



The Murderer in the Mirror

OR

The Mark of Cain

A Mystery-Thriller in Two Acts

by

Peter Colley

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Cast of Characters

- Sean O'Neill:** A tall, handsome, powerfully built, charismatic young man in his twenties. HE has dark deep-set eyes, and a quiet brooding intensity.
- Dale O'Neill:** Sean's wife. SHE is an attractive woman in her twenties. SHE is a good-natured woman, idealistic and very much in love with her husband.
- Otto Sorensen:** A burly man (late 30's to late 40's). HE is a card-carrying NRA member, and in his plaid shirt, dirty green work pants, and old cap, HE looks every inch a classic red-neck. HE owns the local marina.
- Molly Sorensen:** Otto's wife. SHE is a voluptuous, earthy woman in her mid-thirties, with the deep tan of someone who spends a great deal of time outdoors. SHE wears rough working clothes, although SHE still manages to look pretty good in them - thanks mainly to a pair of skin-tight blue jeans. A cigarette usually dangles from her lip, and her sex drive is constantly in high gear.
- Dr. Eugenia Clifford:** A retired psychiatrist in her sixties. Despite her age and the fact that she is not well, SHE still has a commanding presence. Through many years of working in psychiatry SHE has developed a suspicious and inquiring nature and appears to be constantly analyzing each situation. HER manner is gruff, but not unfriendly.
- Michael O'Neill:** (doubled) Sean's identical twin brother (this does NOT require real twins, it is played by the same actor who plays Sean). Michael has an angrier and more cynical nature than his brother.

Scene

An old cottage on the shores of a lake.

Time

The present

Act I

Scene 1 - early afternoon in Autumn

Scene 2 - later that day, early evening

Scene 3 - later that same evening, about 9 o' clock

Act II

Scene 1 - later that same night

Scene 2 - a few weeks later

ACT I**Scene 1****SETTING:**

The living room of an old summer cottage, located deep in the heart of cottage country. Stage left has a large set of French doors which lead out onto a wooden deck. On either side of the French doors are tall picture windows similar in style to the doors, giving the impression that a fine view is to be had from that side of the room. There are drapes on each set of windows and the French doors. Visible outside is part of a tree which is in the full splendor of its autumn colors. The room is a split-level, having a raised section near the French doors. Stage right has a large stone fireplace, and the room has an old rustic sofa and some chairs. Leaning against the wall by the fireplace is a large axe for chopping wood. Above the fireplace is the stuffed head of a stag complete with a majestic set of antlers. Nearby a stuffed fish hangs on the wall. Upstage center is a “pass-through”, which gives access to the kitchen. Upstage right is a hallway, which leads to the front of the cottage, and an open stairway which leads up to the bedrooms. The ambiance is old and dark - the predominant materials being varnished wood and bare rock.

AT RISE:

There is the SOUND OF WIND through the leaves, and the HAUNTING CALL of a few migratory birds. [**Note that there are cues for a musical score built into the script. The music can be performed with an electric synthesizer or selected taped movie soundtrack music. Any Hitchcock-style mood music would do, like the soundtrack to “Blue Velvet”. The pre-show music should help set this mood and fade as the play starts.]

The cottage appears to have been empty for some time because the furniture is covered with white sheets. It is late autumn and old leaves lie around the room, blown in through some broken window panes.

It is early afternoon and the room is empty. The sun’s rays slant across the room, and through the red and gold leaves of the tree outside. The mood is richly autumnal, although with a muted and eerie quality.

DALE O’NEILL ENTERS with a broom and starts sweeping the leaves into a pile. DALE is an attractive woman in her mid twenties, and is wearing a pair of old jeans, a shirt with bits of paint splattered on it and a cloth covering her hair. There is the sound of a CAR PULLING TO A HALT

outside. DALE hears this and looks out of the window.

SEAN O'NEILL ENTERS the room. HE is a tall, powerfully built young man in his twenties. HE has dark deep-set eyes, and a quiet brooding intensity. HE tosses the car keys down on the table.

Well... ? DALE

It's no use. He's more stubborn than ever. SEAN

At least you tried. DALE

I told him we were selling it, so that's the end of the matter as far as I'm concerned. SEAN

How did he take it? DALE

He didn't exactly burst with joy over the news. SEAN

(Beat)
Still no sign of Otto, I suppose?

No. DALE

I'll chew his head off when I see him. Look at this mess! I should have known better than to ask him to look after the place. SEAN

(SEAN goes to the French doors and looks out, darkly.
DALE goes to HIM soothingly.)

I should have gone with you. DALE

No. It's better you don't see him. It's hard enough for me. SEAN
(SEAN picks up a piece of broken glass from the floor.)
Isn't this great! I promise you a few quiet days here and now we'll be busting our butts cleaning the place up. You deserve better than this, Dale.

(Gives HIM a hug)
Sean, I've got everything I need right here. DALE

I just wish I had the money to give you a decent honeymoon. SEAN

We'll have enough money when we sell the house. DALE

SEAN
If we can sell it. The market's bad.

DALE
Relax... we'll sell it.

SEAN (Troubled)
I sure hope so.
(Moves away)
I'll bring in the groceries.

(SEAN, obviously still concerned, exits through the hallway. DALE observes this for a moment and then exits after him.)

After a moment a MAN opens the French doors and pokes his head in. It is OTTO SORENSEN. OTTO is a big man (late 30's to late 40's) who could flatteringly be described as a red-neck. HE wears a plaid shirt, dirty green work pants, partly unlaced boots and an old cap. HE has a pair of radiophones over his cap (the large kind with the radio built into the headphones and an antenna sticking in the air), and is SINGING ALONG TUNELESSLY to a hideous Country and Western song.

HE carries a small stepladder and a metal bucket. HE goes back out onto the deck outside the French doors. HE puts the stepladder down and then gets a cloth from the bucket, and with the bucket in one hand clammers up the ladder and starts to clean the outside of the windows. DALE and SEAN re-ENTER with the groceries. DALE sees OTTO outside.)

DALE
Sean!

(SHE indicates OTTO)

SEAN
Oh, that's Otto. Finally he's doing some work around here.
(Shouts)

Hey, Otto! Otto!
(There is no reaction from OTTO, so SEAN waves at HIM.)

He can't hear me.
(SEAN goes up to the window and bangs on it.)

OTTO!

(Taken totally by surprise, the OTTO falls backward off HIS ladder with a cry of shock.)

OTTO
Aaaaargh!

(OTTO disappears into the shrubbery while HIS bucket of water CLANGS ON the deck. SEAN and DALE dash outside to help HIM.)

DALE

Are you all right?

SEAN

It's only us! I was trying to get your attention.

(THEY help OTTO in through the French doors.)

OTTO

My God, I thought my number was up there!

(HE holds HIS heart)

SEAN

I'm sorry. I thought you'd seen us.

OTTO

I was just about to wash down the windows when I get this bang, bang, right next to my ear! I tell you, I thought it was a ghost or something.

DALE

You knew we were coming, didn't you?

OTTO

Tomorrow! I thought you were coming tomorrow!

(Checks HIS heart again)

Listen to that! Boom, boom, boom, she's going! I thought I'd woofed my cookie that time.

SEAN

Just sit down for a moment.

OTTO

I'm O.K. now. This house gives me the creeps at the best of times.

(HE calms down a bit)

So. Let's have a look at you, Sean. At least, I suppose it is Sean. I never could tell you two apart.

(HE looks closely at SEAN)

You look older.

SEAN

It's been nearly ten years.

OTTO

That long? Yes, I suppose it has.

SEAN

This is my wife, Dale. Otto Sorensen.

OTTO

Pleased to meet you.

SEAN

(Indicates out of the window)

The marina looks in good shape. Making money?

(DALE takes the sheets off the furniture.)

OTTO

It's been going well. More tourists on the lake now. Lots of city folks doing their darndest to drown themselves. "Otto's Marina" helps them do it in style. I got fifteen rental boats now. Yeah, it's busy all right. There were three fatalities on the lake this summer... one up from last year.

SEAN

(Sarcastically)

Things are going well.

OTTO

Yup, yup. Like to expand. Could give you a very nice offer for this property, you know. Of course, the first thing I'd do is knock this old place down.

(SEAN looks at HIM coldly)

I mean, you won't be wanting to live here...

(Ominously)

... in this house...

SEAN

There may be a problem there, Otto. I don't think Michael would agree to selling the land to you.

OTTO

Then don't tell him who you're selling it to.

(Nudges him)

I mean, he doesn't exactly have much choice, does he?

(OTTO laughs coarsely)

SEAN

I have a few reservations too, Otto.

OTTO

You don't still blame me for what happened, do you?

(Beat. They look at each other)

SEAN

You never liked Michael.

OTTO

I don't like murderers, Sean! It's a little quirk of mine.

SEAN

He's still my brother.

OTTO

Hell, we shouldn't even be talking about this. It's over and done.

(To DALE, making light of it)

I have always said: never discuss politics, religion or family murders.

(HE laughs raucously, but the joke falls flat)

Look, why don't I call Molly over? She'd be very interested to see you again. Just a moment.

(OTTO goes over to the French doors and bellows offstage.)

MOLLY! MOLLY! COME OVER HERE!

(HE waves and bellows again)

YES. THEY'RE HERE! COME OVER!

(HE comes back in)

She's coming. So. How long are you here for?

DALE

Just until we clean the place up, and by the looks of it that will take a while.

OTTO

(Shiftily)

We tried to keep the place clean, but you know how quickly things get dusty round here.

SEAN

Gets in through all those broken windows I'll bet.

OTTO

Ah... yes... I've been meaning to fix those.

SEAN

I noticed the lock on the front door is broken too.

OTTO

Is it?

(Tries to be jovial)

Lots to do, eh?

SEAN (Coldly)

Lots.

OTTO

A lick of paint and this place will look like new. Oh, by the way, I run a water taxi service out of the marina, and I make a regular run down the lake into town so if you need anything just give me a shout. Oh, and Dr. Clifford asked me to say hello.

SEAN (Interested)

Clifford!

OTTO

Yes. She bought a cottage on the lake when she retired. I deliver her mail and supplies three times a week. She's not very well, can't get about much. I think she's writing a book. In fact you're probably in it.

(MOLLY ENTERS through the French doors. SHE is a voluptuous, earthy woman in her mid-thirties, with the deep tan of someone who spends a great deal of time outdoors. SHE wears rough working clothes although she still manages to look pretty good in them, thanks mainly to a pair of skin-tight blue jeans. A cigarette dangles from HER lip. SHE looks closely at SEAN.)

MOLLY

Well, well. You haven't changed much. Still got all the women running after you?

OTTO

(Coughs)

Molly... this is Sean's wife.

(HE glares at HER with a "behave yourself" look)

Dale, this is my wife Molly.

MOLLY

Married! Never took Sean to be the marrying type. Got any kids?

DALE

No. We've only been married a few months.

MOLLY

Well hang in there. How does it feel being married to an identical twin?

DALE

I really don't know, I've never met Michael.

MOLLY

Just as well. I've never seen two people look so similar. Does funny things to the mind looking at the two of them. I used to baby-sit them, you know.

DALE

Really? I'll bet they were cute.

MOLLY

Cute? Yeah... they were the cutest little monsters the world has ever produced. God, they played some terrible tricks on us over the years.

OTTO

Look, why don't you come over to our house for a nice cup of coffee?

(To DALE with a lecherous smile)

I'll take Dale for a run down the lake.

DALE

(Innocently)

I would love that.

MOLLY

How is Michael, by the way? Still crazy?

OTTO

(To MOLLY, chiding, but not unsympathetic to her viewpoint.)

They don't use words like that these days Molly. Remember? Michael is "sick", he's in a hospital.

MOLLY

What's wrong with the word "crazy"? Look, the guy got off a life sentence by claiming he was nutso. Now we have to talk about him like he's got the flu?

SEAN

(Holding himself back)

Otto, could you take a look at that lock on the front door? It may need some new parts.

OTTO

Oh, right.

(Glares at MOLLY)

We'll just be a moment.

(OTTO and SEAN exit through the hallway, leaving
DALE and MOLLY alone.)

MOLLY

Touchy, touchy! Huh. My big mouth... always gets me into trouble. Ah, well. How about you? How do you feel about this?

DALE

About what?

MOLLY

About being married to a man whose twin brother is a loony... sorry, "sick". I mean, these kids were more than just identical... it was eerie looking at them. You're sitting on a time bomb there if you ask me.

DALE

They're different people. They're two separate human beings.

