village Resident 2: He doesn't come down here often, if you ask me we'd be better off without him. Too many young girls being driven out of this village never to be seen again.

Village Resident 3: Its no wonder he never shows his face.

All three Residents laugh together thinking this is a trivial matter.

This laugh is carried - Three Residents separate laughing and head to different parts of the auditorium.

PIANO TUNERS FATHER: Remember what I told you.

The Next lines need to be repeated, and overlapping each other continuously building.

HOUSEKEEPER: I'll sort this.

Hello Dear.

EX WIFE: Muttering, clear to the piano tuner as his senses are heightened.

COUNTESS: I am no miss, I am the counts ... I am the counts. I am the counts. I am the counts.

How do you be a good wife?

COUNT: You are mine.

I'll have to add you to my collection.

At this point all the building noises and dialogue stop and all the actors around the auditorium say this line one by one.

Housekeeper

Countess

Ex Wife

Snow Child

Actor (TBC)

Actor (BC)

After it has gone round once, the cycle continues again, except the actors start to overlap each other, the tempo increases, the volume is louder and coming from every corner of

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the auditorium.

The signal to stop will be the noise of the door locking.

Chains will drop to the floor along with a body being dragged covered with them. This is the last sound we hear to signify the end of the scene.

The final sound of a lock.

END SCENE

Scene 10

The COUNT and SNOW CHILD enter the room with his arms around her waist holding her up. He takes her over to the bed and lays her down.

COUNT

Here. Get in bed and get warm.

He pulls the cover over

How long were you out in the woods? *(she doesn't reply and is just shaking in bed)* It's okay you're here now.

The COUNT begins to walk around the room and grabs clothing to cover the SNOW CHILD to keep her warm

This should keep you warm for now. I'll get the housekeeper to bring up a bed warmer after she has come back from the market. I don't think she will be too long.

The SNOW CHILD begins to shiver even more and begins to curl up in a ball as she is so cold. The COUNT looks at the SNOW CHILD and begins to walk over to her slowly

Here. *(he gets into bed with her from behind and holds her)* I'll warm you.

The COUNT lays hugging the SNOW CHILD for a while

You really are like ice. Why did you stay out so long? If only I had found you earlier. I will help you as much as I can. Just try to get warm.

The COUNT then begins to stroke the SNOW CHILD'S head and moves her hair from her neck. He looks at her for a while

You know you are the most beautiful girl I have ever seen. *(he grabs her hand and lifts it from under the covers and begins to stroke it.)* Your skin is as white as snow. So beautiful. I would never let anything bad happen to you.

(CONTINUED)

The COUNT sits up and moves the SNOW CHILD on to her back. He strokes her face and kisses her cheek.

I don't know what it is about you. You make my heart ache. I can't bear to see you like this yet I don't even know you. (Pause. He looks into her eyes) I've never felt this way before. (Pause. He kisses her lips. The SNOW CHILD does not move or do anything.)

The COUNT begins to kiss the SNOW CHILD on her cheeks and lips. The SNOW CHILD keeps still and closes her eyes. They make love. Half way through the SNOW CHILD dies and we see this by her head turning to the side and her arm coming out of the bed and she is just lifeless. The COUNT carries on making love to her and in the end he holds her head to his chest and cries. He then picks up her body and exits.

END SCENE

Scene 11

Sweet Dreams Music is playing.

*Single Spot Light Centre Stage.
Snow Child slowly walks into the spotlight, blood dripping down her legs and stares straight ahead at the audience, no movement just a blank, dead stare.*

A faint light comes up on the Bloody Chamber Up Stage Centre. The Angel in front of the stairs arms come down (from previously being a statue in SCENE 3 and 7) slowly comes down from guarding the entrance to the Bloody Chamber, Angel moves to the side and stares at the SNOW CHILD.

The SNOW CHILD slowly turns around and begins walking towards the entrance. Spot Light fades out as her silhouette forms behind her as she ascends the stairs.

Material Angel lifts and she goes through. Material Angel comes back down and the stone Angel resumes its place back on the stairs, eyes covered in the 'weeping angel' position.

