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The doorbell chimes. Clifford starts to rise but Sidney puts up a hand.

SIDNEY. Don't. We don't want to break the flow, do we?

He heads for the foyer. Clifford resumes typing. Sidney opens the front door. Porter Milgrim is there, a man of substance in his mid-fifties; in hat, topcoat, and business suit, carrying a briefcase.

Porter! It's good to see you! Come on in.

They shake hands.

PORTER. How are you, Sidney?

SIDNEY. Doing fairly well, thanks.

PORTER. (*Entering the foyer.*) There are a couple of things I want to talk to you about. Am I disturbing you?

SIDNEY. (*Closing the door.*) Not at all. Glad of the chance to take a break.

Porter has put his briefcase down and is taking his hat and coat off.

How come you're not in the city?

PORTER. I have to be in New Haven this afternoon. The secretary?

SIDNEY. (*Taking the hat and coat.*) Yes.

PORTER. My, what a fast typist...

He picks up his briefcase while Sidney hangs the hat and coat on a wall rack.

SIDNEY. He is, isn't he. Come meet him. Clifford?

Clifford stops typing; turns and rises as Porter and Sidney come into the study.

This is Clifford Anderson. And this is my friend Porter Milgrim.

PORTER. (*Shaking hands with Clifford.*) How do you do.

CLIFFORD. How do you do, sir.

SIDNEY. I would say "my attorney," but then he would bill me.

PORTER. I'm going to anyway; this is a business call. Partly, at least.

SIDNEY. Clifford was at the seminar I conducted last July. He asked me then about a secretarial position, and--when Myra passed on--I realized I would need someone to lend a hand, so I called him. The next day, here he was.

CLIFFORD. Have typewriter, will travel.

PORTER. That was very good of you.

CLIFFORD. It's a privilege to be of help to someone like Mr. Bruhl.

PORTER. (*Noticing the desk.*) Oh, look at that... Isn't this a beauty!

SIDNEY. Partners' desk.

PORTER. Mmmm! Where did you find it?

SIDNEY. In Wilton. Just happened on it last week. Makes more sense than cluttering the room with two single ones.

PORTER. Cost a pretty penny, I'll bet.

SIDNEY. Well, it's deductible.

PORTER. Yes, they can't very well quibble about a writer's desk, can they? Wait till Elizabeth sees this...

SIDNEY. How is she?

PORTER. Fine.

SIDNEY. And the girls?

PORTER. Couldn't be better. Cathy loves Vassar.

SIDNEY. And Vassar versa, I'm sure. Sit down.

CLIFFORD. Shall I go get the groceries now? Then you and Mr. Milgrim can talk in private.

Sidney looks to Porter, who nods infinitesimally.

SIDNEY. Would you mind?

CLIFFORD. I have to do it sometime before dinner; might as well.

SIDNEY. All right. (*Heading for the foyer.*) Be with you in a second, Porter.

PORTER. Take your time. I haven't started the clock yet!

Sidney is out and on his way upstairs. Clifford smiles as he rolls the paper from his typewriter. Porter sits D. R. and puts his briefcase down.

I love this room.

CLIFFORD. Isn't it nice? It's a pleasure working here.

Clifford puts the paper and the page he finished earlier into the folder, behind other sheets in it.

PORTER. He's looking well...

CLIFFORD. Yes, he's picked up quite a bit in the past few days. (*Putting the folder into the desk.*) It was pretty bad the first week. He cried every night; I could hear him plainly. And he was drinking heavily.

PORTER. Ah...

CLIFFORD. (*Standing against the desk.*) But he'll pull through. His work is a great solace to him.

PORTER. I'm sure it must be. I've always envied my writer clients on that account. I tried a play once.

CLIFFORD. Oh?