MOLLY

You've never met Michael. Believe me, they're almost the same person. Michael was the worse of the two of them though. We always used to say he's got the "mark of Cain" on him, that one. But if you want my opinion it's just a matter of time before this one goes cuckoo as well.

DALE

Damn it, Molly! This is my husband you're talking about!

MOLLY

Hey... calm down... I'm only trying...

DALE

I know what you're trying to do! You're just like everybody else! My parents... my friends... they all tell me the same thing. I wish everyone would just get off my back. The truth is Sean's never laid a hand on me, and all that garbage about him having an unhealthy dependence on his brother... well today is the first time he's seen Michael in over a month!

MOLLY

And you really think you can keep them apart?

DALE

I've done pretty well so far.

MOLLY

Why is it women are such suckers for hopeless causes? That's how Otto got me.

(The DOOR SLAMS offstage)

OTTO (O.S.)

Looks like you'll need a whole new lock.

(OTTO ENTERS followed by SEAN)

OTTO (Continuing)

I'll pick one up in town.

(To DALE)

Look, do you want anything from the store? I'm heading down the lake at about three o'clock.

DALE

We're just making up a list.

OTTO

Well, if you want anything I'll be down at the landing. See you later.

(OTTO winks lasciviously at DALE and then OTTO and MOLLY exit out of the French doors. SEAN is seething.)

SEAN

If that woman says another thing about Michael I swear to God I'll tear her face off!

DALE

Don't say things like that Sean!

SEAN

She's an old cow! We used to hate her when she babysat us. As soon as Mr. and Mrs. Beecroft left she'd lock us in the cellar, and come up here and wait for her latest boyfriend to creep in.

DALE

Sean, I don't think we should stay here. There are too many bad memories for you in this house.

SEAN

**We have to stay. It won't sell in this condition and we need the money.
(HE looks around the room and shakes his head.)**

Come on, let's go for a walk down by the lake. We'll clean the place up later.

(THEY exit through the French doors, and cross the deck as THEY head down to the lake. After they have been gone for-a moment there is the SOUND OF VOICES OFFSTAGE from a different direction. A door can be heard to open and MOLLY sticks her head in from the hallway. SHE beckons to someone behind her.)

MOLLY

Come on! They won't be gone long.

(OTTO ENTERS reluctantly behind her.)

OTTO

For Heaven's sake Molly!

(MOLLY moves quickly to a cabinet and opens it. SHE carries a cardboard box and unloads a number of

liquor bottles into the box. OTTO watches and keeps a lookout.)

OTTO

This is ridiculous!

(MOLLY goes over to the sofa)

MOLLY

Look, the Beecrofts never touched booze, and when Sean sees this place stacked with bottles he'll know we've been using the cottage for parties.

(MOLLY pulls a couple of empty liquor bottles out from under the sofa and puts them in the box.)

OTTO

I always said it was morbid using this place. I mean, the poor girl was murdered right in this room.

MOLLY

It was a great conversation starter. Will you check the kitchen? We may have left some in there.

OTTO (Reluctantly)

O.K.

(OTTO notices something in one of the boxes that Dale and Sean had brought in.)

OTTO

**Now that's odd. Look at this.
(HE pulls out a bottle)
Bourbon.**

MOLLY

So?

OTTO

That was Michael's favorite drink, wasn't it?

MOLLY

Yeah, that's right. He always stole ours.

(Beat. OTTO looks at HER)

OTTO

Bit of a coincidence, though, when you think about it.

MOLLY

What?

OTTO

Sean never touched alcohol and this was Michael's favorite drink. Seems odd this is the only liquor they brought.

You don't think... ?
(OTTO lifts HIS eyebrows)

(MUSIC CUE)

Nah.
OTTO (Uncertainly)

(THEY look at each other for a moment, but it is something neither of them wishes to contemplate.)

MOLLY
(SHE finishes loading up the box)
Come on. Let's get out of here!

(MOLLY starts to exit, but OTTO is still deep in thought, a dark look on his face as he stares at the bottle of bourbon. HE puts the bottle down and EXITS slowly with MOLLY.)

(As they exit, music swells up as the lights fade out. The music has an eerie quality of foreboding.)

(BLACKOUT)

END OF SCENE 1

ACT I

Scene 2

AT RISE:

Later that day. It is early evening, and the light of the setting sun slants across the room from the windows. The scene change music fades out. SEAN ENTERS with a broom and starts to sweep the floor. Outside, MOLLY peers through the glass of the French doors and sees HIM. Unseen by SEAN, SHE quietly opens the door and steps inside. SHE looks at SEAN for a moment with a slightly lascivious smile on her face.

MOLLY

Hi.

(SEAN turns and sees HER)

Thought I'd drop over to see if you needed a hand.

SEAN (Coldly)

Thanks, but we're managing fine.

MOLLY

Hey, I'm sorry if I got you mad earlier. You know I don't mean no harm.

SEAN (Unmoved)

That's O.K., Molly.

MOLLY

To be honest I'm kinda glad you're back. It gets real quiet here sometimes.

(Sensuously)

Especially the afternoons. Otto goes down the lake every day, you know.

(Looks HIM right in the eye)

If you ever feel like coming over for a cup of coffee or whatever...

SEAN

Molly...

MOLLY

Just like the old days.

SEAN

The old days? I think perhaps you're getting me confused with Michael.

MOLLY

(Moves towards HIM)

Let me help you with that.

(MOLLY goes over to SEAN and runs HER hand down the broomstick handle and onto HIS arm. HE pulls away violently.)

SEAN

Get out of here!

MOLLY (Smiles)

Just trying to be friendly.

(Moves to the French doors)

Remember... every afternoon at three. You can set your watch by it.

(SHE gives HIM a coy smile and exits. SEAN watches HER go and thinks for a moment. HE then carries on sweeping the floor when suddenly a dark thought appears to cross his mind and HE stares out of the window with an intense look on his face.

MUSIC CUE

A SOUND can be heard, a distant ethereal chord, like a feeling inside SEAN'S brain. Abruptly SEAN turns and looks out of the French doors as if he is feeling some strange communication from far away. The SOUND continues as DALE ENTERS from the hallway with a heavy cardboard box full of tin cans.)

DALE

Could you help me with this box, Sean?

(SEAN is still staring out of the windows, as if mesmerized. DALE puts the box down. SHE is about to exit when SHE notices SEAN'S odd behavior.)

Sean? Is something the matter?

(SEAN does not react. DALE moves toward HIM.)

Sean?

(DALE touches SEAN on the arm and abruptly the SOUND STOPS.

MUSIC CUE ENDS.

SEAN turns to HER, startled.)

DALE

What is it?

SEAN

Huh?

DALE

Are you feeling all right?

SEAN

What? Yes. Yes, I'm fine.

DALE

Did you see something?

SEAN

No. I just felt... that something had happened. It felt like... like he was trying to tell me something.

DALE

Who? Michael?

SEAN

Yes.

DALE

It's probably this house. It's bringing back memories.

(SEAN stands in the middle of the room, looking around intensely, trying to interpret what it is HE is feeling. Abruptly HE seems to snap out of it.)

SEAN

Yes. That's what it must be.

(HE looks around, a little confused)

What was I doing?

DALE

Judging by what you're holding in your hand you were sweeping the floor... but how about helping me with the boxes?

SEAN

(HE picks up a box and moves it into the kitchen.)

Sure. I'm sorry ...

(THEY both EXIT out of the hallway. VOICES CAN BE HEARD from outside approaching the cottage. Eventually there is a KNOCK ON the French doors, and OTTO sticks HIS head in.)

OTTO

Hello! Hello!

(OTTO looks around)

I have a visitor for you!

(OTTO beckons to someone standing outside.)

Come on in!

(A WOMAN in her sixties ENTERS. SHE is breathing heavily from the exertion of walking up to the cottage. SHE carries a medical bag. This is DR. EUGENIA CLIFFORD.)

OTTO

(Indicating upstairs, with a leering wink to CLIFFORD.)

They can't be far away.

(DR. CLIFFORD moves into the middle of the room and looks around. Despite her age and infirmity SHE still has a commanding presence. SHE carefully takes in the room, as though she too has many memories of this place. Through many years of working in psychiatry SHE has developed a suspicious and inquiring nature and SHE appears to be constantly analyzing each situation. HER manner is gruff, but not unfriendly. SHE coughs heavily.)

DR. CLIFFORD

Damp air gets to my lungs. I shouldn't be riding in boats at my age. I suppose I should have thought of that before I bought a house on an island.

OTTO

There's a mist on the water. Might turn to fog later on. I can't guarantee I'll get you back tonight if it turns to fog.

DR. CLIFFORD

Well, we'll see.

(SEAN ENTERS through the hallway carrying a cardboard box. At first HE does not see OTTO or DR. CLIFFORD. In fact HIS mind appears to be engrossed in thought.)

DR. CLIFFORD

Hello, Sean.

(SEAN does not appear to recognize DR. CLIFFORD at first.)

It's me, Dr. Clifford.

(SEAN recognizes HER and relaxes from his strangely jumpy state.)

OTTO

I brought her down the lake to see you.

SEAN

I'm sorry... I wasn't expecting anyone.

(Shaking HER hand)

How are you, doctor?

DR. CLIFFORD

As well as a person can be, I suppose, at my age. How about yourself?

SEAN

Not bad. Things are a bit disorganized right now. We just arrived this afternoon.

DR. CLIFFORD

Yes, Otto told me you'd come.

(DALE ENTERS carrying some bedding.)

SEAN

We have a visitor. Dr. Clifford, this is my wife, Dale.

DALE

Pleased to meet you.

SEAN (To DALE)

Dr. Clifford was the psychiatrist at Michael's trial. Sit down, Doctor. I'll light a fire. Dale, why don't you get the Doctor a drink while I get some wood.

(SEAN goes over to the fireplace and gets the woodholder.)

DALE

Of course. What would you like Dr. Clifford? We've got tea, coffee, wine... we also have some whisky and some bourbon...

DR. CLIFFORD

I'd better stick to tea. Some of these medications I'm on don't take too kindly to alcohol.

(SEAN EXITS through the hallway with the woodholder. DR. CLIFFORD coughs again.)

DALE

If there's anything I can do please let me know. I'm a Registered Nurse.

DR. CLIFFORD

Thank you, but unless you have a magic cure for rheumatism, emphysema, insomnia and old age there's not much you can do for me.

DALE

What about you Otto? Could I get you a drink?

OTTO (Slyly)

Well.. bourbon's my preferred poison, but I don't want to use up Sean's supply. It's his favorite drink too as I recall.

DALE

Oh, no. Sean never touches the stuff. He buys it for Michael, but we also keep it for guests.

OTTO

Ah.

(Beat)

Well, I'd love to but I have to go and unload the boat. I'll bring you up those things you ordered.

(OTTO EXITS thoughtfully)

DR. CLIFFORD

So, you're Sean's wife. I must say he seems to have made a good choice. What does he do for a living these days?

DALE

Nothing. He was laid off just after we got married. He had a job at a steel mill, but it was closed down.

DR. CLIFFORD

What about yourself? Do you still work?

DALE

No. Sean's got this thing about me working. It wasn't that much of a problem until the lay-off. He thinks that if he's not the breadwinner, that he's some kind of failure. I don't know what we would have done if he hadn't been left this cottage.

DR. CLIFFORD

Frankly, I was quite surprised when I heard that Mrs. Beecroft had left this place to the twins. Given what happened...

(SEAN ENTERS with the wood-holder loaded with logs. DR. CLIFFORD watches HIM carefully. SEAN seems to feel this and becomes slightly hostile.)

SEAN (Pointedly)

I hear you're writing a book.

DR. CLIFFORD

Yes, that's right.

SEAN (Suspiciously)

About us?

DR. CLIFFORD

It's my memoirs. Naturally there will be a chapter or two about...

SEAN

So that's why you're here. You didn't waste much time, did you?

DR. CLIFFORD

The book is not the reason I came. I was wondering if you had seen Michael recently?

SEAN

I saw him today as a matter of fact.

DR. CLIFFORD

And how did he seem?

SEAN

Bad.

DR. CLIFFORD

Do you think Victor is coming back?

SEAN

He never left. Or are you still harboring those delusions that you'd cured him?

DR. CLIFFORD

When I retired he hadn't had any contact with Victor in over a year.

DALE

Victor who? What are you talking about?

DR. CLIFFORD

Don't you know?

(To SEAN, shocked)

Didn't you tell her?

SEAN

She knows what happened. There's no need to go into all the details!

DALE

Will someone tell me what's going on!

