

# **Lulu Monster Tragedy**

By Mark Jackson

Freely adapted from Frank Wedekind's *Earth Spirit* and *Pandora's Box*

Draft 3

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By Mark Jackson

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Mark Jackson

[Mrkjcksn@aol.com](mailto:Mrkjcksn@aol.com)

[www.markjackson-theatermaker.com](http://www.markjackson-theatermaker.com)

# Lulu Monster Tragedy

## **CHARACTERS**

*Lulu, a free spirit*

*Jack, a ripper*

*Martha, an artist*

## **QUESTIONS**

*What kind of love do you believe in?*

*What does it cost?*

*Who pays?*

## **STATEMENTS**

*This play is about capitalism. It's also about the questions above. But in the end it's very much about buying and selling, and the transactional roles we're willing, or not, to play for other people who might give us what we want.*

*The play takes place in Lulu's cheap city apartment. By the looks of it and what Lulu and the others wear, it seems to be the 1920s. Or perhaps the play takes place on theater time. The set designer need not create each of the various locations the characters conjure. The characters will take care of that with what they have available to them. And in fact Lulu has a lot of stuff squeezed into her little apartment, like some back corner of an old variety show theater.*

*Following the Prologue, Lulu and her guests are acting more often than not. Their game is not one they've scripted. All three of them are good role-playing improvisors, being exceedingly accustomed to it in life. So they each bring this sensibility and skill to the table. Lulu leads the game, because it's her life they're playing and she was there. Martha plays particularly well, because they were occasionally there, and also they've played this game with Lulu before. Jack is the newbie, but an experienced role player in his own right and a willing participant in any case. It takes some time for him to understand the rules (and roles) of the game. But he learns fast.*

All this is to say that a great deal of what is "really" happening in the play is happening between the lines and beneath their surface. This is increasingly the case as the evening progresses and the characters get better at their game, mixing their own agendas and concerns with those of the roles Lulu casts them in. It's a mysterious game. And the audience should be allowed this mystery.

Lastly, for clarity's sake I've indicated when Martha is playing a role other than herself, whereas with Jack I've not done so since his relationship to the game is much more slippery. For example, one will notice that in Act One a great many of Jack's lines could as likely be his own as those of Schwarz, the role Lulu has cast him in at that point. Given the interpretable possibilities, rather than laying out my own choices as to Jack's role-playing up front I've left it for the actors and director to sort out in rehearsal.

A slash (/) at the top of a line means it overlaps at a logical point in the previous line. A dash (-) at the top of a line means one should come in tightly to the previous line.

Text in [brackets] are possible additions, cuts, or alternates, tbd.

## **PROLOGUE**

Only one light is on in the room. MARTHA is sitting alone in the apartment, listening to the end of an old love song. THEY appear to be in a devastated trance. The song ends.

Finally MARTHA stands and goes to a suitcase nearby and digs out from it a gun, which they put to their head. After a moment, MARTHA thinks better of this, considering the mess it will make, and puts the gun away.

MARTHA next takes a sharp knife from a plate on a nearby table. THEY consider their throat with it, then heart, then wrists, then toss it angrily to the floor.

MARTHA stands thinking for a moment, then exits into the kitchen with purpose. We hear rummaging. MARTHA returns with a length of rope, gets a chair, stands on it to tie one end of the rope around a hanging light fixture and the other around their neck, then stands still and readies themselves in silence. Then:

MARTHA

Goodbye my angel.

*When MARTHA steps off the chair, the noose set-up immediately breaks and they crash to the floor. MARTHA growls angrily and throws the noose down.*

*MARTHA stands up, emotionally exhausted. THEY pick up the noose and the knife and considers them disdainfully.*

*We hear voices and a key in the front door. MARTHA looks toward the door, quickly sets the chair aright, grabs the suitcase, clicks off the light and dashes out into the bedroom just as:*

*LULU and JACK enter. LULU notices the lights are off. SHE turns them on and crosses the room, glancing about subtly. JACK stands respectfully near the door. LULU gets a candle and lights it for atmosphere. SHE looks at JACK still standing near the door.*

LULU

Come in.

JACK

Thank you.

*LULU exits into the bedroom. Alone, JACK shyly but curiously takes in his surroundings. LULU returns wearing a silk robe over her slip dress and stands looking at JACK. LULU moves some things off a chair.*

LULU

You want to sit down?

JACK

Thank you.

*JACK sits. A silence before:*

JACK (cont'd)

You keep it cold here.

LULU

Cold is cheaper than warm. Are you uncomfortable?

JACK

No.

LULU

I can put the stove on.

JACK  
It's all right.

LULU  
I'll put the stove on.

*LULU does, then returns to JACK. Another momentary  
silence before:*

LULU (cont'd)  
So. What do you like? ...What would you like to do?

JACK  
You have a beautiful mouth.

LULU  
It's my mother's. ...What would you like?

JACK  
Talk.

LULU  
(smiles) Okay. About what?

JACK  
You can tell me about you.

*LULU stares at JACK, smiles at him uncertainly,  
laughs at him, stares again. Finally:*

LULU  
Is that what you really want? Talk? Talk like this?

JACK  
(friendly) You could answer my question.

LULU  
What was your question?

JACK  
Tell me about you.

LULU  
That's not a question.

JACK  
A request. I'm the one paying.

LULU  
For an hour of talk? Or do you want to stay the night?

JACK  
I don't have that much.

LULU

How much do you have?

JACK

Not that much. Only what I said before. That's it.

LULU

...That's all right. I don't have anywhere else to be. What does Time matter anyway; It's not REALLY money, despite what the business men say. ...So what do you want to know?

JACK

What do you have to tell?

*A serious expression comes gradually across LULU's face.*

JACK (cont'd)

...Have a lot to tell? Or maybe one particular thing. Something that happened. ...Something happen? To you?

LULU

A lot of things happen to me. ...*(smiling again:)* Who ARE you?

JACK

I'm paying.

LULU

Don't be like that. *(sighs)* I didn't want you to be like that. I thought... *(shakes her head)*

JACK

What?

LULU

-What do you want to know? I'll tell you. Tell me what do you want to know?

JACK

Whatever you want to tell me or anyone.

LULU

Anyone?

JACK

I can be whoever you want me to be.

LULU

No, that's my line.

JACK

What goes around...

LULU

Yes.

*THEY stare at one another with a mutual look of genuine curiosity. It's easy for them to look at each other. JACK leans forward.*

JACK

...Who are you. I'm curious.

LULU

...Who do you want me to be?

JACK

(shrugs) Who you are.

*LULU senses JACK is sincere and unconsciously gathers her clothes closer around her neck. Then SHE becomes self-conscious again and releases them. Recovering her prostitute role, LULU lets her clothes slip off her shoulders provocatively. JACK takes a breath and calmly pulls her clothes back up to cover her.*

JACK (cont'd)

I know that part already.

*JACK waits. Staring between them. After a moment, LULU breaks it by kneeling down near the lit candle. JACK takes her in.*

LULU

Okay. I used to be with the circus. When I was a girl. Big tent. Music. Lots of animals. Women with hair on their faces. Men dressed as clowns. When I got bored I'd watch the other people watching. Have you ever done that? At a circus? The look on people's faces?

JACK

What look on their faces?