Scene 2

When the lights come up, Clifford, in a different shirt, is standing at his side of the desk squaring up a sizable thickness of paper and looking pleased with himself. Sidney's typewriter is covered, Clifford's isn't. The room is quite dark; the desk lamp and a light outside the front door fan-light are the only illumination. Wind can be heard. Through the darkness outside the closed French doors a flashlight approaches; the person holding it raps at the doors. Clifford starts. He puts the papers down and, as the person raps again, goes warily toward the doors.

HELGA. (*Shining the flashlight onto her face.*) Mr. Bruhl? Is I, Helga ten Dorp!

Clifford turns a lamp on at R. and goes and unbolts the French doors and opens them.

CLIFFORD. Come in. Mr. Bruhl isn't here now.

HELGA. (*Coming in, in a raincoat and kerchief.*) I come through wood; is less to walk.

CLIFFORD. (*Closing the doors.*) He should be back any minute.

HELGA. You are?

CLIFFORD. His secretary, Clifford Anderson.

HELGA. (*Offers her hand.*) I am Helga ten Dorp. I am psychic.

CLIFFORD. (*Shaking her hand.*) I know, Mr. Bruhl's told me about you. I understand you predicted his wife's death.

HELGA. (*Coming into the room, pocketing her flashlight.*) Ja, ja, was much pain. Right here. (*Pats her chest.*) Very sad. Such a nice lady. Ei, this room... He is well, Mr. Bruhl?

CLIFFORD. Yes, fine. He went out to dinner, the first time since... He said he'd be back by ten and it's about a quarter past now.

HELGA. Will be big storm! Much wind and rain, lightning and thunder. Trees will fall.

CLIFFORD. Are you sure?

HELGA. Ja, was on radio. (*Takes her kerchief off.*) I come to borrow candles. Are none in house. You have?

CLIFFORD. I don't know. I haven't noticed any but there must be some; I'll go look. Why don't you sit down?

HELGA. Thank you.

Clifford starts for the foyer. Helga starts to sit but rises, pointing.
You wear boots!

Clifford stops, and after a moment turns.

CLIFFORD. Everyone does these days. They're very comfortable.

HELGA. You are for long time secretary to Mr. Bruhl?

CLIFFORD. No. I just came here—about three weeks ago. After Mrs. Bruhl died.

Helga turns from him, worried and perplexed.
I'll go look for—

He is interrupted by the unlocking and opening of the front door. Sidney comes in, switching the foyer light on and the outside light off. He's in a trenchcoat over a shirt, tie, and jacket. As he closes the door:

SIDNEY. Hi. What a bore that—

CLIFFORD. (*Interrupting him.*) Mr. Bruhl! Hello. Mrs. ten Dorp is here.

He and Sidney exchange a look.

SIDNEY. Oh.

He comes to the doorway, smiling.

Hello.

HELGA. (*Going toward him.*) Good evening, Mr. Bruhl.

SIDNEY. (*Meeting her, shaking her hand.*) How are you?

HELGA. Well.

SIDNEY. Did you get my note?

HELGA. Ja, thank you.

SIDNEY. (*Taking his coat off.*) Yours was most kind. And the flowers...

CLIFFORD. Do we have any candles? There's a storm coming up and Mrs. ten Dorp wants to borrow some.

ACT II

Scene 1

At rise, Clifford is hard at work and Sidney isn't. They sit facing each other at c. s. across a handsome old partners' desk, Sidney at its R. side, Clifford at its L. The Act I desk is gone. The draperies are open to bright morning sunlight.

Clifford, typing away like sixty on an old black Smith Corona, is in chinos, a shirt, and boots. Sidney, lolling in his chair and feigning unconcern, is in his cardigan and another turtleneck. There's a sheet of paper in Zenobia, but it's probably blank.

God, how Clifford types! On and on, speech after speech. Occasionally he backtracks to X out a few words, occasionally he pauses for an instant of intense thought; but then it's on and on, fast and expert and clattering. Sidney finds it harder and harder to hide his irritation. He squirms, frets, grits his teeth. Eventually he pecks out a word, mouthing the letters—S, H, I, T—and sits back and glares at it.