SEAN

Look, it was a long time ago! I just came here to fix up this house and sell it! I don't want to hear another damn thing about Michael! He's my problem and I'll deal with it in my way!

DR. CLIFFORD

He's not just your problem any more, Sean. He's escaped.

SEAN

What!

DR. CLIFFORD

According to the four o'clock news a certain Michael O'Neill slipped out of the Lakeview Mental Institution...

(SEAN thinks for a moment.)

SEAN

So that's what it was. I felt that something had happened...

(Looks out of the window)

Did they say when he broke out?

DR. CLIFFORD

Early this afternoon.

SEAN

Just after I talked to him! Damn! I should have known this would happen!

DR. CLIFFORD

I called the police and told them you were here.

SEAN

What the Hell did you do that for?

DR. CLIFFORD

Well, I think it's obvious where Michael is heading.

SEAN

I don't need any police. Michael is my responsibility.

DR. CLIFFORD

I admire your courage, but your wife at least deserves police protection.

SEAN

She's not going to stay here.

DALE

Just a minute! Why do I have to leave?

DR. CLIFFORD (To DALE)

I agree that Sean should stay, but I think it would be wiser for you to leave.

DALE

If the house is surrounded by police I'll be as safe here as anywhere.

(To SEAN)

I just don't want to leave you to face this alone.

SEAN

I can't risk it. You'll have to leave when the police arrive. I'll be all right.

(DALE gives SEAN a glance that shows she's going to put up a fight about this.)

DR. CLIFFORD

I think I should stay until Michael gets here. I asked the police to pick up some large doses of largactil and diazepam. We may need them.

SEAN

Did they say anything else on the radio about the escape?

DR. CLIFFORD

Not much, except that he apparently stole a car.

SEAN

A car! He could be here by...

(Thinks)

Hell, he could be here now!

(SEAN looks out of the French doors into the fading light.)

DR. CLIFFORD

I don't think he'll come by road. He knows it's too easy to block it. I think he'll come across the lake.

SEAN

I knew this would happen! Why doesn't anyone listen to me!

DR. CLIFFORD

I didn't tell Otto because... well, you know how he feels about Michael. I'd rather find some way of getting him away from here.

SEAN

He's bound to find out as soon as the police arrive.

(HE looks with concern at the others.)

I'll talk to him.

(SEAN exits out of the French doors.)

DALE

Well, I didn't expect this. I'm glad you came though, Dr. Clifford. You didn't have to get involved.

DR. CLIFFORD

Let's just say I have some unfinished business here.

DALE

Perhaps you could tell me who Victor is?

DR. CLIFFORD

Sean hasn't told you much, has he? You see, my diagnosis was that Michael had become a split personality. Under hypnosis I discovered this character called "Victor" who was the vicious, cunning, and very angry side of Michael's personality. Although Victor himself usually appeared as a very pleasant, almost affable character. Even

quoted poetry... loved Shakespeare. Actually, as time went on Victor became quite obsessed by Shakespeare and the classics. I don't know where that came from, since the boys were not well educated. But despite Victor's literary fixation he was in fact a cold-blooded killer. A pure psychopath.

DALE

But Sean isn't like that at all. How could Michael be so different?

DR. CLIFFORD

I'm not sure. It could be because they are mirror-image twins.

DALE

In what sense?

DR. CLIFFORD

When the egg split it caused Michael to be left-handed, Sean right-handed, that sort of thing, so there are genetic differences. But I traced the origin of Michael's problems back to the day their father died in a terrible accident at the sawmill, their mother - who was always unstable - went to pieces and couldn't look after them. They were shunted around from one foster home to another, until they ended up here.

(The French doors open and OTTO ENTERS in a state of great animation. MOLLY comes in behind HIM, followed by SEAN.)

OTTO

Dr. Clifford! Is this true? He's out?

DR. CLIFFORD

I'm afraid so.

OTTO

So! He's finally coming back.

DR. CLIFFORD

Yes, and I think it would be better if you weren't around.

OTTO

Yeah, I'll bet you do.

SEAN

For God's sake, Otto! Forget about your personal vendettas, the police will be here soon.

OTTO

You seem to forget that I knew the Beresford girl... knew the whole family... saw what Kelly's death did to them ...

SEAN

Your testimony put him away for life. What more do you want?

OTTO

They should have had him put down ten years ago, and if he sets foot on my property I'll finish the job myself.

(The PHONE RINGS and everyone stops. SEAN goes over to it and picks it up.)

SEAN

Hello? Yes.

(To the others)

It's the police.

(Listens to the phone)

Yes. We had a dispute recently about the cottage, so I'm pretty certain this is where he's heading.

(Listens, and then to the others)

They just found the stolen car by the Falls.

OTTO

The Falls! My God, he's that close already!

SEAN

(Into phone)

Yes. I'll be here.

(Puts the phone down)

OTTO

Well, I guess the hunting season is starting early this year.

SEAN (Menacing)

If you hurt him Otto, I'll...

OTTO

Listen to this guy! Why do you defend Michael all the time? The guy is a murderer!

SEAN

I won't have you calling him a murderer! It's not Michael that kills! It's Victor!

OTTO

Yeah, yeah! It's a great routine he's got down. He should get an Oscar for it. But I'll make you a deal. I'll stop calling him a murderer the day that Beresford girl walks back into this room!

(OTTO EXITS)

MOLLY

I wouldn't wander about too much from now on. The great white hunter will be shooting at anything that moves tonight.

(MOLLY EXITS)

DR. CLIFFORD

I think the first thing we should do is secure the house. I'll go round and check the windows.

SEAN

I'll put that new deadbolt on the front door.

DR. CLIFFORD

Good idea.

(DR. CLIFFORD EXITS out of the French doors.
SEAN goes into the kitchen and gets a screwdriver out

of the cardboard box, and grabs the new fitting for the lock. HE is about to exit through the hallway when DALE stops HIM.)

DALE

Sean. I wish you'd told me a bit more about all this.

SEAN

I'm sorry. I didn't see the point of going into all the sordid details. Maybe your Mom and Dad were right ...

DALE

I'm not scurrying home to my parents at the first sign of trouble, if that's what you think.

SEAN

It would just be simpler if you weren't here.

DALE

You're stuck with me so you'd better start getting used to that.

SEAN (Affectionately)

You're a tough cookie, aren't you?
(Holds her)

Thank God.

DALE

What happened to your real parents? You've never told me.

SEAN

My real parents... Clifford talked about them, huh?

DALE

She said your Dad worked at the Falls.

SEAN

Yeah. At the sawmill.

DALE

What happened that day?

SEAN

What day?

DALE

The day your father died.

(SEAN looks at her for a moment. This is obviously difficult for him.)

SEAN

Dale, please...

DALE (Gently)

It's important. Dr. Clifford thinks it's the key to Michael's behavior.

SEAN

Yeah, I know. Another one of her great theories.

(He looks out of the window across the lake.)

To be honest with you I don't remember much about it now. Not anymore. Just the sound of the steam whistle at the mill. It always went off when there was an accident. It was still going when we arrived at the mill ... screaming like a banshee. I only vaguely remember seeing Dad's body... but I'll never forget that sound.

(With deep anger)

He was dead... what more is there to say!

DALE

I'm sorry. You don't have to tell me any more. Dr. Clifford explained to me who Victor was.

SEAN

Victor is anger, Victor is hate. Victor wants to tear the world apart.

(SEAN goes to the window and stares out into the fading light.)

So, you see I have to wait for him to come. I've been too weak in the past. The only way I can save Michael is to confront Victor head on.

DALE

This time you won't have to confront him alone.

(HE looks at DALE with some real misgivings.)

SEAN

I'm just like him you know. We share the same genetic code. Even mother used to call us both Sean-Michael. Occasionally when she sobered up and made the effort she could tell us apart. Sometimes it freaks me out to look at him. It's like looking in a fun-house mirror... it's my own face I see, but warped... distorted. I keep asking myself, what went wrong...

(Looks at DALE.)

... and could it happen to me...

(DALE and SEAN look at each other)

CLIFFORD (Offstage)

Sean! Do you have a hammer and some nails?

SEAN (Calls out)

Yes! I'll bring them out!

(SEAN looks at DALE as though HE is about to say something, but changes his mind. HE goes into a drawer in the kitchen and gets a hammer and a handful of nails.)

DALE

I'll take them. You fix that lock.

(DALE takes the hammer and nails from SEAN, and EXITS through the French doors. SEAN is about to exit when the PHONE RINGS. SEAN picks it up.)

SEAN

Hello?

(HE listens)

Yes, it was very clever of you, managing to escape like that. But it won't make a damn bit of difference!

(Listens again)

I'm not going to run. This time I'll be here waiting for you.

(SEAN listens to the phone as DALE ENTERS and looks at HIM.)

Leave her out of this! It's just you and me this time! You understand that! This is just between us!

(DALE hears this. SEAN puts the phone down and turns and sees HER.)

It seems we're going to get a visitor tonight.

MUSIC CUE

(THEY look apprehensively at each other as the lights fade.)

(BLACKOUT)

(Dramatic music continues through the blackout.)

END OF SCENE 2

ACT I

Scene 3

AT RISE:

Later that evening about nine o' clock. Night has fallen and it is dark outside. There is a heavy fog outside and wisps of it can be seen occasionally coming in through the broken window panes. DALE ENTERS from the kitchen and hands a cup of coffee to DR. CLIFFORD who is standing at the French doors looking out into the darkness. There is THE SOUND OF TWO BLASTS ON A FOG HORN in the distance.

DR. CLIFFORD

Normally I love these foggy autumn nights, but tonight I wish I could see the whole world a bit more clearly.

(DALE stands next to DR. CLIFFORD for a moment looking out of the window.)

DALE

It is eerie, isn't it. It feels like we're the only people left on earth.

DR. CLIFFORD

We'd be a lot safer if we were.

DALE

We'll be all right. As long as we all stay together.

DR. CLIFFORD

You're a very trusting person, Dale. My advice to you is: take the car and get out of here. I don't think you realize what a dangerous situation this is.

DALE

I'm in no more danger than you.

DR. CLIFFORD

You take a great risk when you come between twins.

(There is another SOUND OF A DISTANT FOG HORN, like the kind used on a boat. They look toward the sound.)

DR. CLIFFORD

Sounds like someone's lost out on the lake.

(There is a SUDDEN KNOCK at the front door, and DR. CLIFFORD and DALE turn to face it.)

Who is it?

SEAN (Offstage)

It's me. Sean!

(DALE disappears down the hallway to let SEAN in. There is the SOUND OF A DEADBOLT

**UNLATCHING. After a moment the two of them
ENTER. SEAN is carrying a small package.)**

SEAN

I don't believe it! One police officer sitting in his car out on the road! That's our so-called "police protection"!

DALE

Why don't we call the police station? I'm sure if Dr. Clifford talked to them...

SEAN

It won't do any good. It seems they don't consider him dangerous. Damn psychiatrists! Michael was always much too clever for them.

(DR. CLIFFORD lifts her eyebrow at this)

Oh, they delivered those sedatives you asked for.

(SEAN hands DR. CLIFFORD the package and SHE opens it revealing several small bottles.)

DR. CLIFFORD

(Looks at the labels closely)

Good. We may need these.

(Also in the package are several syringes in hygienic wrappers. DR. CLIFFORD unwraps one and attaches a needle to it.)

DR. CLIFFORD

Might as well be prepared.

(SHE then takes out a small bottle with the sedative in it and starts to fill the syringe.)

With this he'll be sleeping like a baby in about fifteen seconds.

SEAN

Good. But just to be on the safe side we should do one more check of the outside of the house.

DR. CLIFFORD

I'll check the front, why don't you check the back?

(DR. CLIFFORD puts the syringe in her bag.)

SEAN

0.K.

(SEAN takes a powerful flashlight from one of the cardboard boxes in the kitchen. DR. CLIFFORD EXITS out through the hallway and SEAN goes to the French doors and unlocks them.)

SEAN (to DALE)

Why don't you check that the upstairs windows are latched.

(SEAN disappears into the fog. DALE watches HIM go and then stands for a moment looking thoughtfully out into the darkness. SHE closes the French doors

when she HEARS SOMETHING outside and opens them.

MUSIC CUE

SHE listens intensely for a moment, and then shrugs it off and starts to close the doors again.

MUSIC FADES

This time the sound is unmistakably a human voice although it is only just audible.)

VOICE (Offstage)

Dale!

(DALE stops in her tracks even though the voice is exactly like SEAN'S.)

VOICE (O/S)

Dale!

DALE

Sean?