LULU

That mix of... Expectation. Anticipation or, no: Hope. Joy. Disappointment. Boredom. A kind of desperate desire for the next exciting thing to leap into the ring, some Moment. And the waiting, that's what I noticed. The waiting for that moment to come, with EVERY moment trying to be THE moment. Sometimes it comes. Or people react as if it's come, because they so want it to be. And I realized, that I never once laughed at the clowns. And the people who did laugh, I didn't believe them. They WANTED to laugh. So they did. Even though the clowns... aren't funny. Have you ever noticed that? Clowns are supposed to be funny. Actually funny. But they so seldom are. Actually funny.

JACK

I hadn't thought about it.

LULU

And the animals all seem to be on opium. Their eyes are dull. The tiger stares vacantly as it growls on command. The bear looks drunk as it's led about on its hind legs. The snake isn't even bored, it seems to have lost its soul. Even a snake must have had a soul once, when it was in the forest.

JACK

Possibly.

LULU

And constant music filling the circus tent, from a band pushed back into the dark just outside the ring. I watch the clowns and the animals, and everyone staring, eating fistfuls of bright colors. Better dressed people toward the front. Poorly dressed toward the back. All with that same look in their eye anyway. And the happier that old band played, the sadder I got. I left and never went back. ...So there's something about me.

JACK

Sounds unhappy.

LULU

Not me. The circus.

JACK

Why did you join the circus?

LULU

I didn't have a choice.

JACK

Why did you stay?

LULU

I don't know. Hope? Wishful thinking?

JACK

Hope is important.

LULU

I've heard.

JACK

You don't believe it?

LULU

I like to believe it. It's not always easy to believe it.



JACK  
Why not?

LULU  
Well. Look at us. There are other reasons to bring a man home. We're not here because we're old friends.

JACK  
Would you rather I go?

LULU  
No.

JACK  
Because I'm paying.

LULU  
...No.

JACK  
Of course you say that. Because you're selling. Otherwise you'd answer differently.

LULU  
No. I mean it. Stay.

*THEY stare at one another again. JACK senses LULU is sincere, and settles back, looking at her expectantly. Finally she relents:*

LULU (cont'd)  
Okay. I'll tell you one other thing.

*LULU runs her finger along her lips like a kid would, looking into the candle's flame like a crystal ball.*

LULU (cont'd)  
...I don't remember my mother. Sometimes I think I crawled out of the ground.

"...Nature created her out of course stuff  
And desire draws her to the earth.  
The earth belongs to evil not to good.  
What the angels send us from above  
Are merely common goods:  
Their light pleases but makes no one rich,  
And in their province no property is gained.  
And so that precious stone, Almighty Gold,  
Must be taken up from those False Powers  
That dwell gravely underground.  
One does not gain Gold's favor without sacrifice,  
And no one lives who has withdrawn  
Her clean soul from its service."

(more)

LULU (cont'd)

A dear old friend of mine wrote that.

JACK

Very pointed. What sort of old friend?

*LULU smiles. THEY stare at one another, smiling. LULU moves closer to JACK, not to seduce but to be straight. Then:*

LULU

If you want to know more. You're going to have to stay a while.

JACK

I don't have any more money than I already said.

LULU

I know. But we'll have fun. Okay?

JACK

Okay.

LULU

Okay.

**ACT ONE**

*LULU smiles and stands up. SHE puts on music, an old song, and begins to move to it:*

LULU

"Act One. Pierrot."

JACK

The clown?

LULU

Three clowns. None of them very funny. And I may need help from time to time.

JACK

I'll do my best.

*LULU dances her way out of her current clothes and into a tattered, makeshift Pierrot outfit seemingly made custom for her, then up onto the chair upon which Martha had tried to hang herself. There LULU poses as if for a portrait. There is something odd about the pose LULU strikes. It's difficult to know how to respond to it.*

*LULU is still for a moment before she speaks, and then remains still as she does. It becomes apparent that LULU's monologue is one half of a dialogue, throughout which she relates to JACK as Schwarz and a nearby empty chair as her husband, Doctor Goll, or Bussi, as she calls him.*

LULU

Here I am. How do you like me?

JACK

...Uh-

LULU

-Well I know how I LOOK. I know myself inside and out. But what do you see? ...Now, Bussi, you're not going to talk income again. Leave dear Mister Schwarz alone to capture your lovely wife with his brush strokes. I bet he FEELS richer than you, anyway. ...Because he's creative. You shouldn't judge a man who's lived his life from palette to mouth. You haven't the moral courage to lift a brush. You'd burn your fingers. ...I AM still. I'm perfectly still. I know my job, Bussi darling. Although what would YOU say if for two hours you had to stand on display? ...I will NOT be quiet for in fact I am NOT "a still-life." Life is anything but still. And I don't think my fluttering lips will disturb Mister Schwarz's efforts one bit, will they Mister Schwarz?

JACK

Uh, no.

LULU

You see, darling? Mister Schwarz is a professional. You can paint my lips open, if you like. Bussi, aren't you going to Alva Schön's ballet tonight? You don't want to be late. ...No, I just don't want you to be late. You get so angry when you're late. ...I will keep MY eye on his progress. I can't see the canvas but I can feel his eyes on me and I know what he's up to. ...Good, I'll be waiting for you, (*blows a kiss*) muah! Goodbye darling. ...There. Now you can paint me in peace. You owe me one.

JACK

He's much older than you?

LULU

Quite.

JACK

Why did you marry him?

LULU

He was paying. And I didn't have anything else going at the time. I didn't think dancing could get me anywhere.

(more)

LULU (cont'd)

I just liked doing it. Thank god. Bussi has me dancing every night, with the best tutor from the ballet.

JACK

Do you like ballet?

LULU

There are a lot of rules. So at least you know where you stand. But I'd rather dance differently. Alva Schön's ballet is about Buddhism. Alva says Corticelli dances the young Buddha as though she'd seen the light of the world by the Ganges. Alva says she dances with intelligence. Bussi says she dances with heart. Alva's father - he owns a newspaper - he says she dances with her legs.

JACK

And what do you say?

LULU

She dances. Who knows how. For me dancing is FUN. May I step down for a moment?

JACK

Yes.

LULU

It won't disturb you to take a break? I don't wish to interrupt the creative process.

*LULU has put a scarf around JACK'S neck, flinging it artistically.*

JACK

I can't tell whether your making a joke with me or of me.

LULU

I adore you, Mister Schwarz, you know that. You paint me so perfectly.

JACK

Do I do anything other than paint you?

LULU

I don't do much but stand and look lovely. And I'm getting along fine.

JACK

I'm not as lovely as you are. I don't think your husband would take care of me like it seems he does you.

LULU

Do you need taking care of Mister Schwarz?

JACK

Does he go with you everywhere?

LULU

He's at the ballet without me now. Alva invited him especially.

*On that LULU rubs her fingers together indicating money.*

LULU (cont'd)

It's a dress rehearsal! ...I miss him already.

JACK

You don't like to be alone.

LULU

I don't prefer it. When Bussi has business to go to, the housekeeper keeps me company.

JACK

What do you do together?

LULU

She dresses me. She has excpetional taste.

JACK

You must go to a lot of parties.

LULU

Never! Bussi doesn't like them.

JACK

What does your housekeeper dress you for, then?

LULU

For dancing.

JACK

You really dance?

LULU

Ballet, Ballroom. If it's classical Bussi will sometimes play his violin.

JACK

He plays the violin?

LULU

Like a sport. He's very competitive. Shall we? Go on with the painting?