Clifford whips out the finished page, scans it, puts it down on a Manila folder beside him and begins revising with a pen.

SIDNEY. That must have been quite a welfare office...

CLIFFORD. It was. Everyone had a poignant story. They're creating the play of their own accord.

SIDNEY. No notes? No outline?

CLIFFORD. This isn't a thriller, Sidney. It's not dependent on intricate plotting and contrived theatrics. These are real people. All I'm doing is bringing them on and letting them spill out their dreams and frustrations, their anger at the bureaucracy.

SIDNEY. Joe Papp will have a messenger at the door any minute.

CLIFFORD. I was thinking of him as a possible producer. Do you know him?

SIDNEY. Slightly. Let me see a few pages.

CLIFFORD. Sure, if you'd like to. But I'd really rather wait till the draft is done, give you the whole thing in one glorious bundle. Would you mind?

SIDNEY. Of course not. What's another hour or so?

CLIFFORD. *(Putting a fresh sheet of paper into his typewriter.)* It's going to take three or four weeks, I think.

SIDNEY. At the rate you're going you'll have a trilogy by then.

CLIFFORD. *(Looks sympathetically at him.)* Nothing doing?

SIDNEY. I'm thinking...

CLIFFORD. Why don't you invite her over? Ten Dorp. Talking with her might spark something.

SIDNEY. Do you think we should risk having her on the premises?

CLIFFORD. Maybe not when the moon is full, but any other time, why not? Look at the egg she laid on the *Griffin Show*.

SIDNEY. Well, she got rattled by the Amazing Kreskin when he described all her husbands in such detail.

CLIFFORD. Oh, Belle Forrester called before you came down. *(Resumes typing.)* Wanted to know if she could bring over a casserole or come sew a button. I told her we were managing just fine.

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forward and feels at a wrist within its handcuff. Myra sits L., weeping, moaning.

Sidney gets up, breathing hard, trembling a little. He gets out his handkerchief, wipes his hands and his face, looks at Myra. He rights the chair, picks up the lamp, puts it in its place and straightens its shade—not very successfully because his hands are shaking badly now. He holds them a moment, then turns to the desk, picks up a key, and crouching beside Clifford unlocks and removes the handcuffs. He rises, wiping the cuffs with the handkerchief, and goes and replaces them on the wall, then returns to Clifford's body. Myra is staring at him.

SIDNEY. Right on the rug. One point for neatness.

He crouches again and unwinds the garrote from Clifford's throat, then turns the ends of the hearth-rug over Clifford's body. Rising, he wipes the garrote with the handkerchief and meets Myra's wondering stare.

Your heart seems to have taken it.

MYRA. *(Keeps staring at him awhile.)* Barely.

SIDNEY. *(Looks away, wipes at the garrote.)* We'll give it a rest on the Riviera, after the opening. And we'll have a housekeeper again, so you can take things easy. Another car too, a goddamn Rolls.

Sidney looks at the blood-streaked handkerchief, wipes the garrote more.

MYRA. We're going to be in prison!

Sidney throws the handkerchief into the fireplace and heads U.

SIDNEY. A young would-be playwright walks away from his house-sitting job. The police won't even bother to yawn.

He puts the garrote in its place.

MYRA. Leaving his clothes? And his typewriter?

SIDNEY. Why not? Who can figure these young people nowadays? *(Going back D.)* Especially the would-be writers. Maybe he realized he wouldn't be—*(Picking up the envelope and the bound manuscript.)*—and went off to preach ecology. *(Going back behind the desk.)* Or to join the Reverend Sun Myung Moon.

He puts the envelope and manuscript down, opens the manuscript.

Who knows, the place might be broken into, and poor little Smith Corona stolen.

Sidney tears out the first page and puts it aside; unfastens the envelope and takes out the two unbound manuscripts; removes their first pages.

MYRA. What are you—going to do with him?

SIDNEY. (*Examining other papers that were in the envelope.*) Bury him. Behind the garage. No, in the vegetable patch; easier digging.