MUSIC CUE

VOICE (O/S)

Yes. Come here.

(SHE opens the doors wide, but something in the voice scares her and she pauses.)

DALE

What do you want?

VOICE (O/S)

Just come outside for a moment.

(DALE pauses momentarily, staring out into the night. SHE is very nervous about the alluring quality of the voice she has just heard. Nevertheless SHE slowly exits out of the French doors and into the foggy night.

After DALE disappears into the mist MICHAEL slips quickly in through the French doors, and looks around. HE looks exactly the same as SEAN but is wearing plain hospital clothes. [* Note: if Sean has long hair, then Sean can wear his hair pulled back and Michael can wear it down to differentiate the twins]. MICHAEL goes to the kitchen and GRABS A KNIFE out of the cutlery drawer. Then HE sees the bottle of bourbon on the counter, opens it and gulps down several deep swigs. Then HE hurriedly goes back to the French doors, looks out, and disappears into the night.

Offstage DALE's voice can be heard)

DALE (O.S.)

Sean! Sean! Where are you?

(After a moment DALE re-ENTERS through the French doors, quite perplexed, and is standing in the doorway when ...

A HAND COMES OUT OF THE DARKNESS ONTO HER SHOULDER!)

VOICE

You shouldn't be...

(DALE wheels around and screams. We see that the hand belongs to OTTO. HE appears to be as scared as DALE.)

MUSIC ENDS

OTTO

It's only me! It's only me!

(DALE breathes a sigh of relief when SHE sees who it is.)

I was just saying, you shouldn't be standing in the doorway like that. Not with Michael around.

DALE

Dear God! You scared the daylights out of me.

(SHE notices that OTTO is carrying a pistol in HIS hand.)

OTTO

You're not the only one who's scared! What a terrible night! You can't see the hand in front of your face!

(DR. CLIFFORD rushes in through the French doors.)

DR. CLIFFORD

What happened? I heard a scream.

DALE

It was only Otto. He surprised me for a moment.

(SEAN rushes in)

SEAN

What's going on?

DALE

Sean, did you call me just then?

SEAN

Call you? No.

DALE

I thought I heard you call my name. You asked me to come outside.

SEAN

No, but I did call out to Dr. Clifford. That must have been what you heard.

DALE

It was your voice. I'm sure I heard you call my name.

SEAN

(The strain is getting to him)

For God's sake, Dale. The last thing we need is people hearing "voices". I told you I was just talking to Dr. Clifford.

DR. CLIFFORD

Tension changes your perception of sound. So does the fog.

OTTO

I brought you a gun. Best thing for getting rid of tension.

(OTTO shows them the pistol)

SEAN

Otto, we don't need your damn guns!

OTTO

If he attacks me I'm not going to try and talk him out of it. You should at least let Dale use it.

(OTTO inadvertently points the pistol at DALE who flinches.)

DALE

No thanks. Those things scare me.

OTTO (To DALE)

I'll show you how to use it. Look... I'll take the bullets out.

(OTTO takes the bullets out and puts them on the table.)

Hey, you're the one who's going to need this the most.

SEAN

Stay out of this, Otto!

(The PHONE RINGS. SEAN picks it up. The others turn and listen for a moment, tense.)

SEAN

Hello?

(Listens, then to the others)

It's the police.

(The others relax)

Well, I told you that's what he'd probably do.

(Listens)

But how do you expect one policeman out on the road to stop him? Don't you have a boat of some kind?

(Everyone listens)

When we lived here we could have navigated this lake blindfolded! The fog isn't going to stop him!

(The others look at one another apprehensively)

SEAN

(Into phone)

Yeah, thanks for your concern!

(SEAN shakes HIS head and slams the phone down in disgust.)

They won't take anything seriously until somebody's been hurt! Well, they probably won't have to wait long!

DALE

Won't they send any more men?

SEAN

A boat was reported stolen from the Falls. They didn't send a police boat after it because of the fog!

OTTO

(Nervously)

When was it stolen?

SEAN

Two hours ago.

OTTO

Two hours!

(OTTO looks out of the window for a moment, a look of rising consternation and resolve on HIS face. The others all look at one another, struck by the realization that Michael could be outside the house at that very moment. There is a tense silence while everyone contemplates their next move. OTTO goes to the French windows and opens them, looking out into the fog. Suddenly there is the SOUND OF A FOG HORN only much louder this time. SEAN reacts sharply to the sound.)

SEAN

My God! That sound!

(SEAN seems to be gripped by some inexplicable terror. DR. CLIFFORD observes SEAN carefully.)

DALE

Sean! Are you all right?

OTTO

It's just a foghorn!

SEAN (Snaps out of it)

I'm sorry... the tension's getting to me as well, I guess.

(SEAN moves to the French doors and looks out intensely into the night.)

MUSIC CUE

SEAN
He's out there.

OTTO
Brilliant! I don't need E.S.P. to tell me that.

SEAN
I mean he's close. Very close. I can feel it. Dale, that must have been his voice you heard. Tell me again... what did you hear?

DALE
He asked me to come outside.

SEAN
He called you by name?

DALE
Yes.

SEAN
So that's what his game is!

(Suddenly SEAN picks up the flashlight and heads for the French doors. DR. CLIFFORD tries to stop HIM.)

DR. CLIFFORD
What are you doing?

SEAN
I told you! He's out there!

DR. CLIFFORD (Grabs SEAN)
Wait for him here! He'll come!

SEAN
You'd like that wouldn't you? Then you could play ringmaster to our little circus. That would make a great final chapter for your book, wouldn't it!

DR. CLIFFORD
I came here to help you!

SEAN
Well, you've been a great help so far! You, and all your kind. Yet here we are, ten years later, and his mind is still crawling with demons!

(SEAN moves to the doors again)

DALE
Please, Sean! We'll all be safer if we just wait here.

SEAN
If you're all so afraid of him, why don't you just get out of here and leave me alone!

(SEAN runs out of the French doors and into the night.)

MUSIC ENDS

DR. CLIFFORD (Shaking HER head)

Damn fool!

OTTO

I'm gonna get my shotgun. If you decide to come over to my place phone first so I know you're coming.

(HE is about to exit when HE remembers the pistol)

I'll hold on to that gun since you people don't seem to care whether you live or die.

(OTTO grabs the pistol and goes to the French doors.

HE looks out.)

It's awful dark out there.

(Opens the French doors and peers out.)

Can't see a damn thing!

DR. CLIFFORD

It's only going to get worse as the night sets in.

DALE

Please be careful with that gun. Don't forget Sean is out there too.

(OTTO cocks the pistol, and holding it out in front of him in his best pseudo-military form, HE EXITS.

DR. CLIFFORD closes the door behind OTTO. DALE notices the bullets on the counter.)

DALE

(Picks up the bullets)

Oh, look! He forgot to re-load the gun.

DR. CLIFFORD

Just as well, as far as I'm concerned.

DALE

I wish Sean hadn't run out like that. This whole thing is really upsetting him.

DR. CLIFFORD

Perhaps it's best to let him go for a while. It's very hard to understand twins. It's almost like he's confronting himself.

(DR. CLIFFORD looks at the French doors)

I'd better lock those doors.

DALE

It's all right. I'll do it.

(DALE goes over to the French doors and locks them.)

DR. CLIFFORD

(SHE looks toward the window)

Why don't you turn the lights down. We may be able to see something outside.

(DALE turns the room lights down and looks out of the windows.)

DALE

I hate these windows. Michael could be out there staring at us right now, and we'd never be able to see him.

(SHE shudders at the thought)

Ugh! Creepy.

(SHE starts to draw the drapes)

DR. CLIFFORD

You shouldn't do that. After all, we want him to come. I still have my doubts that he'll be able to find his way here through a fog this thick.

DALE (Pacing nervously)

I hope he doesn't.

DR. CLIFFORD

Why don't you come and keep warm by the fire. There's nothing we can do but wait.

(DALE stops pacing, but looks uncomfortably out of the window.)

DALE

I guess you're right.

MUSIC CUE

(DALE suddenly notices something and jumps to her feet.)

DALE

Dr. Clifford... look!

(DALE points to the bourbon on the counter)

DR. CLIFFORD

What is it?

DALE

The bourbon!

DR. CLIFFORD

What about it?

DALE

It's been opened! Someone's just been drinking out of it!

DR. CLIFFORD

So?

DALE

Don't you remember? Michael is the only one who drinks it. Sean only buys it to take to the hospital, but because of the fight they had Michael wouldn't take it.

DR. CLIFFORD

There's probably a perfectly ...

DALE

It noticed it ten minutes ago... it hadn't been touched!

(Looking around the kitchen)

And there's a knife missing! He's been in here! He's playing games with us! We'd better show this to the police.

(DALE moves towards the door)

DR. CLIFFORD

Just a moment, Dale. If we call the police in now, they're liable to start shooting at the first thing that moves. And don't forget Sean's out there as well.

DALE

But Michael may still be in the house!

DR. CLIFFORD

Don't worry. I know Michael. I can handle him.

(DR. CLIFFORD goes to her medical bag and takes out the already filled syringe.)

This will take care of him.

DALE (Unsure)

He's got a knife!

(Looking closely at DR. CLIFFORD)

I hope you're doing this for the right reason.

(DR. CLIFFORD looks around the room apprehensively.)

DR. CLIFFORD

He won't attack me. He's waiting for you to be alone. Just stay calm.

MUSIC BUILDS

(DR. CLIFFORD tiptoes over to the light switch, dims the room lights, and moves surreptitiously into the shadows. DALE stands by the French doors looking into the room, waiting. All is quiet. After a moment there is a CREAK OF A FLOORBOARD in the area of the hallway.)

DR. CLIFFORD

(Whispers to DALE; points)

The hallway.

(Immediately they focus their gaze into the dark and shadowy interior of the hallway. In the silence the sound of everything seems to be magnified. A GENTLE WIND seems to have sprung up outside, and a shaft of moonlight comes through a window in the hallway and casts an eerie light.)

DR. CLIFFORD (Whispers)

Can you see anything?

DALE (Whispers)

I don't think so.

DR. CLIFFORD (Whispers)

Stay back.

(DR. CLIFFORD moves out of the shadows with the syringe behind HER back. Hugging the wall SHE moves stealthily toward the hallway.)

DR. CLIFFORD (Gently)

Michael. Is that you? This is Dr. Clifford. You remember me don't you? Why don't you come out and talk with me for a moment. Remember how we used to talk Michael? I have that drug you used to like so much. You always asked me for it... we used to call it "the cocktail", remember? It always made you feel so calm... remember how it chased the demons away for a while...

(It is quiet. DALE breathes heavily, nervously. SHE backs away toward the French doors. DR. CLIFFORD stands near the hallway and waits.)

DR. CLIFFORD

Come on, Michael. I have it right here...

(There is another SLIGHT CREAK on the floorboards when ...

... SUDDENLY the French doors FLY OPEN BEHIND DALE and DR. CLIFFORD with a MONSTROUS CRASH and A FIGURE comes hurtling through the doors and gets all tangled up with DALE, wrestling HER to the ground.

SHE screams and then HER attacker tries to get away from HER. It takes a moment, but finally we see that the figure is OTTO who is in a state of hysterical terror. HE has smashed through the doors in a desperate attempt to get away from something and ran right into DALE who was standing directly in front of the French doors. OTTO's face has a cut on it.)

MUSIC ENDS

OTTO

Oh, my God! Oh, my God!

(OTTO backs away to the far side of the room.)

He tried to kill me! He came at me with a knife!

(HE throws the gun to one side)

Damn gun wouldn't work!

DR. CLIFFORD

The bullets! You left the bullets here!

OTTO

Huh?

(HE grabs the pistol again)

Jesus Christ!

(OTTO picks up the bullets and desperately fumbles with them, ramming them back into the pistol. When it is loaded HE looks nervously at the door which swings creakily on its hinges.)

DR. CLIFFORD

You've got a bad cut there. Let me take a look it.

OTTO

Never mind the cut! Call the police! They're going to have to give us protection now.

DALE

Oh, my God! Sean's still out there!

OTTO

Well if you won't call the police, I will!

(OTTO goes to the phone and starts to dial.)

DALE (To OTTO)

Give me the gun! I'm going to look for Sean!

OTTO

Get your own damn gun!

(Keeps dialing)

OTTO

Hello, police? Yeah. I'm calling from the Beecroft place. Yeah, The one that loony's supposed to be heading for.

(Sarcastically)

Yeah, thanks for the policeman. I nearly got stabbed to death. Yes, he's here, and believe me he's dangerous.