JACK

Uh, sure.

LULU

What. You no longer find me interesting?

*JACK indicates LULU'S clothes.*

JACK

Aren't you cold?

LULU

No. Are you?

JACK

No.

LULU

I prefer dressing this way. It's so much easier to breathe.

*LULU stretches and takes in a deep breath.*

JACK

Don't do that please.

LULU

What?

JACK

You're flirting with me.

LULU

I'm breathing.

JACK

This is a test, isn't it?

LULU

Why do you say that?

JACK

You're testing me.

LULU

I'm breathing. But I can get on the pedestal and be still for you again.

JACK

Maybe a different position.

LULU

What position would you prefer?

JACK

Something less- Something more-

LULU

...Well is it more or less? Why don't you put me in the position you want. ...Come on. ...It's all right. I'll do whatever you like. It's your painting.

JACK

It's your husband's. He's paying.

LULU

But you're painting. Come on. I'm your clay. Move me.

*JACK tentatively goes to LULU, then begins to put her in a more chaste and unambiguous position than she had struck previously. LULU watches him as he does this. At a certain point her hand finds its way to the back of JACK'S neck. THEY look at one another, their faces provocatively close. THEY speak the following with immense restraint between them.*

LULU (cont'd)

What do you want?

JACK

I'm showing you.

LULU

No.

JACK

You're nervous?

LULU

Don't touch me. You don't get me for a long time yet.

JACK

I don't understand.

LULU

I do. I understand everything. Leave me alone. You'll get nothing from me by force. You have no right to touch me. Go sit down behind your easel and get to work.

JACK

You're a capricious one.

LULU

But you'll have me anyway. No. In more clothes I might have fallen into your arms already, but not in this.

JACK

But I've already got you.

*LULU suddenly leaps up onto the chair again.*

LULU

From up here I can see all the cities on the earth! I can reach up and put the stars in my hair!

*JACK grabs her by the legs or waist.*

LULU (cont'd)

If you don't stop I'll jump.

*LULU leaps, but JACK holds on to her.*

LULU (cont'd)

I told you, you don't get me yet!

*LULU struggles to get away and JACK struggles to subdue her and then suddenly THEY are kissing. It's impossible to tell which of them made it happen. THEY continue even as they talk:*

JACK

You don't love me!

LULU

Yes I do! When he married me Bussi had my name changed to Nellie. Do you still want to call me Eve?

JACK

I WOULD call you Eve.

LULU

That's not my name. You smell like oil and paint.

JACK

You're just pretending. You don't love me.

LULU

You're pretending! What makes you think I would? I don't need to do that!

JACK

You've never loved anyone.

LULU

If you think so then YOU never have!

JACK

God, I don't understand the world!

LULU

Just don't kill me yet!

*This stops JACK:*



JACK

...What did you say?

*Just then MARTHA stumbles in, playing Lulu's old husband. JACK is shocked to see MARTHA and pulls away from LULU suddenly.*

MARTHA/BUSSI

You! Dogs! You...!

*MARTHA appears to choke, mouth gaping open, hands reaching dumbly out.*

LULU

Bussi! What are you doing back so soon? You'll be late for Alva's dress rehearsal.

*MARTHA collapses and "dies" of a heart attack.*

LULU (cont'd)

Bussi? Bussi, can you hear me? Oh no.

JACK

What-?

LULU

His heart. He can't hear me. Bussi?

JACK

Should we call a doctor?

LULU

He is a doctor.

*LULU digs into MARTHA's coat pocket and pulls out two theater tickets.*

LULU (cont'd)

TWO tickets to Alva's dress rehearsal! Who was he going with? Bussi! Well, now WE can go.

JACK

What about her.

LULU

He was going to go without US. I bet he's not even dead. I bet he's pretending, just to get at me. He'll spring back to life, any minute now, you watch. Look his eyes are open. He sees my feet wherever they go. He watches my every step. Has his eye always on me. Don't you Bussi! ...Bussi.

*The music has already stopped by now. LULU nudges MARTHA with her foot. MARTHA remains "dead."*

LULU (cont'd)

His face is wild. Maybe it is serious... And no one here to do his last rights. Isn't that sad! ...This dance is over. I'll be sent to prison. What shall I do? This IS serious.

JACK

What about him? Who is she?

LULU

Doctor Goll. Bussi. My husband. Dead of a green heart.

JACK

...Maybe you should get dressed now.

LULU

Could you shut his eyes first?

JACK

What?

LULU

Shut his eyes. I don't like the look in them.

JACK

If he's dead, shouldn't you have some feeling for him?

LULU

Shut his eyes.

JACK

You scare me.

LULU

Not as much as you scare me. You're a born criminal.

JACK

Me?

LULU

You're a coward.

JACK

Why?

LULU

Shut his eyes. He's looking at me, coward.

*JACK bends down and shuts MARTHA'S eyes, then looks back to LULU.*

JACK

Nobody has ever called me that.

LULU  
Didn't you shut your mother's eyes when they looked like that?

JACK  
No. She's still alive.

LULU  
Anybody's eyes?

JACK  
No!

LULU  
I didn't mean to insult you. With him dead, I don't have anyone. You still have your mother.

JACK  
Don't joke about her. She's not got much.

LULU  
I know what that's like. But since Bussi married me I've been rich. What will I do now? I can't go back.

JACK  
Look at me.

LULU  
What do you want?

JACK  
Look in my eyes.

LULU  
I see Pierrot.

JACK  
I'm serious.

LULU  
I have to change my clothes.

JACK  
Can you speak the truth with me now?

LULU  
I don't know.

JACK  
Do you believe in God?

LULU  
I don't know.

JACK  
Do you believe in anything?

LULU  
Leave me alone.

JACK  
What do you believe in?

LULU  
I don't know.

JACK  
That you have a soul?

LULU  
I don't know anything about that.

JACK  
Have you ever loved anyone?

LULU  
I don't know.

JACK  
You don't know. ...Why don't you get dressed.

*LULU exits into the bedroom. JACK is alone with the  
"dead" MARTHA. After a moment, MARTHA stands up.  
JACK steps back.*

JACK (cont'd)  
Hello. Who are you?

MARTHA  
Martha.

JACK  
You've been back there all this time?

MARTHA  
Yes. I didn't plan on disturbing you.

JACK  
You live here too?

MARTHA  
No.

JACK  
You're a friend of hers.

MARTHA  
I'm her husband.

JACK

No, I mean-

MARTHA

-I'm whoever she wants me to be. She's got you too.

JACK

What?

MARTHA

She's impossible to escape. Like god and the devil.

JACK

She's only human.

MARTHA

Wishful thinking.

*LULU comes back in, wearing something new, and stops when she sees MARTHA standing. Then, to JACK, but still looking at MARTHA:*

LULU

Would you do me up? My hands are trembling.

*JACK obliges.*

JACK

I've just met your friend, Martha.

LULU

Who?

JACK

Your friend here?

LULU

You mean my new husband? Mister Schwarz?

*LULU pulls the scarf from JACK'S neck and flings it around MARTHA'S neck and kisses them, after which LULU walks flirtingly past JACK.*

LULU (cont'd)

Love has changed him.

## **ACT TWO**

*LULU puts on new music for:*

LULU

"Act Two. The Headline."