He examines the last scraps of paper and puts them down; opens the desk's center drawer and puts the three manuscripts into it; closes and locks it. Myra puts her face into her hands, overcome by grief and shock again. Sidney gathers the papers and loose pages, the envelope, the letter that came with the play.

Take a brandy or something...

He goes to the fireplace and, crouching by Clifford's body, tosses everything in; takes a match from a holder, strikes it, and sets the papers afire. He tosses the match in, rises, watches, then moves away and faces Myra, who is studying him.

I'm going to be a winner again! All our dear friends are going to see *you* living on my money! Picture their confusion.

Myra looks into her lap. Sidney goes and throws open the draperies, unbolts and opens the French doors. He looks toward the treetops.

Full moon all right...

He comes back to the hearth and, crouching, rearranges Clifford's body for carrying.

I hope this isn't going to become a monthly practice...

He straightens up, takes his jacket off and puts it on a chair, rubs his hands and readies himself; meets Myra's gaze.

Would you mind helping me carry him?

Myra looks at him for a moment, and looks away.

It's been *done*, Myra. I don't see the point in my getting a hernia.

Myra looks at him and after a moment rises and comes over. The lights begin dimming as Sidney lifts Clifford's rug-wrapped shoulders. Myra lifts his feet. They heft him up between them and carry him toward the French doors, Sidney going backwards.

Thank God he wasn't the fat one.

The lights fade to darkness.

DEATHTRAP

ACT I

Scene 1

At rise, Sidney Bruhl is seated thoughtfully at his desk. He's about fifty, an impressive and well-tended man, wearing a cardigan sweater over a turtleneck shirt.

The typewriter is covered. The draperies are open at the French doors; it's late afternoon of a sunny day in October of 1978.

The door to the foyer opens partway and Myra Bruhl looks in. She's in her forties, slim and self-effacing, in a sweater and skirt. She enters quietly with an ice bucket, which she places on the buffet. Sidney notices her.

SIDNEY. *Deathtrap.*

Myra turns.

A thriller in two acts. One set, five characters.

He lifts a manuscript in a paperboard binder.

A juicy murder in Act One, unexpected developments in Act Two. Sound construction, good dialogue, laughs in the right places. Highly commercial. (*Tosses the manuscript on the desk.*)

MYRA. Why—that's wonderful, darling! I'm so happy for you! For both of us!

SIDNEY. Happy? Why on earth happy?

MORA. But—it's yours, isn't it? The idea you had in August?

SIDNEY. The idea I had in August has gone the way of the idea I had in June, and the idea I had in whenever it was before then: in

the fireplace, up the chimney, and out over Fairfield County—pollution in its most grisly form. This arrived in the mail this morning. It's the property of one— (*Finds the covering letter.*) — Clifford Anderson. He was one of the the twerps at the seminar.

He reads the letter, twerpishly.

“Dear Mr. Bruhl: I hope you don't mind my sending you my play *Deathtrap*, which I finished retyping at two o'clock this morning. Since I couldn't have written it without the inspiration of your own work and the guidance and encouragement you gave me last summer, I thought it only fitting that you should be the first person to read it. If you find it one-tenth as good as any of your own thrillers, I'll consider my time well spent and the fee for the seminar more than adequately recompensed.”

MYRA. (*Sitting.*) *That's nice.*

SIDNEY. No it isn't, it's fulsome. “Please excuse the carbon copy; the local Xerox machine is on the fritz and I couldn't stand the thought of waiting a few days to send my *firstborn child* off to its *spiritual father.*” My italics, his emetics. “I hope you'll call or write as soon as you've read it and let me know whether you think it's worthy of submitting to” et cetera, et cetera. Son of a bitch even *types* well.

He tosses the letter on the desk.

I think I remember him. Enormously obese. A glandular condition. Four hundred pounds. I wonder where he got my address...

MYRA. From the university

SIDNEY. Probably.

Sidney rises and heads for the buffet.