Song ends with the just the image of the Angel and the entrance to the Bloody Chamber, as if nothing has happened. Signalling the end of the SNOW CHILDS short life.

END SCENE

Scene 12

Music - 5 stages of grief

Throughout all this scene there is a voiceover from a self-help; dealing with grief video. Building up through the 5 stages: Denial, anger, depression and acceptance.

At the end of the speech lights will come up to reveal the COUNT surrounded by his 5 dead wives.

The COUNT is staring ahead blankly on the verge of tears.

While this happens the following is heard as a voice over.

VOICEOVER

Thank you for choosing a practical guide to overcoming loss and bereavement. Just take a few moments to breathe deeply and calmly. Feel yourself letting go and relaxing.

The bereavement experience includes the concept of grief, as pain and suffering must be experienced in order to heal and resolve the loss event.

Loss is an integral part of life. It is not something that happens to us as we live; rather, it is life itself. In our view any events that involve change is a loss that necessitates the process of grief and transition. A loss event requires that some part of the individual be left behind and grieve before the process of transition and rebuilding can occur.

-The first assessment starts with a request from the client seeking counselling services. A pre counselling intake form is used. An initial assessment is necessary to determine if the statement is within the normal grief experience or if there is a level of lethality to the suicidal ideation.

- Guilt is the other very strong emotion that the grieving feel. Some guilt will be justified or appropriate, for most of us will be aware of times when we hurt someone we loved and are aware that we can no longer repair or heal the hurt.

Denial of all feelings may lead to persistent depression.

-Trauma can also be experienced through violent acts such as murder, rape, war, hijackings, and varied forms of attack and destruction.

- Moreover, counsellors need to know when a client's issues are beyond their professional scope and a referral is indicated. Despite disagreement in some areas there is general agreement that unresolved grief which becomes diagnosable as a syndrome or as a mental or physical disorder can have social, psychological, and medical implications for the

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

VOICEOVER (cont'd)

larger society, and warrants intensive professional intervention.

- Eventually you will get to the point where you know deep down that you have to do something to regain a sense of control in your life. Regaining a sense of control will help your waves of grief lessen in intensity and frequency.

-The pain, experience, and resolution of grief takes place on two levels: within oneself and within one's environment. It involves many changes and reflects many dimensions. The process of grieving is healthy and adaptive. It gives you the time and space to adjust to the many changes that result from the death of your loved one, both at a physical and emotional level. Even though you may never 'get over' the death of your loved one, it is possible to learn to live without them physically in your life and to find meaning again.

END SCENE

Scene 13

The COUNTESS enters the stage, which is now set back in the woods. The COUNTESS is looking for the EX WIFE who she had spoke to previously.

COUNTESS

(Talking to herself) Where is she? Where is she?
(Pause. She sees the woman) You. Woman. I need to talk to you

EX-WIFE

You. You. Your back

COUNTESS

Yes. I need to talk to you. You need to answer my questions.

EX-WIFE

I knew you would come back. I knew it. I knew it. It's about him isn't it. Him.

The COUNTESS nods

Your young. Younger than the rest. Young. Very young.
(Pause. She begins to stand up. Becomes scared) Where is he? Have you told him? He's not coming is he? Where is he?

COUNTESS

Its okay. He doesn't know I left.

EX-WIFE

Keeping secrets already. He kept secrets. Secrets and lies. Secrets and lies.

(CONTINUED)

COUNTESS

No. It's not like that it's just that someone else has mentioned about the room.

EX-WIFE

Secrets and lies. Secrets and lies.

COUNTESS

No. We tell each other everything

EX-WIFE

No you don't. No you don't. The room. The room. The chamber.

COUNTESS

What about it? What is it?

EX-WIFE

He keeps them in there. In there.

COUNTESS

Who?

EX-WIFE

The others.

COUNTESS

I don't understand the other what?

EX-WIFE

(*Shouting*) THE OTHER WIVES. THE OTHERS. THE OTHERS.