*MARTHA tosses JACK a tuxedo jacket, which he holds but does not put on yet. LULU slips into a green silk morning dress and stands looking at herself in a mirror, discontent. SHE wanders through the room, picking up a book or magazine here and there, indecisive. SHE looks at one with an attempt at interest, but soon returns to the mirror.*

MARTHA/SCHWARZ

Eve.

LULU

*(smiling)* My orders, sir?

MARTHA/SCHWARZ

You look exceptionally charming today.

LULU

Exceptionally? What's the exception?

MARTHA/SCHWARZ

And your hair smells lovely.

LULU

I just had a bath. Am I posing today?

*MARTHA opens a letter.*

MARTHA/SCHWARZ

I've got a lot to do this afternoon.

LULU

So you say.

MARTHA/SCHWARZ

What was that dream you had last night?

LULU

You've asked me that twice already. It's not fair to ask about what a person says in her sleep.

MARTHA/SCHWARZ

Ah! My portrait of Corticelli sold. Fantastic.

LULU

Who bought Corticelli?

MARTHA/SCHWARZ

It doesn't say who. That's the third big sale since we married.

LULU

Since we married you don't need to sell paintings. We could live off my inheritance from Bussi forever.

MARTHA/SCHWARZ

Eva. You're my lucky charm.

LULU

Nobody buys MY portraits.

MARTHA/SCHWARZ

I told you, they're not for sale. They're mine.

LULU

But you have me.

MARTHA/SCHWARZ

Entirely.

*A brief kiss. Then MARTHA opens another letter.*

LULU

...Now who's been sold?

MARTHA/SCHWARZ

Charlotte Adelaide. "Charlotte Marie Adelaide and Ludwig Schön (a glance to JACK) are pleased to announce their engagement." We're invited to the party.

*JACK slips on the tuxedo jacket. LULU has wandered back to the mirror.*

MARTHA/SCHWARZ (cont'd)

Well finally! It's been months since Schön first mentioned it. I've wondered how much longer he would hold out. A man of his standing without a woman on his arm? Officially on his arm, that is; He's always been very proper.

*MARTHA has opened a third letter.*

LULU

What are you reading now?

MARTHA/SCHWARZ

It's from that gallery in St. Petersburg. They want me to show something in that international exhibition.

LULU

Some entrancing girl or another, I suppose.

MARTHA/SCHWARZ

Perhaps you.

LULU

*(feigning flattery:)* Me?

MARTHA/SCHWARZ

You are the finest exhibition of my talents. I still won't allow them to be sold. I want every one of you for myself. And I'll paint a new you, especially for the exhibition. You can pick the pose.

LULU

Thank you I will. Lying down.

*LULU does, mocking depression with some seriousness.*

MARTHA/SCHWARZ

We can't forget to congratulate Schön tonight when we see him at Alva's show.

LULU

How could we forget?

MARTHA/SCHWARZ

*(regarding the mail:)* All right. Enough. To work.

LULU

You're terrible.

MARTHA/SCHWARZ

It's your fault.

LULU

You're wasting me.

MARTHA/SCHWARZ

...If I stand still too long I get lost in you.

*THEY kiss and LULU is about to take it further when suddenly THEY both appear to respond to a doorbell, unheard by JACK or the audience.*

LULU

Oh!

MARTHA/SCHWARZ

What timing.

LULU

Nobody's home.

MARTHA/SCHWARZ

It could be that art dealer.

LULU

And if it's the Emperor of China?



MARTHA/SCHWARZ

All the better. I'll check.

*MARTHA exits out the front door. LULU dashes to the mirror and primps herself a bit.*

LULU

Please be you. Please be you.

*MARTHA returns.*

MARTHA/SCHWARZ

Neither. Another beggar. I didn't have any money on me. We need to move out of this neighborhood.

LULU

But you said it was fashionable.

MARTHA/SCHWARZ

So maybe the beggars will be moved out soon.

LULU

Then it won't be so fashionable.

MARTHA/SCHWARZ

By then I'm sure I'll be able to afford a separate place to work. Speaking of which. I must put the final touches on Charlotte Adelaide before she's married.

LULU

Don't touch her too much.

*MARTHA has exited into the kitchen. LULU turns back to the mirror, then catches sight of JACK in it and turns suddenly to him as if noticing him for the first time.*

LULU (cont'd)

Oh! Mister Schön! How did you slip in? My husband must have left the door open. And in THIS neighborhood! (*Close to him, but no more flirting:*) What are you doing here? Speak quietly. He's working in the back. Or maybe you're not here to see ME. Charlotte's portrait? Congratulations.

JACK

Thank you.

LULU

I don't understand it. Why didn't you tell me you were finally getting engaged to her? Yesterday for example.

*On that, LULU's physicality toward JACK indicates what happened between the two of them yesterday.*

JACK

Yesterday?

LULU

Don't pretend. Just because it wasn't on the front page of one of your newspapers. Surely you can remember. It was only yesterday.

JACK

Let's not talk about yesterday right now. I did say I was going to marry Charlotte, months ago.

LULU

Yes, months ago. And months before that. We've all been waiting with baited breath. Why don't you go back there and do your business with my husband.

JACK

...Because I have something to say to you as well.

LULU

Do you? Is it sweet?

JACK

We have to stop seeing one another.

*LULU smiles at first. JACK is proving himself good at the game. Then HER smile drops.*

LULU

May I offer you a drink.

JACK

No thank you. Did you hear me?

LULU

I can't remember. It was so long ago. What was it you said?

JACK

We have to stop seeing one another. It's not right. Marriage is sacred.

LULU

Who are you to say so, Newspaper Man. Have you read your headlines lately?

JACK

Listen to me-

LULU

-My name is Eve now.

JACK

Changed again?

LULU

Everything changes and everything stays the same. Though I would never have dreamt I'd be living like this. When I think back - ugh! Life is beyond me.

JACK

What do you know about it. You're still young.

LULU

I never dance anymore. I lie around and sleep. I stretch out until I crack.

JACK

It seems you're perfectly well off with him.

LULU

You're an idiot. Just an old circus bear.

JACK

Led about by you?

*LULU takes JACK by the collar and pulls him slowly around the room.*

LULU

He bores me. When he's drunk you can see exactly what's inside of him. And I'm tired of being painted. Never thought I'd say that.

JACK

You have a choice. Either we do the right thing or-

LULU

/Or?

JACK

Or, I'll tell your husband myself.

LULU

And your Headlines. What will they say?

JACK

...The truth. As they should.

*LULU looks at JACK doubtfully, lets go of his collar, goes to the kitchen doorway and calls through it.*

LULU

Darling!

JACK

If I am engaged to be married, I want to bring my new wife into a clean house.

LULU

Ah! I look forward to meeting her there. Darling, you have a client waiting!

JACK

You'll meet her in public with your own husband at your side.

LULU

You're as believable as your headlines. Darling!

JACK

Go ahead and call him. I can tell him the truth. I owe him that respect. He's my friend, isn't he?

LULU

Mine too.

JACK

This is the right thing to do.

*LULU goes to JACK directly and they speak quickly.*

LULU

The right thing to do? I'm chained to you. I'm happiest with you. You've known me since I was a girl, selling flowers outside that cafe and slipping in at night in my bare feet. And when I became a woman you gave me hope. You were the first man ever to accept me exactly as I am. You only try to control me now because you're scared. But all these years don't have to stay our secret. And you'll have plenty of other friends once you're married, you don't need him.

JACK

He can't be that blind. He must know already. At least suspect.