MYRA. Is it really that good? His first play?

SIDNEY. It can't miss. A gifted director couldn't even hurt it. (*Fixing something on the rocks.*) It'll run for years. The stock and amateur rights will feed and clothe generations of Andersons. It can *easily* be opened up for a movie. George C. Scott—or Michael Caine.

MYRA. Oh, I love him.

SIDNEY. The damn thing is perfect.

MYRA. I should think you'd be proud that one of your students has written a salable play.

SIDNEY. (*Considers her.*) For the first time in eleven years of marriage, darling—drop dead.

MYRA. My goodness...

She puts things right at the buffet as Sidney moves away with his drink.

SIDNEY. I'm green with envy. I'd like to beat the wretch over the head with the mace there, bury him in a four-hundred-pound hole somewhere, and send the thing off under my own name. To... David Merrick. Or Hal Prince... (*Thinks a bit, looks at Myra.*) Now there's the best idea I've had in ages.

MYRA. (*Going to him.*) Ah, my poor Sidney... (*Hugs him, kisses his cheek.*)

SIDNEY. I mean, what's the point in owning a mace if you don't use it once in a while?

MYRA. Ah... You'll get an idea of your own, any day now, and it'll turn into a better play than that one.

SIDNEY. Don't bet on it. Not that you have any money to bet with.

MYRA. We're doing very nicely in that department: not one creditor beating at the door.

SIDNEY. But for how long? I've just about cleaned you out now, haven't I?

MYRA. *We've cleaned me out, and it's been joy and delight every bit of the way.* (*Kisses him.*) Your next play will simply have to be a terrific smash.

SIDNEY. (*Moving away.*) Thanks, that's what I need, an easing of the pressure.

Sidney moves to the desk, toys with the manuscript.

MYRA. Why don't you call it to Merrick's attention? Maybe you could get—a commission of some kind.

SIDNEY. A finder's fee, you mean?

MYRA. If that's what it's called.

SIDNEY. A great and glorious one percent. Maybe one and a half.

Scene 2

As the lights come up, Sidney has unlocked the front door from the outside and is showing Clifford Anderson into the foyer, while Myra, who has been fretting in the study, hurries to greet them. The draperies are drawn over the French doors, and all the room's lamps are lighted. Sidney has replaced his sweater with a jacket; Myra has freshened up and perhaps changed into a simple dress. Clifford is in his mid-twenties and free of obvious defects; an attractive young man in jeans, boots, and a heavy sweater. He carries a bulging Manila envelope.

SIDNEY. Actually it was built in seventeen *ninety-four* but they were out of nines at the hardware store so I backdated it ten years.

CLIFFORD. It's a beautiful house...

SIDNEY. *(Closing the door.)* Historical Society had kittens.

MYRA. Hello!

She offers her hand; Clifford shakes it warmly.

SIDNEY. This is Clifford Anderson, dear. My wife, Myra.

CLIFFORD. Hello. It's a pleasure to meet you.

MYRA. Come in. I was beginning to worry...

SIDNEY. Watch out for the beam.

Ducking. Clifford comes into the study. Sidney follows.

You can always tell an authentic Colonial by the visitors' bruised foreheads.

Myra smiles nervously. Clifford looks about, awed.

CLIFFORD. The room you work in?

SIDNEY. How did you guess.

CLIFFORD. The typewriter, and all these posters...

He moves about, studying the window cards. Sidney watches him; Myra glances at Sidney. Clifford touches the Master's covered typewriter, then points at the wall.

Is that the mace that was used in *Murderer's Child*?

SIDNEY. Yes. And the dagger is from *The Murder Game*.

Clifford goes closer, touches the dagger blade.

Careful, it's sharp. The trick one was substituted in Act Two.

CLIFFORD. (*Moves his hands to an axe handle.*) *In for the Kill?*

SIDNEY. Yes.

CLIFFORD. I can't understand why that play didn't run...

SIDNEY. Critics peeing on it might be the answer.