COUNTESS

(*Takes a few steps back*) What? But I though they had died. He said that they had died and that...

EX-WIFE

They are. They are dead (*The COUNTESS looks horrified. Long pause*) The blood. The blood. The smell. The blood. So many bodies. So much death. The blood. The blood.

COUNTESS

How have you seen this? When?

EX-WIFE

When I was his and he was mine. When I was his and he was mine.

COUNTESS

When you were married. Why did you go in there? Why?

EX-WIFE

I didn't go in. No. No. I didn't go in. No. I was put in. I was put in

(CONTINUED)

COUNTESS

By...

EX-WIFE

(Shouting) BY HIM!

COUNTESS

(Looks puzzled) I don't know what to believe. Why would he do that? He's such a good man. He wouldn't do that to someone.

EX-WIFE

You don't know him. You don't know him. He is evil. He is evil. He takes away the young and the beautiful and uses them for his pleasure. He is evil.

COUNTESS

How did you escape?

EX-WIFE

He came. He came to kill. He came to kill. But... But I ran. I hit him and I ran. The blood. The blood. The smell and the blood.

COUNTESS

(The COUNTESS looks puzzled. Shouting) Please. Look at me! *(Stops shouting)* Tell me the truth. Is this room real? I need to know. I need to see it!

EX-WIFE

(Starts laughing) Why would I lie? Why would I lie?

COUNTESS

I don't know. I just...

EX-WIFE

I would not lie. Women. Wives. Girls. Beautiful. All lying in the chamber. All lying in the chamber for his pleasure. I do not lie. I do not lie.

COUNTESS

Where can I find it? Where did he put you?

EX-WIFE

Behind the angel. Behind the angel. Do not go in. Do not go in. You are next. You are next. Do not go in.

COUNTESS

I must get back. I must. You don't understand. I must get back.

EX-WIFE

(The EX-WIFE grabs the COUNTESS) Do not go back. Run. Run. Run far away.

COUNTESS

No! I need to. You don't understand. You don't understand. I need to get him and keep him safe. I promised I would go back to him and be safe. I promised

(The COUNTESS breaks free and she runs off stage)

END SCENE

SCENE 14

Countess storms in from forest. She goes to the piano room. Piano Tuner is sat in silence.

COUNTESS

It's true. *(Pause)*. All the rumours, everything you said ... it's true.
She was there, she's seen it all.

PIANO TUNER

What shall we do?

COUNTESS

I don't know. I need to go and see it for myself.

PIANO TUNER

(He Stands and holds her hands) No. We should leave. Right now. Just me and you. We don't need to pack. We can go and forget all this and be happy. Just me and you... Please.

COUNTESS

I can't, this doesn't feel real. I need to know the truth.

PIANO TUNER

Elizabeth, you know the truth.

COUNTESS

No ... I need to hear it from him.

PIANO TUNER

Elizabeth please...

COUNTESS

I'm sorry.

Countess runs off

PIANO TUNER

Elizabeth, wait!

END SCENEScene 15

The HOUSEKEEPER and the COUNT are alone. The COUNT is sat pondering to himself while the HOUSEKEEPER observes silently. Finally after a few seconds the HOUSEKEEPER speaks up.

HOUSEKEEPER

Where is she now?

Silence. The atmosphere is uncomfortable.
Where is the girl?

COUNT

Girl?

HOUSEKEEPER

The child

COUNT

The chamber.

The HOUSEKEEPER is shocked

HOUSEKEEPER

What? Why have you put her in there?

COUNT

I...I didn't know what else to do.

HOUSEKEEPER

You're going to have to be more careful; you're starting to slip up.

The COUNT stays silent. The HOUSEKEEPER starts to get impatient.

Are you listening to me? Be cautious.

COUNT

It doesn't matter anymore.

The HOUSEKEEPER is infuriated

HOUSEKEEPER

(angrily)

Are you insane? Your sorrow for that girl is infuriating; she's dead, dead you hear me. And while you're here feeling sorry for yourself that wife of yours is out there sneaking around asking questions.