LULU

I wish he would. Then he might grow up. He trusts that marriage contract he keeps in his pocket. He sees nothing. And you want to go blind as well? With Charlotte Adelaide? Don't lie to me. When your first wife died you were relieved. Your fake of a son Alva uses you for the free press and gets on your nerves. And little Charlotte Adelaide has been far too carefully brought up. You need me! His respect means nothing to you.

JACK

I'll open his eyes.

LULU

Please! Save me from his blindness. I'm going to ruin here in the dark of his gaze. Calling me Eve. Never touches me. Only from across the room with his brushes and a wall of canvas between us.

(more)

LULU (cont'd)

I dance the can-can late at night in despair, and he yawns! So please, open his eyes. Seduce him. Corrupt him. You know how. I know you do. Or at least admit to him you're the one anonymously buying all his paintings. Shake him up with the truth and set me free of him.

JACK

You're impossible.

LULU

I am entirely possible.

JACK

He loves you.

LULU

No. He worships me. If he REALLY understood me he'd tie a rock around my neck and sink me into the ocean.

JACK

I don't want to play this game anymore.

*LULU clutches JACK.*

LULU

Too late. You're already here. If I belong to anyone on this earth it's you. No one else has treated me the way you have. The way you DID. No one else has tried to understand me. And I've done everything you've ever told me to do. I deserve you.

*JACK now clutches LULU.*

JACK

You don't know how right you are.

*LULU kisses JACK with force. JACK pushes LULU away. MARTHA enters.*

MARTHA/SCHWARZ

What's the matter? Mister Schön.

LULU

(to JACK:) Well? Go on.

MARTHA/SCHWARZ

What's the matter with you two.

LULU

Nothing that concerns you.

JACK

Mister Schwarz-

LULU

-Has had his fill of me.

MARTHA/SCHWARZ

Eve. Leave Mister Schön and I alone for a moment, would you?

*LULU looks at JACK before exiting into the bedroom.*

MARTHA/SCHWARZ (cont'd)

...What is it, Mister Schön?

JACK

...What do you know and not know?

MARTHA/SCHWARZ

What was happening between you two here.

JACK

...Was that an answer to my question, or are you asking me?

MARTHA/SCHWARZ

Explain it to me.

JACK

...As I understand it, you married an inheritance.

MARTHA/SCHWARZ

-That's not a crime. I can't help what she was left with when Dr. Goll died.

JACK

But you've made a name for yourself now. You can work freely. People write you letters asking to show your paintings and to buy them. You have a wife adored by everyone who meets her. She deserves someone she can respect.

MARTHA/SCHWARZ

Does she not respect me? Why not? What has she said to you?

JACK

...That you should pay more attention to her.

MARTHA/SCHWARZ

MORE attention? More? It isn't possible. She floats high above me. I cherish nothing more than to one day be worthy of her.

JACK

She wants you to let her come down to you. And if you can't trust her on the ground it's your fault.

MARTHA/SCHWARZ

What is my fault? What has she done?

JACK

I'm not here to make trouble but to end it.

MARTHA/SCHWARZ

You must have misunderstood her.

JACK

Your wife deserves to be respected.

MARTHA/SCHWARZ

And you would know. You've seen her grow up.

JACK

What do you mean?

MARTHA/SCHWARZ

Don't pretend. You know what I mean. She just said it, right here. ...When I FIRST met her she told me she didn't know if she had ever loved anyone.

JACK

Then if she married you, consider yourself happy. She loves YOU. She married YOU.

MARTHA/SCHWARZ

She married Doctor GOLL; Bussi!

JACK

And that's worked out well for you now hasn't it.

MARTHA/SCHWARZ

I married HER! Not her inheritance!

JACK

It takes money to become a famous artist.

MARTHA/SCHWARZ

Oh if only I'd stayed where I was! Dying of hunger was better than this! You wouldn't know anything about it with your newspapers!

JACK

We all make compromises. Me and my headlines. You and your rich widow. You're an artist. Don't pretend you're anything like someone who works for a living.

MARTHA/SCHWARZ

I am talking about the inhuman conditions, which, thanks to her good instincts, she has managed to pull herself up from. I admire her for it!

JACK

Who? Nellie?

MARTHA/SCHWARZ

Eve!

JACK

-Eve!

MARTHA/SCHWARZ

My wife! Your obsession! At least I'm honest! I married her! I embraced my obsession. You could have married her any number of times and each time she would have flown into your arms but you never did. And yet here you are, still. Looking after her as you always have. Pretending it's just a good deed dutifully done by a proper gentleman of society!

JACK

Pull yourself together.

MARTHA/SCHWARZ

The pain I feel. If only I could scream it out.

JACK

I said stop it now!

MARTHA/SCHWARZ

...You're right. I'll stop it. Now.

JACK

...Where are you going?

MARTHA/SCHWARZ

To tell her how I feel.

*But MARTHA exits into the kitchen, not the bedroom.  
JACK isn't sure what to do. LULU enters from the  
bedroom.*

LULU

How did it go?

JACK

She said he was going to talk to you. But in there.

LULU

Gone to have his cry first, has he?

*LULU exits into the kitchen and yelps, then returns  
with something looking like blood on her hand.*

LULU (cont'd)

He's done it.

JACK

Oh-! Should we call a doctor?



LULU

That wouldn't look good for you. It'd be in your headlines by morning.

JACK

I wouldn't care.

LULU

A scandal on the eve of your engagement? You can't let yourself be seen leaving here. It will ruin your career.

JACK

Be quiet! [Stop it!]

LULU

God help you.

*JACK moves away.*

LULU (cont'd)

Don't leave me here with him! I can't be alone with him! Wait for me!

JACK

Where are you going?

LULU

To change my clothes!

JACK

What for?

LULU

It's written on the wall darling! Can't you see it?

*As SHE draws a sad face, a heart, and a happy face in blood on the wall:*

LULU (cont'd)

You. Love. Me.

*In the following dialogue, HER tone with JACK is entirely honest, not vengeful, something more like compassion.*

LULU (cont'd)

We can't hide from the world anymore. If you had been true to me when your wife died, none of this would have happened. This is your doing. (*Her bloody hand:*) And this is my reward for all I've done for him. I dreamt just last night that I was murdered and it was a relief. I only got one detail wrong.

JACK

How did you explain this to the police?

LULU

I don't explain anything. He killed himself and left no note. Except for this.

*LULU points to her bloody graffiti with her bloody hand.*

JACK

That's your husband's blood.

LULU

It leaves no trace on me.

JACK

How?

LULU

If you marry me, he committed suicide. If you marry Charlotte Adelaide, he was murdered, and I found him here after YOU had been fighting with him.

JACK

If you're serious, you're a monster.

LULU

*(genuinely:)* What did you come here for?

*After a beat, LULU holds up her bloody hand again as a possible answer.*

JACK

Let's just sit down.

LULU

Are we going to write the headline together? Darling?

*A silence. MARTHA enters and stands in the kitchen doorway, with "blood" on their throat.*

LULU (cont'd)

*(to JACK, lovingly:)* Gotcha. Right where I wantcha.

*MARTHA reaches over and clicks off the lights.*

### **ACT THREE**

*In the semi-dark, LULU puts on new music. MARTHA wipes the blood off with a wet rag and then wipes LULU's hands as well, after which LULU paces the room slowly.*

*MARTHA puts on a man's suit jacket, something more youthful and artistic than a tuxedo but still expensive, and begins to arrange a few things in the room.*

LULU

"Act Three. The Engagement."