(Listens)

However many you've got. What about the army?

(Listens)

O.K., but don't hang around!

(Puts the phone down)

They're sending more men over.

(SEAN ENTERS through the French doors.)

MUSIC CUE

(SEAN still carries the flashlight, but HIS shirt is ripped and HE is out of breath. HE stops in the center of the room and looks around.)

MUSIC SOFTENS

DALE

(Runs to HIM and throws HER arms around HIM.)

Sean! Thank God you're safe!

OTTO

That crazy brother of yours damn near killed me! He jumped me from behind, I didn't even hear him coming. I knew he'd never forget what I said at the trial.

DR. CLIFFORD (To SEAN)

Where have you been... we were worried.

SEAN

I saw him!

DALE

(To SEAN)

Honey... your shirt! It's ripped!

SEAN

I got hold of him, but he was too strong for me.

DALE

Are you all right?

SEAN

Yeah, I'm fine. Nearly got lost in that damn fog.

DALE

You've hurt your hand!

(DALE has noticed that there is blood on the knuckles of HIS LEFT hand. HE tries to hide it.)

SEAN

I had to hit him. He went crazy when he saw me! It's O.K., it's not a deep cut.

(DALE accepts this, but DR. CLIFFORD looks at SEAN a little suspiciously. Could this in fact be MICHAEL?)

DR. CLIFFORD

Otto called the police while you were out.

SEAN/MICHAEL?

Did he?

DALE

They're sending more men.

OTTO

A dozen at least they said.

SEAN/MICHAEL

Good. We'll need them.

DALE

Look, Sean.

(SHE picks up the bourbon)

Michael must have got into the house.

SEAN/MICHAEL

You're right. At least we're all safe now. We can relax. The police will find him in the morning.

DALE

Thank God! I don't want you running out into the night again.

MUSIC BUILDS

SEAN/MICHAEL

Don't worry. I'm not going to let you out of my sight for the rest of the night, Dale.

DALE

Is that a promise?

SEAN/MICHAEL

That's a promise, Dale. You can count on it.

(SEAN/MICHAEL looks at DALE and smiles. DALE holds HIM tightly.)

OTTO peers nervously out of the window and cocks HIS pistol with a snap.

DR. CLIFFORD turns and looks suspiciously at SEAN/MICHAEL as the lights fade. The room lights fade first leaving the flickering light from the fire illuminating the four characters. The dramatic music wells up, and as the music increases in intensity the light from the fire fades to black.)

(Curtain)

END OF ACT ONE

ACT II

Scene I

SETTING: Same as Act 1, later that same night.

AT RISE: DALE and DR. CLIFFORD are in the living room looking towards the hallway. There is the SOUND OF TALKING offstage. SEAN/MICHAEL's back can just be seen as HE talks to the police who are standing offstage.

SEAN/MICHAEL

We'll be fine officer. Yes. Yes, we'll give you a shout if we see anything. I can tell you, we feel a lot safer now that you guys are out there.

(A door is closed and SEAN/MICHAEL comes into the living room from the hallway.)

God, I thought they'd never leave. Did they leave any of our doughnuts?

DALE

No, they're all gone.

SEAN/MICHAEL

Typical.

(HE turns the room lights down low)

They love to ask questions, don't they? Makes them think that they're doing something useful.

(HE moves into center of room)

At last we seem to have got rid of everyone.

(Looks coldly at DR. CLIFFORD)

Well, almost. Perhaps we could get the police to drive you home?

DR. CLIFFORD

That would be a little difficult, since I live on an island.

SEAN/MICHAEL (Laughs)

That's right. Well, I'm sure Otto will be able to put you up for the night. The marina has lots of spare rooms.

DALE

Sean! Dr. Clifford can stay here. There's two spare bedrooms.

SEAN/MICHAEL

I know, but the house hasn't been lived in for so long. Everything will be damp and dusty...

DALE

I'll clean up the room - it won't take me a minute. But the first thing I want to do is to close those drapes. That black void out there has been giving me the creeps all night.

(DALE goes to the windows and pulls the drapes across. SHE also closes the drapes over the French doors.)

DR. CLIFFORD

Don't you think it would be better to leave them open? At least the police could see in - keep an eye on things.

SEAN/MICHAEL

The last thing we want is the cops peering at us all night.

(DALE completes closing the drapes.)

DALE

I think we're going to be safe enough now, Dr. Clifford.

(SHE starts to exit upstairs)

I'll have your bed ready in a jiffy.

(DALE EXITS upstairs)

DR. CLIFFORD

(Looking at SEAN/MICHAEL closely)

Well, I must admit, I'm surprised.

SEAN/MICHAEL

About what?

DR. CLIFFORD

Michael. Finding his way through the fog like that.

SEAN/MICHAEL

It's no big deal. We both knew the lake very well.

DR. CLIFFORD

But he must have known it better than you, surely?

SEAN/MICHAEL

No. We were about the same.

DR. CLIFFORD

Really? That seems odd.

SEAN/MICHAEL (Cagey)

What's odd about it?

DR. CLIFFORD

Well, you were only outside for five minutes and you said you got lost in the fog.

(Beat. SEAN/MICHAEL looks at DR. CLIFFORD.)

SEAN/MICHAEL (Smiling)

I said I nearly got lost in the fog. It would have to get worse than this before I got lost around here. Even after all these years.

DR. CLIFFORD

(Observing SEAN/MICHAEL closely)

I wonder what's driving him? He must have chosen to escape today for a reason. He's risking a lot by trying to come here. He must have known the police would stake this place out.

SEAN/MICHAEL

You're looking for logic from a man who's mentally ill.

DR. CLIFFORD

Come on, Sean! We both know why he's here! It's not the house, is it? That was just the final straw for him!

SEAN/MICHAEL

You know, I think you're getting altogether too interested in this case. I seem to remember you didn't have a lot of success the first time around. What makes you think it'll be any easier today?

DR. CLIFFORD

All my life I've been brought in after the damage was done. This time I can stop something before it happens.

SEAN/MICHAEL

That's quite a challenge, isn't it?

(Smiles cynically)

An over-the-hill headshrinker looking for one last hurrah.

DR. CLIFFORD

It is a challenge. Michael is very clever. He's an expert at playing games. I admit he's tricked me a few times, but he also plays games with you, Sean.

SEAN/MICHAEL

Me?

(DR. CLIFFORD casually goes to the fruit bowl and picks out an apple. SHE polishes it against her jacket.)

DR. CLIFFORD

He dominated you, you know.

SEAN/MICHAEL

Was it that obvious? Of course that's all changed since I met Dale. Without her I'm sure Michael would still be manipulating me, just like he used to.

DR. CLIFFORD

Yes. It's amazing what a good woman can do for a man.

(DR. CLIFFORD bites into HER apple.)

Mmmm. These are good. Try one.

(Before SEAN/MICHAEL can answer DR. CLIFFORD tosses HIM an apple. SEAN/MICHAEL catches it in HIS RIGHT hand.)

MUSIC CUE

DR. CLIFFORD observes this closely, just a bit surprised. SEAN/MICHAEL senses this, smiles, and bites into the apple.)

SEAN/MICHAEL

They are good.

(The two of them bite deeply into their apples and eye each other warily. DALE ENTERS from upstairs.)

MUSIC ENDS

DALE

The small bedroom wasn't very dirty at all.

(SHE gets a clean set of sheets out of a cardboard box in the kitchen.)

These just need a quick airing.

(DALE takes the sheets and drapes them over the back of a chair.)

DR. CLIFFORD

So, you feel safe staying here tonight?

DALE

Sure.

DR. CLIFFORD

Doesn't it worry you that they haven't found Michael yet? After all, he attacked Otto right outside the house.

SEAN/MICHAEL

He's probably run off into the bush - they'll find him in the morning. Hey, the place is crawling with cops, it's probably the safest night we'll ever spend.

(SEAN/MICHAEL yawns)

Well, I don't know about you, but I'm not staying up all night. It's been a long day. What about you, Doc?

DR. CLIFFORD

(Still a little suspicious)

I think I'll stay up. Like many old women I have great difficulty sleeping. Perhaps the body knows it doesn't have a lot of time left.

(SHE looks at HER watch)

Ah. Time for my medication.

(SHE looks around)

Have you seen my black bag?

DALE

Oh, I put it upstairs in your bedroom. I'll get it.

DR. CLIFFORD

No, no. I'm not dead yet.

(DR. CLIFFORD gives SEAN/MICHAEL a close look before SHE ambles off upstairs and EXITS.)

SEAN/MICHAEL

How are we going to get rid of her?

DALE

What do you mean?

SEAN/MICHAEL

Well, I want to spend some time with you tonight. I mean, this is our first night together... here in this house. I just don't want the old lady hanging around all night.

DALE

Don't worry. I bet she'll get tired soon.

SEAN/MICHAEL

You're probably right. She only wants to stay up because she's a nosy old bitch.

DALE

Sean!

SEAN/MICHAEL

Well, you know what I mean. Anyway she looks like she's on her last legs.

(HE glances up the stairs)

In fact, that's probably the last we've seen of her tonight.

(Back to DALE)

Boy, I'm starving! Can you make me a sandwich or something?

DALE

(A little surprised)

Sure. What would you like in it?

SEAN/MICHAEL

Oh, anything will do.

DALE

Where did this sudden appetite come from?

SEAN/MICHAEL

Country air, I guess.

(DALE goes into the kitchen. SEAN/MICHAEL smiles to himself and then looks upstairs again. HE pulls a knotted rope out of his pocket and pulls it taut in his hands.

MUSIC CUE

HE slowly reaches the bottom of the stairs and tip-toes up them stealthily. Just before HE disappears out of sight there is an URGENT KNOCKING at the door.

MUSIC ENDS

(Thwarted, SEAN/MICHAEL comes downstairs hastily, stuffing the rope back into his pocket.)

SEAN/MICHAEL

Who is it?

MOLLY (Offstage)

Open up! It's Molly! They've found Michael!

(DALE comes in from the kitchen)

The police have found him! Open up!

(SEAN/MICHAEL opens the door and MOLLY ENTERS in a state of excitement.)

MOLLY

Where's Dr. Clifford? They want her!

SEAN/MICHAEL

What do they need her for?

MOLLY

When they found Michael he was unconscious, lying over by the shed.

(DR. CLIFFORD comes downstairs)

DR. CLIFFORD

What's that about Michael?

MOLLY

Doctor, you'd better come quick. They found him, but he's out cold. He may be injured. The police want you to take a look at him.

DR. CLIFFORD

All right. I'll get my bag.

(DR. CLIFFORD dashes back upstairs)

MOLLY

(To SEAN/MICHAEL)

You'd better come too.

SEAN/MICHAEL (Nervously)

No! I don't want to see him.

DALE

But he may be hurt!

SEAN/MICHAEL

I don't want to see him, O.K.!

(DALE looks at HIM, a little surprised. DR. CLIFFORD comes back downstairs with her bag.)

DR. CLIFFORD

Dale, perhaps you could come with me. I may need your help.

(DALE and DR. CLIFFORD EXIT. MOLLY stays.)

MOLLY

Well, thank God that's over! What a scare! I thought for a moment it was Otto they'd found.

(MOLLY sees the bourbon on the counter and helps herself to a shot.)

MOLLY

Mind if I help myself?
(Without waiting for answer)

Thanks.

(SHE swigs back a shot and then looks at SEAN/MICHAEL. Slyly SHE pours HIM a bourbon and hands it to HIM.)

MOLLY

Here.

SEAN/MICHAEL

(Takes the glass then looks at it for a moment.)

Not for me, thanks.

MOLLY

Oh, right. Only for guests. Well, I'm a guest.

(MOLLY swigs his drink down as well in a single gulp. Then SHE looks at HIM carefully. HE notices this.)

SEAN/MICHAEL

What are you staring at?

MOLLY

There's something about you...

SEAN/MICHAEL

Oh, yeah?

MOLLY

Your eyes.

SEAN/MICHAEL

What about them?

MOLLY

Reminds me of something.

(Suddenly outside the house the SIREN OF A POLICE CAR starts up and the reflection of the flashing lights from the police car dart around the inside of the room. SEAN/MICHAEL becomes very upset by the commotion.)

SEAN/MICHAEL

I wish they'd turn that damn thing off!

(THE SOUND is really beginning to bother HIM. HE holds HIS head)

MOLLY

Are you all right?

SEAN/MICHAEL

(Snaps at her)

Of course I'm not all right! They just found my brother unconscious outside! How am I supposed to feel!

(The SIREN is turned off)

Thank God for that!