COUNT

Where is she now?

(CONTINUED)

HOUSEKEEPER

I observed her leaving the grounds; she has gone to the forest.

COUNT

Leave her, she knows nothing.

HOUSEKEEPER

I wouldn't be so sure of that. (pause) Listen to me; she's been seen in the woods.

COUNT

Who has?

HOUSEKEEPER

The one who escaped

COUNT

I thought she died

HOUSEKEEPER

Well she is still alive

COUNT

(*unsure*)
What harm can she do? She's insane.

HOUSEKEEPER

What is wrong with you?

COUNT

Nothing. I'm fine

HOUSEKEEPER

You're a disgrace.

COUNT

GET OUT

HOUSEKEEPER

Your mind has become corrupted by this ridiculous fantasy of yours.

COUNT

I SAID GET OUT.

HOUSEKEEPER

Fine I will sort this.

The COUNTESS enters. She stops when the HOUSEKEEPER turns to face her. The COUNT sits back down.

The HOUSEKEEPER leaves. The COUNTESS watches as she goes then approaches the COUNT. He doesn't look at her or even move.

COUNT

Where have you been?

COUNTESS

In the garden.

COUNT

That's amusing. I don't remember the woods being part of the garden.

COUNTESS

I...How did you...?

COUNT

What were you doing?

COUNTESS

Nothing. I swear. Nothing. I... I just went for a walk

COUNT

You're lying. What have you been doing?

COUNTESS

(Long pause. She looks down) There's a woman in the forest and...

COUNT

So its true then?

COUNTESS

What?

COUNT

(he stands)
This woman, what did she say?

COUNTESS

She...she...

COUNT

(angriy)
WHAT DID SHE SAY?

COUNTESS

She told me about a room. A room in the castle...
She...

COUNT

(temper flaring)
What room?

COUNTESS

A room filled blood and with the smell of flesh

COUNT

Well this is just perfect

COUNTESS

(distressed)

She told me she was not the first, that there were others before...

COUNT

Please go on... What else did this woman say?

COUNTESS

(terrified)

That you were evil, that you were going to....kill me

COUNT

To kill you...

COUNTESS

She said you didn't love me!

The COUNT stops what he is doing and stares at the COUNTESS

COUNT

Love you?

COUNTESS

Yes

COUNT

Oh my darling. I loathe you

COUNTESS

No

COUNT

You don't like that?

COUNTESS

You're lying to me..

COUNT

Oh no. I think you're lying to yourslef

COUNTESS

You're horrible

The COUNT laughs. She goes to leave. He stops her.

You are mine I will do with you as I please.

COUNTESS

No I'm not...

The COUNTESS leaves

END SCENEScene 16

Scene opens on bloody chamber. The SNOW CHILD is in the middle of the chamber slightly raised and the Ex wives are around her in different positions. The COUNTESS walks on stage with a knife and looks traumatised at what she is looking at. She walks around the chamber trying to take everything in. She goes to touch some of the objects in the chamber and then notices the SNOW CHILD. She walks up to the SNOW CHILD and walks around her. She stops and stares at her for a while

COUNTESS

What's so special about you? Peasant child. Look at you! Disgusting. I am far more beautiful and you took him away from me. You took all this away from me. I was living my dream and I had everything I have always wanted. He would buy me everything until you came along. It's sickening really how he could love something like you.

The COUNTESS begins to stroke the SNOW CHILDS face with her knife to show she is crazed linking to the scene 7. As she is doing this the door to the chamber opens and a males silhouette is shown on stage. The COUNTESS stands up straight with her knife clutched in her hand and it is obvious she thinks it is the COUNT. The male begins to walk into the chamber and the COUNTESS can sense that he is getting closer and closer. The PIANO TUNER is the male and he is trying to feel his way into the chamber feeling around for the COUNTESS. The COUNTESS is unaware who this is as she is facing the other way. The PIANO TUNER moves towards the COUNTESS and puts his hand on her shoulder. She is still gripping the knife tight

PIANO TUNER

I heard the argument... (The COUNTESS turns sharply and plunges the knife into the PIANO TUNERS stomach. He keels over and she withdraws the knife and screams.)