*LULU changes her clothes. MARTHA turns on some lights. The room has been arranged to look a bit like a star's dressing room at a theater, and MARTHA and LULU's actions and rhythm suggest it's intermission. MARTHA, playing Alva, pours two glasses of champagne.*

MARTHA/ALVA

I have never seen an audience so out of control with enthusiasm. They love you!

LULU

Is he here, Alva?

MARTHA/ALVA

My father?

LULU

Yes.

MARTHA/ALVA

I didn't think he'd come. But then I spotted him tucked back in the orchestra left box. Not his usual seat.

LULU

Hiding. Did you talk to him? Will he come and see me afterwards?

MARTHA/ALVA

Well, you know, he has so little time.

LULU

His fiancé?

MARTHA/ALVA

His newspapers. He never rests. (*trying to change the subject:*) But we were talking about YOU!

LULU

Did he say anything about my performance?

MARTHA/ALVA

He told me I could do with less symbolism and more reality, and that my performers could do with a bit more technique.

LULU

And what did he say about me?

MARTHA/ALVA

That you don't need my symbolism. That you're perfectly effective on your own. How's that? Otherwise he seemed bored. The rest of the audience doesn't seem bored. Did you hear them after you're exit just now?

LULU

What about afterwards. Will he come see me.

MARTHA/ALVA

I'm to meet him at Peter's for drinks.

LULU

I'd given up hoping he'd come at all.

MARTHA/ALVA

Don't spend your energy on him right now.

LULU

He didn't notice how clever your staging is?

MARTHA/ALVA

He noticed I took full advantage of the fact that you know how to change a costume.

LULU

Ha! If I had sold my flowers outside the Alhambra Cafe dressed like this I'd have been locked up at first sight.

MARTHA/ALVA

You'd have been scolded at least.

LULU

Do you remember the first time I visited your house and came running into your room?

MARTHA/ALVA

In a dark blue dress.

LULU

You were playing theater and asked if I wanted to play too. I can still see you waving your hands back and forth over your miniature stage, making plans.

MARTHA/ALVA

My mother was already sick then. When she finally died and I realized what exactly your relationship with my father had become-

LULU

-You were very cold with me.

MARTHA/ALVA

I adored you. More than my mother. I felt ashamed about that. And I was jealous. But I was eighteen and proud. And, eventually, one day, I went and stood before my father to demand he marry you immediately.

LULU

He told me you did that.

MARTHA/ALVA

I respected him then. Now I pity him. He'll never understand me. He's never forgiven me for advocating for you like I did, and NOW he's convinced I'm out to ruin his engagement to Charlotte.

LULU

Does she still look as innocent as morning dew?

MARTHA/ALVA

She loves him I think. Her family is against it. But I think that makes her love him all the more. She'd do anything for him. Why THAT man? I'll never understand it.

LULU

A bit more please.

*LULU has held out her glass. MARTHA obliges.*

MARTHA/ALVA

Be careful. You've got two more acts to go.

LULU

He'll learn to really believe in our success. I'll show him. He's never quite believed in art. He only believes in newspapers.

MARTHA/ALVA

And God, when it suits him.

LULU

He only funded you to give me work here in hopes that some other rich man would meet me at the stage door to sweep me off my feet and out of his hair. I'd be perfectly happy to dance myself into some millionaire's heart.

MARTHA/ALVA

God help me if I loose you now to some marriage. You're my biggest hit. You know I'd always wanted to write a show for you.

LULU

I'm not made for this.

MARTHA/ALVA

What? You're a born dancer, and a good actor.

LULU

Your father isn't entirely wrong, Alva. Why don't you write things that are more like life?

MARTHA/ALVA

Because nobody would believe it. The stage is not the street. Truth is something else here.

LULU

/ Yes yes yes you've said. If I didn't know more about acting than these actors do, God knows what would have happened to me on the street!

MARTHA/ALVA

What's the matter? The audience is in love. They're completely stirred up.

LULU

I'd like to be completely stirred up.

*MARTHA pulls the glass from LULU's hand as LULU downs the last drop.*

MARTHA/ALVA

I think you're at least a bit stirred up.

LULU

It will help with the icy shudder I'm going feel run up my spine when I catch sight of her.

MARTHA/ALVA

Control yourself.

*MARTHA reaches outside the front door and presses the buzzer, then stands near the open door.*

MARTHA/ALVA (cont'd)

There's the bell.

LULU

I'll dance the brains right out of their heads. You won't need your father's shameless publicity ever again. I'll give HIM something to shudder about. The orchestra left box, you said?

MARTHA/ALVA

You're incredible.

*LULU exits and MARTHA closes the door after her, leaning against it and looking at JACK.*

*The music happens to reach a dramatic point as they stare one another down. After a moment, the buzzer buzzes alarmingly.*

MARTHA/ALVA (cont'd)

For Heaven's sake, what's that for?

*MARTHA exits quickly, closing the door behind them. The door flings right open again and LULU comes flying in. MARTHA is right behind her.*

MARTHA/ALVA (cont'd)

You fainted?

LULU

Lock the door!

MARTHA/ALVA

What's happening out there now?

*LULU looks right at JACK.*

LULU

Did you see him?

MARTHA/ALVA

Who?

LULU

With his bride?

MARTHA/ALVA

With his-! Oh my God, please!

LULU

Here he comes!

*JACK stands up abruptly.*

LULU (cont'd)

Get him out of here!

JACK

What's the matter with her?

MARTHA/ALVA

Father, go back to your box! You can't be of any help here!

LULU

Holding her hand like that! Mocking me! I feel like I've been whipped!

JACK

You played that dance right to me, what was I to-

LULU

/How could I not? All I could see was you!

JACK

I've made you famous with every newspaper I have. Isn't that right? Now get back out there.

LULU

To dance for your bride?

JACK

It's your job! You have an engagement here! You're being paid a salary!

LULU

Is that your business?

JACK

You dance for anyone who buys a ticket. Who I sit with has nothing to do with it!

*MARTHA opens the front door.*

MARTHA/ALVA

Father would you go back to your box and let me talk to her!

*MARTHA buzzes the front door then shouts out it:*

MARTHA/ALVA (cont'd)

Give us a minute! Father please.

JACK

Get back on that stage!

*LULU sits down, her head in her hand.*

LULU

I just need a moment! I'm a wreck!

MARTHA/ALVA

Please!

LULU

Tell them to skip to the next number. No one will know the difference.

MARTHA/ALVA

And then you'll go on?

LULU

Yes! Just give me a moment.

*MARTHA considers JACK for a moment before:*



MARTHA/ALVA

I'll tell the stage manager.

*MARTHA exits out the front door. LULU is immediately on JACK.*

LULU

Well you certainly put me in my place, didn't you? Letting me dance like that in front of her with your hands all over her.

JACK

Where you came from you're lucky to perform for people like her.

LULU

Oh so I'm parading where I came from in front her? It's a dance! I can't help it if high class people like you find it common! Anyway the rest of the audience doesn't seem to mind it one bit! Not even your straight-laced blushing bride!

JACK

It doesn't matter what I think about it. You're getting paid good money for it, aren't you? Where would you be now without this? Anywhere? Now people love you and Alva can keep them clamoring for you with his artsy trash! The more you disgust me the more they'll love you and the higher you'll climb in this ridiculous business! But it's certainly better than-

LULU

...Better than what? I don't care what they think of me. I don't need to be anything more than what I am. I'm perfectly happy with myself. Better than what!