(In the silence that follows SEAN/MICHAEL seems to go through a transition. HE becomes colder, harder and yet more in control. HE looks icily at MOLLY when:

The French doors fly open and OTTO ENTERS in a rush.)

OTTO

They've found him! They've got Michael!

(They look at OTTO. HE is quite a sight as HE is loaded down with weapons. HE has a hunting jacket and boots, and carries a large shotgun. A bandoleer of bullets hangs across one shoulder, a rifle across the other. From an army belt hangs a pistol in a holster, a large hunting knife in a sheath and a machete stuck in the belt. He almost staggers in under the weight of the arms. HE has a bandana tied across HIS forehead, and HIS face is blackened, military-style. HE looks like a backwoods version of Rambo. The others stare at HIM in astonishment.)

OTTO

Did you hear what I said?

MOLLY

(Casually)

We all know about it, Otto.

OTTO

Oh.

MOLLY

What on earth are you wearing?

OTTO

Well what did you expect? I'm the one he's out to kill.

SEAN/MICHAEL

What's happening out there?

OTTO

What?

SEAN/MICHAEL

The police. What are they doing with Michael?

OTTO

Oh... Clifford was looking at him.

SEAN/MICHAEL (Concerned)

Was he conscious?

OTTO

He was moving, but he looked real groggy.

(The SIREN starts up again along with the flashing lights. There is the SOUND OF A CAR accelerating rapidly down the road. The SOUND OF THE SIREN and the flashing lights fade away. After a moment DR. CLIFFORD and DALE ENTER.)

DR. CLIFFORD ,

The panic's off everyone! He's going to be fine.

(To SEAN/MICHAEL)

Still, you must have hit him pretty hard.

(SEAN/MICHAEL subtly slips HIS still bloodied left hand into a pocket where it cannot be seen.)

SEAN/MICHAEL

I didn't mean to hurt him... are the police taking him back to the hospital?

DR. CLIFFORD

Not yet. There's a highway patrol station on the main road. They want to hold him there until the hospital staff arrive. They're very nervous about him escaping again.

OTTO (Worried)

You think he may escape again?

SEAN/MICHAEL

Did you sedate him?

DR. CLIFFORD

No. Hardly necessary considering the state he's in. He's in police custody. I don't think he'll be able to escape a second time.

(An expression of concern crosses SEAN/MICHAEL's face.)

OTTO

Well, that's a relief!

MOLLY

It's been quite a day. I'll say one thing for you kids. Life was always unpredictable when you were around.

OTTO (To DR. CLIFFORD).

I'll take you back in the morning. Shouldn't be any problem - the wind is blowing the fog off.

DR. CLIFFORD

Thank you. Sean and Dale have kindly asked me to stay here tonight.

OTTO

Good. We're all set then.

MOLLY

You know. I was kind of enjoying all the excitement.

SEAN/MICHAEL

Well, now we can all go to bed.

DR. CLIFFORD

Yes. Even I feel quite tired.

OTTO

See you all in the morning then.

SEAN/MICHAEL

Yes. Goodnight.

(OTTO and MOLLY EXIT. DR. CLIFFORD ambles
off upstairs.)

DR. CLIFFORD

Goodnight.

MUSIC CUE

(SEAN/MICHAEL and DALE stand in front of the fire
and HE looks into her eyes romantically.)

SEAN/MICHAEL

Well, here we are. Alone at last.

(SEAN/MICHAEL holds HER closely.)

This is what I had planned for this weekend... just you and me... a crackling fire... a
glass of wine... kinda got blown, didn't it?

DALE

It sure did.

SEAN/MICHAEL

Let's just sit by the fire for a while.

(SEAN/MICHAEL stares into the fire)

"A book of verses underneath the bough, a jug of wine, a loaf of bread and thou, beside
me singing in the wilderness. Ah, wilderness is Paradise enow."

DALE

That's beautiful. What's it from?

SEAN/MICHAEL

It's an old Persian love poem.

(Kisses DALE)

I'm going to get some wood and bank up the fire. Don't you go anywhere.

DALE

(Affectionately)

I won't.

MUSIC ENDS

(SEAN/MICHAEL takes the axe that is leaning on the wall next to the fireplace. HE looks at DALE for a moment, then goes outside.

DALE glances around for something to do. SHE goes into the kitchen and brings out a couple of towels and hangs them in front of the fire to dry out. Outside, THE SOUND OF CHOPPING WOOD can be heard.

DR. CLIFFORD comes downstairs nervously.)

DR. CLIFFORD

What's that noise?

DALE

Oh, it's only Sean. He's chopping wood for the fire.

DR. CLIFFORD (Relieved)

Ah. Good. As long as everything's all right.

(DR. CLIFFORD turns to go upstairs)

DALE

Dr. Clifford... !

(SHE stops)

Do you think... I mean...what happened to Michael... could that happen to Sean?

DR. CLIFFORD

You mean suddenly developing Multiple Personality Syndrome at his age? It's highly unlikely.

DALE

But not impossible? After all they both witnessed their father's death and they share the same genetic code.

DR. CLIFFORD

Well... yes... that's true. But remember their genetic codes are mirrors so they're not identical in the strictest sense. Besides, I think that if Sean were going to develop the same disorder as Michael it would have shown itself before now.

DALE

It's just that he seems... different since we arrived here.

DR. CLIFFORD

It's been quite an ordeal for him, coming back to this house. And then Michael escaping. He'll be all right.

DALE

I guess you're right.

(Beat)

I can just imagine what my parents are going to say when they hear about this.

DR. CLIFFORD

Do they know much about Michael?

DALE

As much as I did. They said I was crazy getting involved with Sean. Dad said twins give him the creeps.

DR. CLIFFORD

When you marry a twin you're not just marrying one person. And there's always the worry that you'll never be as close as the other twin.

DALE

Well, if I can weather this storm I guess I can handle anything.

DR. CLIFFORD

(Encouraging)

Right.

DALE

I'm glad you've been here for all this.

DR. CLIFFORD

Wouldn't have missed it for the world.

(Beat)

Well, I won't disturb you again. Goodnight.

(DR. CLIFFORD goes upstairs to bed. DALE listens to the chopping and then takes some sheets upstairs and exits. The chopping stops. SEAN/MICHAEL comes in from the hallway with some wood and places it by the fire. HE looks around for DALE.)

SEAN/MICHAEL

(Uneasy)

Dale? Dale?

(HE glances around with rising anger when MOLLY ENTERS through the French doors.)

MOLLY

Are you alone?

SEAN/MICHAEL

For the moment. What do you want?

MOLLY

To talk.

SEAN/MICHAEL

This isn't a good time.

MOLLY

You've changed you know.

SEAN/MICHAEL

I don't think so.

MOLLY

Yes. You're more like your brother now.

SEAN/MICHAEL

Oh, really?

MOLLY

I got to thinking. You know, you two were always playing games. You were so similar you could easily play each other. Then I thought... what if they changed places at the hospital... you know, Michael doing a couple of months... then Sean doing a couple of months...

SEAN/MICHAEL

Ha! That's a great theory Molly! But why would he escape today?

MOLLY

Let's just say that you're Michael, O.K. And Sean's the one inside. You meet a girl, get married and refuse to go back in.

SEAN/MICHAEL

(Laughs)

That's funny, Molly. That's really good. And what leads you to think that I'm Michael?

MOLLY

Your eyes.

(This stops SEAN/MICHAEL's laughter.)

SEAN/MICHAEL

You're wrong, Molly. But if I were Michael, which I'm not, why aren't you afraid of me?

MOLLY

Because Michael loved me.

(Beat)

SEAN/MICHAEL

He made love to you. There's a difference.

MOLLY

No, he loved me.

(There is A NOISE upstairs)

SEAN/MICHAEL

We'd better finish this conversation tomorrow.

MOLLY

Come over after three... I'll be waiting for you.

(SHE kisses him and exits. SEAN/MICHAEL thinks about this for a moment, laughs to himself and shakes his head. THE PHONE RINGS. SEAN/MICHAEL

stares at the phone for a moment. He thinks about picking the phone up, but changes his mind and EXITS.)

DALE comes downstairs. SHE answers the phone)

DALE

Hello?

(Beat)

Just a moment.

(Calls upstairs)

Dr. Clifford! The phone!

(DR. CLIFFORD comes downstairs and picks up the phone.)

DR. CLIFFORD

Hello?

(Listens)

Yes...yes. I see.

(Listens)

I'll be right over.

(SHE puts the phone down)

It's Michael. He's beginning to recover and is causing quite a disturbance at the police station. They want me to sedate him. May I take your car?

DALE

Of course.

(DALE looks for the keys)

I think Sean has the keys. I'll get them.

(DALE exits. DR. CLIFFORD picks up the phone and dials.)

DR. CLIFFORD

Hello, Otto? Dr. Clifford. Look, the police just called me and they say that Michael is claiming that he's really Sean... yes, I know... up to his old tricks again. He's claiming it happened after that fight they had outside.

(Listens)

No, I Don't believe it either. I tested Sean earlier and he is right-handed. The only thing that worries me is that his left hand is injured, so there is a slight possibility... Look, can you do me a favor? I won't be gone very long, but can you keep an eye on the place? Just in case. You needn't come inside. I'll just open the curtains. O.K., bye.

(DR. CLIFFORD puts the phone down and opens the curtains that cover the French doors just as SEAN/MICHAEL ENTERS with DALE. SEAN/MICHAEL is carrying a wood-holder loaded with logs. SEAN/MICHAEL notices DR. CLIFFORD at the French doors.)

SEAN/MICHAEL

What's going on?

DR. CLIFFORD

It's Michael. He's become very unruly. The police want me to give him a sedative. It's not serious.

(SEAN/MICHAEL puts the wood-holder down.)

SEAN/MICHAEL

By all means take the car. I don't want Michael to hurt himself.

DR. CLIFFORD

Thank you. I won't be gone long.

(SEAN/MICHAEL takes the car keys out of HIS pocket and hands them to DR. CLIFFORD. DR. CLIFFORD EXITS hurriedly.)

SEAN/MICHAEL

(To DALE)

Don't worry. Michael does this all the time.

(There is the SOUND OF THE CAR STARTING AND PULLING AWAY RAPIDLY. SEAN/MICHAEL puts some logs on the fire and then looks at HIS watch.)

At least it got rid of the old woman. Now we're really on our own. Come and sit by the fire.

(SEAN/MICHAEL moves to the fire and warms himself before the flames.)

I think we have enough wood to last the night.

DALE

I brought your bath robe down.

SEAN/MICHAEL

It's O.K., the fire's warming me up. You know, I'm finally beginning to relax a little. I really think our problems are almost over.

(HE puts his arms around her.)

You're very tense.

DALE

It's not been a quiet night, exactly.

SEAN/MICHAEL

Look, Michael is in police custody. He's out of our lives. Tonight is going to mark a whole new beginning for us. In the past I've always felt... guilty about my brother. But it's time to look out for myself... and for us.

DALE

You're right. It's funny, I've never even met Michael and yet somehow he's managed to dominate our lives.

SEAN/MICHAEL

It was hard for me to admit he was such a bad influence. Good or bad I felt that brothers should stand by each other, no matter what they've done. But that's all over now, thanks to you.

(Flattered by that remark, DALE gives SEAN/MICHAEL a comforting hug. SEAN/MICHAEL looks at HER for a moment.)

SEAN/MICHAEL

So let's snap out of this somber mood and try to get on with our lives. This was supposed to be a romantic evening, let's salvage what we can.

DALE

You're right. It hasn't been very romantic.

SEAN/MICHAEL

First of all why don't you put something on which is a little more...
(Sensuously)
... interesting.

DALE

Oh? What's on your mind?

SEAN/MICHAEL

Look, we're out in the country. You can hear the wind in the trees. We have a beautiful fire! We're alone. Let's put all this madness behind us. Tonight we should celebrate the end of an unhealthy relationship.

DALE (Affectionately)

I'll sure celebrate that!

(DALE gets up)

I'll take a quick shower, and then I'll put something on that will really knock your socks off.

SEAN/MICHAEL

Can't wait. I'll light some candles and stoke up the fire.

DALE (Smiles)

I think I know what you're up to, you devil.

(DALE waltzes upstairs in a rather jaunty mood. SEAN/MICHAEL looks after HER and a sudden cold and determined expression forms on his face.)

SEAN/MICHAEL

(Malignantly, to himself)

Do you, now?