COUNTESS

NO! NO! William?! NO! (She places him on the floor and begins stroking his face and touching his wound. She is getting blood all over her hands and is putting it all over his face as she is touching him.)

(CONTINUED)

PIANO TUNER

Elizabeth... You must leave this place.

COUNTESS

No, No. I said I would come back to you. I promised.
I promised.

PIANO TUNER

You did. You're here with me now.

COUNTESS

(She is sobbing) But... No. I didn't... I'm sorry.
I'm sorry.

PIANO TUNER

(The PIANO TUNER smiles and touches the COUNTESS' face as she is leaning over him) I love you,
Elizabeth

COUNTESS

I love you too. *(They kiss and the PIANO TUNER dies)*
William? *(She begins to shake him)* William? *(She says in disbelief and begins to cry)* No. No.

(The COUNT enters the chamber. The COUNTESS is still on the floor crying)

COUNT

How touching

COUNTESS

You! You did this! *(The COUNTESS stands with the knife in her hand)*

COUNT

My darling, I am not the one holding the knife.

COUNTESS

No.. but.. but you made him come down here. I know you did. You did something. You did this. *(She turns back and stares at the PIANO TUNER and puts her hand over her mouth. She is trying not to cry)*

COUNT

(Spiteful) I did nothing. This was all you... *(His eyes light up)* Did you enjoy it? Did you? *(He walks around his chamber with confidence. Pause)* I do. I'm a little upset that I will have to add you to my collection so soon. I was enjoying your company.

COUNTESS

I am nothing like you. You disgust me. Look at what you have done to these women. Sick. You're sick. I will be no part of your collection.

COUNT

You honestly think you will get away?

COUNTESS

Well one has already...

COUNT

(The COUNT laughs) Has she? I wouldn't be so sure. *(A light comes up and we see the EX WIFE dead in the chamber)*

COUNTESS

(Gasps) No. But how...

COUNT

... Shhh. Secret.

(Long Pause. The COUNTESS moves towards the SNOW CHILD but does not take her eyes off the COUNT. He flinches as she gets closer but does not move from where he is standing)

COUNTESS

I didn't think she would be in here. Not judging by the way you were looking at her in the woods.

COUNT

I did not kill her if thats what you mean.

COUNTESS

(Laughs) I do not believe that for a second. Look around you.

COUNT

(Angry) I DID NOT KILL HER. *(He looks at the SNOW CHILD. Finds it hard to say)* She... She died in my arms

COUNTESS

How?

COUNT

(Looking at the SNOW CHILD still and is lost in his own thoughts and emotions) The cold. On the day I found her. She was so beautiful... Just like snow.

COUNTESS

(Mocking) Ohhh... Touching. *(COUNTESS puts the knife to the SNOW CHILDS neck)*

COUNT

(Threatening) Do not touch her.

The COUNTESS begins to move the knife across the SNOW CHILDS neck

COUNT

I am warning you. Do. Not. Touch. Her.

COUNTESS

(Looks at the SNOW CHILD) How precious. (She slits the SNOW CHILDS throat)

COUNT

NO!

In a rage the COUNT marches up to the COUNTESS and grabs her by the throat. The COUNTESS is choking and he is threatening her though gritted teeth in her face

COUNT

I said not to touch her. I said not to touch her! Look at what you have done. You have stained her with blood. You have stained my child with blood. Her neck... *(He releases the COUNTESS and begins to stroke her neck as if he is planning to cut it where her necklace is)* Her beautiful neck.

The COUNTESS is weeping and sees this as her chance to kill the count. She slaps him and plunges her knife into his stomach and drops it on the floor and stumbles back. The COUNT falls to the floor but tries to reach up to the SNOW CHILD but he can't reach. He dies. The COUNTESS is left on the floor of the chamber holding her knees. A spot light it on her for a few minutes as she just sits there

END SCENE