JACK

Your true nature.

LULU

Oh! Yes, I know very well what I would have become if you hadn't saved me from it all my life. But is that really anything different than this? No!

JACK

That's exactly right.

LULU

And how insanely happy all your help has made me!

*The door buzzes.*

JACK

They want you on the stage.

LULU

When I fainted out there just now did you worry for me? Did you think, how might I help her this time, and ran here as fast as you could?

JACK

I know you're indestructible.

LULU

Do you!

JACK

Leave me alone!

LULU

Nobody's keeping you here!

JACK

I'll go when you've promised me you'll leave me alone once and for all.

LULU

You'll go when you finally have the guts. Where are your guts? You've been engaged to her forever! Marry her! End the suspense! You can't blame me for anything. You told me I should marry Doctor Goll and I did it. Then when he died you told me I should marry that painter and I did that too. And after using your newspapers to make him popular you then managed to use them to wipe his blood off your hands, and then to promote me straight into your son's artsy embrace. And here I am: a real dancer making a living! Artists are your creatures. You lead them around by the neck like circus animals and then whip them when you get tired of them. That's what you do with your respectable newspapers!

JACK

Do you really think I've not married her yet because of you?

LULU

If you knew how happy your red face makes me. You keep trying to raise me up in order to sink me as low as you can, so you can jump over me and be done with me. But you never will. You wouldn't be here right now if you had it in you to let me go. You're suffering. You have no control. No matter how many headlines you write. You love me. ...Go! For the sake of your innocent fiancé, go back to your box. But you'll be right back here with me soon enough, making another scene, pretending that I'm not right.

JACK

I'm not afraid of you.

LULU

Me? Be afraid of yourself. I don't need to faint on stage to destroy your future. I trust you have confidence in me. Confidence that I'm an Innocent forever in need of your help. Confidence that I'm a Tempting Spawn of Eve. I'm neither one nor the other and you know it. Your destruction is that you've decided I am.

JACK

You've buried two men already. I'm done with you. Whatever angel may have hovered over you has long since gone. God made the world. I only report what happens in it. And to me life is nobody's dance.

LULU

Oh how grand! How noble! Tell me, who is more noble, you or me?

JACK

In a week I'll be married.

LULU

A week? Time is flying.

JACK

Please don't come near me before then.

LULU

I'll lock my doors.

JACK

God knows I have never hurt anyone.

LULU

Anyone from where I came from?

JACK

Anyone so depraved!

LULU

Oh how clean you must feel when you say things like that. How austere and principled. I understand you have to say those things. How else could you ever convince yourself to marry her boundless innocence?

JACK

Do you want me to hurt you?

LULU

Yes! That's what I want! For you to hurt me, finally, like a man. Not like the coward you've always been until now.

*JACK takes a swing at LULU and she bats his attempt away easily.*

LULU (cont'd)

There you go. I wouldn't trade places with Charlotte Adelaide for the world. I'm sure she'll love you're big fist.

JACK

Shut your horrible mouth.

LULU

Marry her. Not me. And then I'LL watch HER dance.

*JACK looks down, deeply torn. LULU speaks to him honestly. No games now.*

LULU (cont'd)

...You're like me. Too weak to tear yourself away from who you are. It's our nature. We cry like children. We keep trying our best. We fail. We're made for each other. What else can we do?

JACK

God forgive me.

*JACK embraces LULU passionately, and then THEY kiss. For a moment THEY are deeply, despairingly happy. The door buzzes.*

#### **ACT FOUR**

*LULU pulls gently away from JACK. MARTHA enters and looks at them. LULU kisses JACK tenderly, then moves away to change her clothes again. No music this time. There is a soberness to their preparations. MARTHA goes about adjusting the room, including hanging up Schwarz's painting of LULU that's been propped against a wall until now. When everything is ready, LULU looks at JACK.*

LULU

"Act Four. The Father, the Son, and the Ghost."

*MARTHA, now playing herself, brings LULU some flowers, which LULU takes and sets on a table. It seems they are wrapping up an afternoon visit.*

LULU (cont'd)

So, Martha. Thank you for the flowers. And thank you for having come all the way out here to see me. I know it's a long way. But hopefully it was nice to get out of the city for a moment.

MARTHA/MARTHA

It's so beautiful here. Mr. Schön does have good taste in HOMES, I will admit.

LULU

-I'm sorry if my husband was a bit abrupt with you earlier. I hope you didn't take it personally. He was off to see his accountant again. Apparently all his property is drifting on the waves of the stock exchange. I'd rather be dead and buried than let my life be dragged around by property. He's been in a bad mood for weeks. We've hardly seen each other.

MARTHA/MARTHA

I'm sorry to hear it. But I'm glad it means you'll be able to make it to our Art Salon.

LULU

If he's not with his accountant may I bring him along?

MARTHA/MARTHA

It might be considered a treason. A newspaper man in our midst? It's a private affair, really.

LULU

Certainly. He's not a particular fan of art anyway. And I imagine he'd feel a bit traditional at "a gathering for ladies only."

MARTHA/MARTHA

I see. Better not let him see your outfit then.

LULU

I think I'll look dashing in men's clothes.

MARTHA/MARTHA

I think so. ...Angel, may I ask. How does it feel, being married?

LULU

...I've never thought of it as a feeling. Marriage gives my husband a sense of order. I've never needed order, myself. But it relaxes him; so, we're more relaxed together now, and that feels good. Is that marriage? I don't know. Whatever helps a person feel more free. ...Why?

MARTHA/MARTHA

Curiosity. ...Who did that?

*MARTHA has noticed Schwarz's painting of LULU.*

LULU

TYou wouldn't have heard of him. I look forward to what YOU'VE made of me.

MARTHA/MARTHA

I hope you'll like it.

I'm sure I will.

LULU

Will I see you again before the Salon?

MARTHA/MARTHA

I hope so.

LULU

Until next time, then.

MARTHA/MARTHA

*MARTHA and LULU kiss one another on each cheek, and then at MARTHA'S instigation once more on the lips. LULU doesn't seem to take much notice of that.*

Goodbye Angel.

MARTHA/MARTHA (cont'd)

Goodbye Martha.

LULU

*MARTHA exits into the bedroom. LULU looks at Schwarz's painting. SHE walks toward it and touches it carefully with her fingertips, then covers the painting's eyes with her hand. MARTHA returns and LULU steps away from the painting. MARTHA, now as Rodrigo, a male servant, collects two tea cups.*

Thank you Rodrigo.

LULU (cont'd)

Anything else, ma'am.

MARTHA/RODRIGO

Rodrigo, how long have you worked for my husband?

LULU

About a month longer than you have. Been married to him, I mean. I began shortly after the two of you had been engaged.

MARTHA/RODRIGO

Do you like it here?

LULU

I do.

MARTHA/RODRIGO

It is rather lovely. I don't imagine your life was terribly different than mine once. That you began rather humbly.

LULU

Yeah.

MARTHA/RODRIGO

LULU

I sometimes wonder how we got so lucky. How it is life managed to find us in a place like this.

MARTHA/RODRIGO

...What would your father say?

LULU

My father? What does that matter?

MARTHA/RODRIGO

I'd say he'd be proud.

LULU

...Why would YOU say?