MUSIC CUE

(SEAN/MICHAEL looks around for a moment and then hastily gets a pair of candles and puts them over the fireplace. Then HE goes into the kitchen and emerges with a long carving knife. During this there is A NOISE OUTSIDE the French doors and OTTO can be seen creeping across the deck and staring in through the glass. OTTO squints around the dimly lit room, trying to see something, looking a little perplexed.)

When SEAN/MICHAEL is about to light the candles HE notices OTTO at the French doors. SEAN/MICHAEL stops what HE is doing and casually goes over towards the French doors. OTTO sees this and sinks back into the darkness outside. SEAN/MICHAEL closes the drapes that cover the French doors, then HE grabs the knife and turns the room lights down.

OTTO, who now cannot see what is going on, goes up to the French doors and stares in. SEAN/MICHAEL sees this and slips deeper into the shadows.

OTTO opens the door and comes stealthily into the room. HE has a hunting rifle which HE aims nervously around. SEAN/MICHAEL sees this and hides the knife.)

SEAN/MICHAEL

(Coming out of the shadows)

Hello, Otto.

(OTTO spins around and aims the rifle at HIM.)

MUSIC ENDS

SEAN/MICHAEL

(Mockingly)

What are you doing with that gun?

OTTO

Oh, just keeping an eye on things. Everything O.K. here?

SEAN/MICHAEL

Just fine.

OTTO

Good. Mind if I sit by the fire for a while? Damn cold outside.

SEAN/MICHAEL

We were about to go to bed.

(OTTO sits down in front of the fire and warms himself. HE obviously has no intention of leaving.)

OTTO

I'm freezing. You couldn't spare a shot of that bourbon could you?

SEAN/MICHAEL

(Realizes he's not going to get rid of him)

Sure.

(Gets the bourbon and pours a shot)

Here.

(Hands it to OTTO)

OTTO

Thanks.

SEAN/MICHAEL

You know, you should just go to bed and let the police handle this.

OTTO

I can't.

SEAN/MICHAEL

What do you mean, you can't?

(Suddenly realizes what's going on)

Did Dr. Clifford call you?

OTTO

Yeah. You know what she's like.

SEAN/MICHAEL

She wants you to stay 'til she gets back, right?

OTTO

You got it.

SEAN/MICHAEL

Well, there's no need of course, but if you're going to stay you may as well relax. Have another drink.

(HE pours HIM another drink. OTTO leans HIS rifle up against the fireplace.)

How far away is this place they've taken him to?

OTTO

Oh, not far. It's just down on the highway. The Doc'll be back soon.

(SEAN/MICHAEL looks at HIS watch)

OTTO

Where's Dale?

SEAN/MICHAEL (Preoccupied)

Huh? Oh, she's upstairs. Getting ready for bed.

OTTO

Very nice girl. Pretty too.

(Sadly)

You're very lucky.

SEAN/MICHAEL

Yes. I know.

OTTO

Better keep Michael away from her. I hate to even think what that creep would do to her if he got her alone for awhile.

SEAN/MICHAEL

(Looks at HIM, coldly)

You really don't like Michael, do you?

OTTO

I hate the son-of-a-bitch. I'll never forget the night I came up to the house. That memory just stays with me... I'll never be able to forget it. He was standing right here with that bloodstained knife...

(Shakes HIS head)

If I'd been five minutes earlier...

SEAN/MICHAEL

It's not just that though, is it?

OTTO

What do you mean?

SEAN/MICHAEL

Why you hate him.

OTTO

What are you getting at... ?

(SEAN/MICHAEL moves tauntingly behind OTTO.)

**MUSIC CUE
(Very Low)**

SEAN/MICHAEL

It's what was going on between him and Molly that really made you hate him.

OTTO

What are you talking about? There was nothing going on between him and Molly. That's ridiculous! He was just a kid.

SEAN/MICHAEL

(Taunting)

He was a lusty nineteen-year-old Otto. And she encouraged him, Otto. She led him on. She let him know exactly what she wanted.

OTTO

She wouldn't have done that.

SEAN/MICHAEL

(Laughs)

Wouldn't she? Come on, Otto. You must have known.

OTTO

I never knew. I never knew for sure!

SEAN/MICHAEL

But you suspected, didn't you? You always suspected.

OTTO

(Angrily)

Yes! I suspected, but there was never any proof!

MUSIC BUILDS

SEAN/MICHAEL

“Oh, jealousy! It is a green-eyed monster! And, oh, what damned minutes tells he o’er, who dotes, yet doubts; suspects, yet strongly loves”.

OTTO

What the hell are you rambling on about?

SEAN/MICHAEL

Shakespeare, my dull-witted friend. Othello to be precise. But unlike the sad hero of that tale, your wife was running around on you. Yes, Otto... Michael told me all about it! They were making “the beast with two backs”.

(SEAN/MICHAEL moves behind OTTO and pulls out the knotted rope from his pocket. HE pulls it taut in HIS hands. HE is about to pounce.)

OTTO

(In anguish)

Why are you telling me all this?

(SEAN/MICHAEL suddenly whips the rope around OTTO’s neck from behind. HE pulls the rope tight and begins to strangle OTTO. We now realize that whether it is SEAN or MICHAEL it is most surely the alter-ego “VICTOR”).

SEAN/MICHAEL (AS VICTOR)

Why? Because you made me betray him! You spoiled it all when you walked in on them! You came up to this house that night because you thought he was with Molly, didn’t you? Never mentioned that at the trial, did you?

OTTO

(Struggling to breathe)

Oh, my God!

SEAN/MICHAEL (AS VICTOR)

(Whispers into his ear)

“And thus the whirligig of time brings in his revenges... “

(OTTO loses consciousness and SEAN/MICHAEL looks at him coldly.)

SEAN/MICHAEL (AS VICTOR)

Twelfth Night.

(With an evil smile)

And your last.

(SEAN/MICHAEL drags him across the room and through the hallway. After a moment, SEAN/MICHAEL emerges, breathing heavily. HE notices the rifle up against the fireplace. HE takes it offstage and hides it. HE catches HIS breath for a moment.

MUSIC ENDS

HE goes to the bottom of the stairs leading to the bedroom and looks up.)

SEAN/MICHAEL (AS VICTOR)

(Calls out)

Are you ready yet?

DALE

(Distant)

What?

SEAN/MICHAEL (AS VICTOR)

(Calls out)

I was wondering if you were ready yet?

(There is the SOUND OF AN UPSTAIRS DOOR OPENING.)

DALE (O.S.)

Hold onto your hat! I'll be a couple more minutes.

SEAN/MICHAEL (AS VICTOR)

No rush! Whenever you're ready.

DALE (O.S.)

Who were you talking to just then?

SEAN/MICHAEL (AS VICTOR)

Oh, just Otto.

(Beat. Smiles)

He's gone now.

(Then HE goes back to the fireplace and lights the candles.

The PHONE RINGS. HE moves quickly to the phone glancing upstairs as HE goes.)

SEAN/MICHAEL (AS VICTOR)

Hello? Dr. Clifford!

(Listens)

Yes, everything's fine. My, you do worry about us. No, Dale's upstairs getting changed. There's no need for you talk to her, she's fine. How's my brother? Have you sedated him yet? Oh, well before you do can I talk to him for a moment? Thanks.

(Beat)

Well, hello.

(Firmly)

Now calm down! I'm sorry... but Victor's here ... I can't control him, you know that. But he knows what has to be done.

(Listens)

Get off the phone, Clifford! I want to talk to my brother. Let me talk to him!

(Listens, briefly)

Who am I?

(Laughs coldly)

You're so smart, Dr. Clifford... you work that out!

2-1-60

MUSIC CUE

(HE puts the phone down and returns to the fireplace. HE holds the knife and looks at it impassionately.

HE surveys the scene with satisfaction and then takes HIS shirt off. There is a SOUND FROM UPSTAIRS and HE quickly grabs the bath robe and puts it on, putting the knife back over the mantel.

MUSIC ENDS

DALE comes down the stairs wearing a white satin nightgown. HER hair is down and flowing and SHE looks beautiful. SHE looks at the room with its candles, the warm glow from the fire, and dim lighting.)

SEAN/MICHAEL (AS VICTOR)

Now that's more like it! Come and sit by the fire!

DALE

(Looks at candles and the fire)

Oh, Sean! That's lovely!

(THEY sit down in front of the fire. SEAN/MICHAEL sits behind HER cradling HER in HIS arms. SEAN/MICHAEL gives the fire a prod with the poker and light from the flames flickers over them.)

SEAN/MICHAEL (AS VICTOR)

Well, here we are at last!

(HE kisses HER gently on the forehead)

I've thought about this for a long time.

DALE

You know, I really think you are over Michael. With everything that has happened tonight you'd usually be upset for weeks. But you look so calm... almost serene.

SEAN/MICHAEL (AS VICTOR)

There is a moment in your life when you realize you're no longer in control of your destiny. You feel no more fear... no more guilt.

DALE

You know, I want to see Michael. When he's back in the hospital we should both go and see him. Together we may be able to help him.

SEAN/MICHAEL (AS VICTOR)

(Uncomfortable with DALE's gentleness)

Let's not talk about Michael.

DALE

But I want you to talk about him. I'll never fully understand you if I don't understand Michael. Please! Let me see him. I'm sure he's not as bad as everyone says.

(SHE touches HIM tenderly on HIS face. Unnerved, SEAN/MICHAEL shies away from HER.)

SEAN/MICHAEL (AS VICTOR)

You'll never understand him! How can you understand a man who's been to Hell and back.

(VICTOR coming through.)

I'm the only one who can really understand.

(Intensely)

Look at the flames.

DALE

(Frightened by the outburst)

What?

SEAN/MICHAEL (AS VICTOR)

(Roughly HE turns HER head toward the fire)

Look at the flames!

(Mesmerized by the fire)

We used to play games here when we were kids. See who could stare into the flames the longest. "Blow me about in winds! Roast me in sulfur! Wash me in steep-down gulfs of liquid fire!"

DALE

Sean...

SEAN/MICHAEL (AS VICTOR)

(Obsessed)

Have you ever stared at flames for a long time? They can make you think the strangest things. So bright, so inviting... you just want to reach out and hold them.

(HE puts HIS hand too close to the fire, and draws it away in pain.)

You want to live inside the flames, warm and protected, but they lie. They lure you in only to hurt you. Lies, so many lies.

DALE

What are you talking about? What lies?

SEAN/MICHAEL (AS VICTOR)

They killed our father! They took away our mother! They said they had a better place for us. They all lied!

DALE

Sean! You know that's not true! Your father died in an accident!

SEAN/MICHAEL (AS VICTOR)

And now you want to take my own brother away from me! Oh, yes, I know what you want!

MUSIC CUE

DALE

(Really frightened now)

You're not Sean.

SEAN/MICHAEL (AS VICTOR)

Really?

(SEAN/MICHAEL grabs the knife off the mantel. Since he has now revealed himself we shall call him MICHAEL - although he is still in the grips of his alter-ego "VICTOR".)

DALE

Michael... I never wanted to take Sean away from you!

MICHAEL

Then why did he stop coming to see me every week? Why did he talk about you all the time? Dale, Dale, Dale... I got sick of hearing that name while I rotted alone in that Hell-hole!

DALE

I never meant to hurt you!

MICHAEL

Liar! You hated me! "O cunning love! How well you kept him blind, lest eyes well-seeing thy foul faults should find".

DALE (Desperately)

Michael, you can't get Sean back by killing me! Sean will hate you... he'll never forgive you.

MICHAEL

He will understand, once you're out of the way. Just like he did with Kelly. He thought he was in love with her too, but I soon put a stop to that.

DALE

Please! Michael, listen to me... !

MICHAEL

Michael! Michael! Why do you keep calling me that? There's no-one by that name here!

(MICHAEL raises the knife as if about to strike.)

DALE

Oh, God! No!

(HE starts to bring the knife down when...

A LOUD SHOT FROM A SHOTGUN BLASTS ACROSS THE ROOM. The gun is protruding between the drapes of the French doors. MICHAEL is hit in the head and spins around with a cry of pain and falls to the floor.

MUSIC ENDS

The French doors open and MOLLY ENTERS carrying a shotgun.)

MOLLY

Are you all right?

DALE (Breathless)

Yes. Yes. Thank God you came!

MOLLY

Don't thank me - Dr. Clifford called... told me to get my butt over here.

(Looks sadly at MICHAEL)

Damn him! Damn him! Why did he have to do this?

(Looks around)

Where's Otto? He was supposed to be keeping an eye on things.

DALE

I haven't seen him. I did hear them talking though.

MOLLY

(Goes to the body of MICHAEL)

I should have known.