Clifford goes on with his inspection.

MYRA. The train must have been late.

Sidney pays no notice.

Was it?

CLIFFORD. (*Turning.*) No, Mr. Bruhl was. The train was on time.

SIDNEY. I had to get gas, and Frank insisted on fondling the spark plugs.

Clifford points at a window card.

CLIFFORD. Do you know that *Gunpoint* was the first play I ever saw? I had an aunt in New York, and I came in on the train one Saturday—by myself, another first—from Hartford. She took me to the matinee. I was twelve years old.

SIDNEY. If you're trying to depress me, you've made it.

CLIFFORD. How? Oh. I'm sorry. But that's how I got hooked on thrillers.

SIDNEY. *Angel Street* did it to me. "Bella, where is that grocery bill? Eh? What have you done with it, you poor wretched creature?" I was fifteen.

MYRA. It sounds like a disease, being passed from generation to generation.

SIDNEY. It is a disease: *thrilleritis malignis*, the fevered pursuit of the one-set, five-character moneymaker.

CLIFFORD. I'm not pursuing money. Not that I wouldn't like to have some, so I could have a place like this to work in; but that isn't the reason I wrote *Deathtrap*.

SIDNEY. You're still an early case.

CLIFFORD. It's *not* a disease, it's a tradition: a superbly challenging theatrical framework in which every possible variation seems to have been played. Can I conjure up a few new ones? Can I startle an audience that's *been* on Angel Street, that's dialed "M" for murder, that's witnessed the prosecution, that's played the murder game—

SIDNEY. Lovely speech! And thanks for saving me for last.

CLIFFORD. I was coming to *Sleuth*.

SIDNEY. I'm glad I stopped you.

CLIFFORD. So am I. I'm a little—euphoric about all that's happening.

SIDNEY. As well you should be.

MYRA. Would you like something to drink?

CLIFFORD. Yes, please. Do you have some ginger ale?

MYRA. Yes. Sidney? Scotch?

SIDNEY. No, dear, I believe I'll have ginger ale too.

Which gives Myra a moment's pause, after which she goes to the buffet.

CLIFFORD. These aren't *all* from your plays, are they?

SIDNEY. God no, I haven't written *that* many. Friends give me things now, and I prowls the antique shops.

MYRA. *There's* a disease.

SIDNEY. *(Taking his keys out.)* Yes, and a super excuse for not working. *(Indicating a pistol while en route to the desk.)* I found this in Ridgefield just the other day; eighteenth-century German.

CLIFFORD. It's beautiful...

SIDNEY. *(Unlocking the desk's center drawer.)* As you can see, I'm taking very good care of my "spiritual child." Lock and key...

CLIFFORD. *(Unfastening his envelope.)* I've got the original...

SIDNEY. *(Taking the manuscript from the drawer.)* Thank God. I should really be wearing glasses but my doctor told me the longer I can do without them, the better off I am. *(Offering the manuscript in the wrong direction.)* Here you are. Oh, there you are.

Clifford smiles; Myra turns to look and turns back to her ice and glasses. Clifford takes a rubber-banded manuscript from the envelope.

Myra rises, goes to the buffet, puts her glass down and turns.

MYRA. In a month or so, if we haven't been arrested, I want you to leave. We'll have a few arguments in people's living rooms—you can write them for us, little tiffs about money or something—and then you'll move out. I wish you could take the vegetable patch with you, but since you can't, you'll buy it from me, as soon as the money starts rolling in. Before the Rolls-Royce and before you go to the Riviera!

Sidney, concerned, rises and starts toward her; she's growing more distraught.

You'll buy the vegetable patch, and the house, and the whole nine-point-three acres! We'll get Buck Raymond or Maury Escher to set a fair price!

She turns and moves away, near tears, as Sidney reaches for her.

SIDNEY. Darling, you've had a shocking and—

MYRA. Get away from me!

SIDNEY. You've had a shocking and painful experience and so have I. I'm terrified that I'll be caught and absolutely guilt-ridden about having been insane enough to do it. I'm going to give half the money to the New Dramatists League, I swear I am! This isn't the time to talk about *anything*. In a few days, when we're both ourselves again, things will look much cheerier.

MYRA. You *are* yourself, right now. And so am I. In a few days—

The doorbell chime stops her. Sidney freezes. Myra points toward the door.

Go ahead. "He wrote me a twerpy letter, Officer."

SIDNEY. It must be Lottie and Ralph, come to yammer about the movie...

MYRA. (*Wiping her cheeks.*) It's probably Helga ten Dorp.

SIDNEY. Don't be silly.

The doorbell chimes again.

It's Lottie and Ralph, damn them. We've got to let them in; can you face them? Maybe you'd better go upstairs; I'll tell them you—

MYRA. (*Interrupting him.*) No. I'll stay here, and let you worry that I'll fall apart!

Sidney eyes her anxiously. The doorbell chimes a third time. Sidney starts for the door.

SIDNEY. Coming!

Myra tries to compose herself, moves into view of the door.

Who is it?

HELGA. (*Off.*) I am your neighbor in house of McBains. Please, will you let me come in?

Sidney turns, wide-eyed. Myra too is startled and frightened.

Is most urgent I speak to you. I call the information but the lady will tell me not your number. Please, will you let me come in?

Sidney turns to the door.

I am friend of Paul Wyman. Is most urgent!

SIDNEY. (*Opening the door.*) Come in.

Helga ten Dorp comes into the foyer, a stocky, strong-jawed Teutonic woman in her early fifties, in the throes of considerable distress. She wears slacks and a hastily seized and unfastened jacket.

HELGA. I apologize for so late I come but you will forgive when I make the explaining.

She comes D. into the study. Sidney closes the door.

Ja, ja, is room I see. Beams, and window like so... (*Holds her forehead, wincing.*) And the pain! Such pain!

Helga sees Myra and recognizes her as the source of it; approaches her.

Pain. Pain. Pain. Pain...

She moves her hands about Myra, as if wanting to touch and comfort her but unable to.

Pain. Pain. Pain!

SIDNEY. (*Coming nervously D.*) We're neither of us up to snuff today...

Helga turns, sees the weapons.

HELGA. Ei! Just as I see them! *Uuuch!* Why keep you such pain-covered things?

SIDNEY. They're antiques, and souvenirs from plays. I'm a playwright.

HELGA. Ja, Sidney Bruhl; Paul Wyman tells me. We make together book.

SIDNEY. My wife, Myra...

MYRA. How do you do...

HELGA. What gives you such pain, dear lady?

MYRA. Nothing. I'm—fine, really.

HELGA. No, no; something you see pains you. *(To both of them.)* Paul tells you of *me*? I am Helga ten Dorp. I am psychic.

SIDNEY. Yes, he did. In fact we were going to ask—

HELGA. *(Interrupting him.)* For hours now I feel the pain from here. And more than pain. Since eight-thirty, when begins the *Merv Griffin Show*. I am on it next week; you will watch?

SIDNEY. Yes, yes, certainly. Make a note of that, Myra.

HELGA. Thursday night. The Amazing Kreskin also. What they want *him* for, I do not know. I call the information but the lady will tell me not your number. I call Paul but he is not at home; he is in place with red walls, eating with chopsticks. I call the information again. I say, "Is urgent, you *must* tell me number; I am Helga ten Dorp, I am psychic." She say, "Guess number." I try, but only I see the two-two-six, which is everybody, ja? So I come here now. *(Looking sympathetically at Myra.)* Because pain gets worse. And more than pain...

She moves away and wanders the room, a hand to her forehead. Sidney and Myra look anxiously at each other.

MYRA. More than pain?

HELGA. Ja, is something else here, something frightening. No, it will interfere.

SIDNEY. What will?

HELGA. The drink you would give me. Must keep unclouded the head. Never drink. Only when images become too many. Then I get drunk.