(Reaches out and touches the body gently)

He's still breathing.

(Suddenly MICHAEL GRABS THE END OF THE SHOTGUN and pulls it out of MOLLY'S hands. HE LEAPS UP, still brandishing the knife, and thrusts the knife at MOLLY.

MOLLY backs away from HIM.

MICHAEL staggers to HIS feet, HIS hand over HIS face which is covered with blood. When HE sees the blood on HIS hand HE grabs a towel [* note: DALE had left it earlier by the fire to dry out] and uses it to stem the flow of blood. Then HE turns HIS attention back to MOLLY who BOLTS OUT of the French doors.

HE follows MOLLY, although HE is having difficulty moving because of HIS wounds. Still holding the knife, HE disappears outside.

DALE sees the shotgun on the floor and grabs it. SHE checks the cartridges but they are both spent. SHE throws the gun aside as:

MICHAEL returns from outside. staggering and moving slowly, the towel still pressed to HIS face. HE breathes heavily and there is blood on the towel. HE moves menacingly toward DALE.

DALE backs away from HIM to the fireplace. There is the SOUND OF A POLICE SIREN and THE SOUND OF A CAR driving rapidly up the driveway and coming to a sudden stop. Lights from a police car emergency light reflect around the room.

MICHAEL is about to lunge at DALE with the knife when...

The French doors open and SEAN rushes in.)

SEAN (Shouts)

Michael!

(MICHAEL freezes at the sound of HIS brother's voice. Behind SEAN, DR. CLIFFORD and MOLLY ENTER.

MOLLY is shaken, but otherwise all right. DR. CLIFFORD shouts out to the police who are waiting offstage.)

DR. CLIFFORD

(Shouts off-stage)

Wait there! We'll handle it!

SEAN

Michael!

(MICHAEL still holds the knife poised above DALE. HE seems indecisive.)

Tell Victor there will be no more killing!

(Firmly)

Tell him, Michael!

(MICHAEL slowly lowers the knife)

SEAN

Give it to me!

(MICHAEL does not move so SEAN takes the knife from HIS hand. MICHAEL then turns HIS face away from them and slumps down by the fireplace. HE lowers HIS head and sits, defeated. DALE moves to SEAN'S side.)

MOLLY (To MICHAEL)

Where's Otto?

(MICHAEL does not answer. SEAN grabs HIM angrily.)

SEAN

Where is he!

(MICHAEL slowly lifts his arm and points towards the hallway. DR. CLIFFORD dashes into the hallway. They all wait nervously for DR. CLIFFORD to return. After a moment SHE emerges.)

DR. CLIFFORD

(Sadly, to MOLLY)

I'm sorry.

(SEAN turns to MICHAEL)

SEAN

Do you know what you've done! You've let Victor loose again! He's killed again! Are you aware of that!

(MICHAEL bows HIS head even further)

MOLLY

There is no Victor! That's just a trick he plays to get off the hook!

(To DR. CLIFFORD)

Why don't you admit it. We all got taken in by him.

(Suddenly MICHAEL leaps up and snatches the knife from SEAN'S hand.)

MUSIC CUE

Everybody freezes. Slowly HE advances on DALE. SEAN moves in front of HER.)

MICHAEL

(Speaking with difficulty.)

Get.. out... of the way!

SEAN

No! Can't you see... even killing her wouldn't make any difference! I'm not part of you, and I never was! I'm a separate human being with my own life! A life that you can't be part of!

(MICHAEL looks at SEAN, almost disbelieving. Nobody moves for a moment.)

MICHAEL

(Slowly, but with great intensity)

You'll... always... be part... of... me!

(MICHAEL slowly raises the knife and then suddenly DRIVES IT INTO HIS OWN BODY, then pulls it out and thrusts it in again. Then HE twists the knife deep into HIS stomach.)

SEAN

Michael!

(MICHAEL falls to HIS knees in the center of the room. HE holds up HIS blood-stained hand to SEAN. SEAN takes HIS hand.)

MICHAEL crumples to the floor, dead.)

Dramatic music fades up as the lights fade on the tableau. MICHAEL is center stage with DALE, DR. CLIFFORD, SEAN and MOLLY looking on in horror.)

END OF ACT 2 SCENE 1

ACT II

Scene 2

SETTING: Some weeks later. Soft early morning light is flowing in through the windows and the French doors.

AT RISE: SEAN is standing looking out across the lake. Birds sing outside and all is very serene. DALE ENTERS and sees HIM by the windows.

DALE

There you are.

SEAN

Were you looking for me?

DALE

It was so quiet. I thought you'd gone out.

SEAN

Just looking out on the lake. It always calms me.

(DALE joins HIM by the window)

DALE

The lake looks beautiful.

SEAN

It's odd. I thought I couldn't bear to come back to this house after Michael died, but the place feels very different now.

DALE

I know. I think whatever personal ghosts you had here have been finally put to rest.

SEAN

Dale... I was talking to Molly. She needs someone to help run the marina... it's not a lot of money... but at least we wouldn't have to pay rent.

DALE

You mean... stay here at the house?

SEAN

It's just a thought.

DALE

It's awfully quiet out here. I'm not sure ...

SEAN

There's a little hospital in the Falls, and it's advertising for a nurse.

(DALE reacts to this)

It's the least we could do for Molly.

DALE

You wouldn't mind staying here... after everything that's happened?

SEAN

Now that he's gone... it all feels different. It doesn't have to be for long, just until we get our lives back in order.

(Pause. SHE puts HER arm affectionately around SEAN and they both gaze out over the lake.)

DALE

So, they're looking for a nurse?

SEAN

Head nurse. It's a good job.

(As HE looks out of the window HE sees someone approaching.)

Well, look who's here!

(SEAN opens the French doors and goes out onto the deck. HE calls out.)

Hello there!

(DR. CLIFFORD ENTERS onto the deck and shakes hands with SEAN. THEY both ENTER the living room.)

DR. CLIFFORD

Hello Dale! Thought I'd drop over and see how you were doing. Have to pick up my own groceries these days. I thought you'd like to know. I just got a call from my publishers. They love the book. Especially the chapters about the famous O'Neill twins. Now they want me to write a whole book on you.

(SHE laughs)

I don't think I've got that much time left.

SEAN (Lightly)

The book on the O'Neill twins is now closed.

DALE

Dr. Clifford, do you have any medical textbooks I could borrow for a few days?

DR. CLIFFORD

Medical textbooks? Are you thinking of starting work again?

DALE

(Looks at SEAN)

Maybe.

DR. CLIFFORD

Good for you! I have a library full. Come with me and you can pick out all the ones you'll need.

DALE

Do you mind, Sean? I won't be long.

SEAN

Not at all.

(Happily DALE starts to leave with DR. CLIFFORD.)

DR. CLIFFORD

(To SEAN)
I'll bring her right back.

DALE

(Gives HIM a kiss)
See you soon.

(THEY EXIT leaving SEAN alone. HE stands at the open French doors and watches them go. For a moment HE seems lost in thought. HE looks out across the lake and listens to the wind through the trees and the wavelets lapping against the shore. This mood is broken when MOLLY comes up onto the deck.)

MOLLY

Well? What's the verdict?

SEAN

Molly! Come on in.
(SHE comes into the room)
We're going to stay.

MOLLY

Wonderful! I must say I'm kinda surprised you want to stay here, but I sure need the help.

(Half-joking)
'Sides, I can keep an eye on you. Make sure you treat that woman of yours right.

SEAN

You don't have to worry about that, Molly. I know how lucky I am to have her.

MOLLY

You're dead right there. I'm just glad we got rid of Victor. Not that I believe he ever really existed.

SEAN

I'm sure he was real to Michael.

MOLLY

Well, real or not, he's dead now.
(MOLLY moves to the French doors, about to exit.
SHE turns back to SEAN.)
Let's make sure he stays that way.

SEAN

Victor's dead and buried, Molly.

MOLLY

Well... I guess you're the only one who knows for sure.

(MOLLY takes one last close look at SEAN and EXITS.)

MUSIC CUE

An **EERIE SOUND** returns the moment **MOLLY** has gone and **SEAN** turns and looks conspiratorially at the audience.

A **SLY SMILE** appears on **HIS** face and there is a glint in **HIS** eye as the music wells up and the **LIGHTS FADE.**)

CURTAIN

END OF PLAY

For details on how the “Switch” is accomplished see the following pages

EXPLANATION OF THE “SWITCH”

(This enables both “twins” to be on-stage at the same time without using real twins.)

The “switch” takes place during the section in which MICHAEL appears to chase MOLLY out of the French doors, across the deck and into the darkness. The audience sees that MICHAEL quickly gives up the chase of MOLLY and returns to his real prey - DALE.

In fact, the DOUBLE was waiting in the wings, and while the real MICHAEL keeps on going into the wings, it is the DOUBLE who quickly returns into the room and attacks DALE.

The key to making this work (and it’s easier than you probably think) is to have someone of vaguely the same build as MICHAEL. The scene has been structured so that the only special item needed is a wig which can approximate MICHAEL’s hair (unless the DOUBLE has natural hair that can be made to look like MICHAEL’s). In professional productions where it is expensive to hire another actor for one small scene, it would be most efficient to have the actor playing OTTO be the DOUBLE if that is at all possible. In the second professional production OTTO was used as the DOUBLE even though he was slightly heavier built than MICHAEL yet the audience was never aware of the switch. If OTTO is simply too different in build it will be necessary to use a specially picked DOUBLE for the role, and this will always give the closest match.

Here is a step-by-step outline of the switch and the subsequent concealment of that fact.

1. The set-up: MICHAEL is wearing a bath robe which can be long enough to cover most of his legs, and loose enough to conceal moderate differences in body weight and structure. After he is shot, MICHAEL grabs a towel with his LEFT hand and covers the LEFT (Upstage) side of his face as he staggers out of the French doors located stage left.
2. The DOUBLE is waiting in the wings with an identical bath robe, shoes etc., and clutching an identical towel with his LEFT hand. He wears a wig which approximates MICHAEL’s hair. Also, MICHAEL has been shot by buckshot in the face, so the DOUBLE’s face can be somewhat hidden with make-up blood.
3. MICHAEL exits offstage and the DOUBLE ENTERS as if it were MICHAEL returning. This turn-around should be VERY BRIEF, as the longer the audience has to think about it, the more they may suspect a switch is afoot.
4. The DOUBLE ENTERS, and now the towel (still in his LEFT hand) is covering the downstage side of the face, and thereby hiding it from the audience’s view. Also part of the towel can drape in front of the DOUBLE’s body, further diverting attention from any differences in body shape. The audience’s focus should be on the blood on the towel, which should be very visually diverting, being on a white background. Added to this is the fact that MICHAEL has been wounded which gives him a staggering gait that will be quite different from MICHAEL’s usual way of moving. As DALE is by the fireplace when the DOUBLE ENTERS through the French doors, his entire cross from stage left to stage right can be made with his face hidden in this way.
5. Meanwhile the actor playing SEAN/MICHAEL is QUICKLY changing into a new costume to re-enter as SEAN. This change has to take place while the DOUBLE is staggering across the stage toward DALE, and even though this moment can be drawn out in true Hitchcock fashion, it is still a quick, though not unmanageable change.

6. Once SEAN ENTERS and confronts MICHAEL (the DOUBLE), SEAN takes a position upstage so that the DOUBLE will have to stand with his back to the audience to keep eye contact with SEAN.

7. After he gives up the knife the DOUBLE slumps down by the fire (downstage corner, looking upstage, apparently trying to hide his head in shame). He can still use the towel to hide his face if necessary.

8. When the DOUBLE leaps and grabs the knife, he advances toward DALE who is upstage behind SEAN. This keeps the DOUBLE's back to the audience right up until the moment when he crumples and spins around as he dies, keeping his head in such a position that it cannot be clearly seen. Although the DOUBLE speaks briefly, he has been wounded and speaks with difficulty so the difference in voices is masked to some degree.

In the past the switch has worked quite easily because the audience is simply not expecting it. And because they are not looking for it, as long as they are not presented with anything that would definitely make them question the real identity of the DOUBLE (such as markedly different hair color) they will not notice the minor things, such as feet that are too large.

LISTING THE FAKE ACTOR IN THE PROGRAM

To carry on the illusion it is a good idea to state in the program that the actor playing SEAN is a real twin and that his twin brother is playing MICHAEL (some theatres even have press releases about the search for twin actors). This means two bios should be listed in the program - one with a fake first name. If the play is working properly people will be wondering why the other twin didn't come out for the curtain call!