MARTHA/RODRIGO

Shall I ask HIM?

*After a moment LULU looks toward the door. Then back to RODRIGO again.*

LULU

...You know my father?

MARTHA/RODRIGO

Once when I was in some trouble, he helped me.

LULU

I'm sure. Have you seen him lately?

MARTHA/RODRIGO

Maybe.

LULU

I see. Did he ask about me?

MARTHA/RODRIGO

Perhaps.

LULU

-What do you want? Money?

MARTHA/RODRIGO

That would help.

LULU

You'll have it. Where is he? Do you see him often? Does he ask about me.

MARTHA/RODRIGO

What are you paying?

LULU

I can't right this moment, but you know I'm good for it. Anyway if I say I will do something I will do it. I don't lie. It's my husband who writes headlines, not me.

MARTHA/RODRIGO

...I haven't told him I work here. So he doesn't ask about you. But just about the only thing he ever talks about is you.

*LULU cries suddenly and just as suddenly stops.*

LULU

Then he knows I'm married?

MARTHA/RODRIGO

He reads everything about you.

LULU

...I'd like to see him. No. Yes, I'd like to see him. Can you arrange it?

MARTHA/RODRIGO

Talk is cheap. Seeing is believing. And believing is gonna cost you.

LULU

I don't care about money. As long as it doesn't raise my husband's suspicions. I can't get you his money. But I can pay you from my own account.

MARTHA/RODRIGO

Isn't that his money?

LULU

It's mine to spend as I like. I can't have him peering into all my business. He understands that.

MARTHA/RODRIGO

He doesn't understand much.

*LULU considers MARTHA for a moment. Then:*

LULU

...Well, this is quite an unexpected surprise. Rodrigo. ...What did you do before you worked here?

MARTHA/RODRIGO

Different things. But for a time I was an acrobat.

LULU

An acrobat. So, that's how my father helped you.



MARTHA/RODRIGO

I was a natural, as it turned out. Who knew. It kept me off the street anyway.

LULU

And why did you leave?

MARTHA/RODRIGO

A better opportunity.

LULU

To be a servant?

MARTHA/RODRIGO

No high wires. And the pleasure of meeting you.

LULU

Clever. So you've been waiting for this chat. You've planned this. How elaborate. You ARE an acrobat.

MARTHA/RODRIGO

Who knew.

LULU

I see. ...Well this talk has not been so cheap after all. I've gained quite a lot. You're right that seeing is believing. All this time whenever I've glanced at you in the corner of my eye I've thought I was seeing a servant there. Now that I'm really looking at you I see an acrobat. A daredevil. Since you've now abused me, being a fair and honest person, as I said, I'll repay you in kind. When my husband comes home I'll let him know you blackmailed me for information about my past. He's very paranoid about that sort of thing. He won't think twice before letting you go.

MARTHA/RODRIGO

And you'll never see your father.

LULU

But I'm used to that. And I have a fertile imagination. Anyway I don't like liars. So in answer to your first question, thank you, but no, I don't need anything else from you. Goodbye.

*MARTHA exits. LULU immediately goes into exhilarated shock and doesn't know what to do with herself.*

LULU (cont'd)

Oh, papa! Papa, papa!

*But MARTHA enters again, almost immediately, this time as Alva.*



MARTHA/ALVA

It's my fate.

LULU

Don't be modest, Alva.

MARTHA/ALVA

Why are you flattering me today?

LULU

You are the only person in the world who has protected me without making me hate myself for it.

MARTHA/ALVA

It hasn't been easy.

*LULU hugs MARTHA tightly. MARTHA strokes her hair.*

MARTHA/ALVA (cont'd)

I'm only human. If we hadn't grown up together like brother and sister-

LULU

-That's why I'm able to give myself to you so freely. I trust you so much.

MARTHA/ALVA

...The more restraint a man clings to, the easier it is for him to break. One can imagine one's entire inner life caving in.

*MARTHA moves away.*

LULU

Alva?

MARTHA/ALVA

Did my father say when he'd be back?

LULU

He didn't. What do you mean your entire inner life caving in?

MARTHA/ALVA

I shouldn't have mentioned it. I don't want to lose anything.

LULU

I've hurt you. I won't talk to you about us again.

MARTHA/ALVA

Can you promise me that?

*LULU takes MARTHA's hand in both of hers.*

LULU

I promise you. We'll just be who we are together. We'll never talk about it again.

*MARTHA caves and kisses LULU's hands.*

LULU (cont'd)

*(smiling)* What are you doing?

*MARTHA looks at LULU's palms.*

LULU (cont'd)

What are looking at there?

MARTHA/ALVA

These life lines.

LULU

*(smiles)* Tell me where they lead?

*MARTHA traces them along their path and describes it.*

MARTHA/ALVA

To these arms.

LULU

These arms?

MARTHA/ALVA

This body.

LULU

...And what do you see there?

MARTHA/ALVA

Mignon.

LULU

Who?

MARTHA/ALVA

Mignon. That's my name for you.

LULU

I'm not an opera, Alva. I'm your sister. Please, let's go somewhere before it gets too late.

MARTHA/ALVA

I'm not worthy of you.

LULU

We're the same. We're equal.

*MARTHA goes down on their knees.*

MARTHA/ALVA

You're more than me. You're high above me. Crush me. Destroy me.

LULU

Alva, stop it. I know you love me.

MARTHA/ALVA

I'll give you everything I have.

LULU

Do you love me?

MARTHA/ALVA

Do you love ME?

LULU

I don't love anyone. You know that.

MARTHA/ALVA

Well I love you.

LULU

...Alva. ...I poisoned your mother.

MARTHA/ALVA

...What? You-?

LULU

-I was a child. Well, childish anyway. I only thought it would put her to sleep. I just wanted to be alone with your father, for one moment. I didn't know what I was doing.

MARTHA/ALVA

...You- ...You- poisoned my mother?

*MARTHA is stunned and can't move. LULU tries to hug them and MARTHA half returns it with confusion. LULU turns and sees JACK and reacts as if startled by him.*

LULU

Oh! It's your father! He's here!

*MARTHA looks at JACK blankly as JACK stands up.*

LULU (cont'd)

How long have you been standing there? It's not what you think! Oh!

*LULU dashes into the bedroom.*

JACK

My son? My own son?

MARTHA/ALVA

Father?

*LULU returns, tossing a gun to JACK, who catches it. (It is a distinctly different gun than the one MARTHA had earlier.) LULU immediately puts her hands up.*

LULU

Please darling don't!

JACK

With my own son?

MARTHA/ALVA

Father.

JACK

You drag me through the mud to a tortured grave!

LULU

You should have raised me better.

JACK

You're the angel of death. A murderer. A hangman's noose!

LULU

Oh shut up and kill me!

JACK

What I haven't done for you! Given to you! And how you repay me for all these years!

LULU

I can't help what you've done.

JACK

Get out before my brain gives way and my son is swimming in his own blood.

*JACK now heads toward LULU to force the gun into her hands. MARTHA makes a break for the bedroom.*

JACK (cont'd)

You infect me like a virus and I will groan away the rest of my life. This is your medicine. Don't faint. Don't even kneel. Put it to your head and pull the trigger. Either you do it or I'll do it to myself. Whichever one of us is weaker!

*LULU has already put the gun to her head.*

LULU

What if it doesn't go off?

JACK

Have you forgotten everything I've done for you?

LULU

I told you, you have too much confidence in me.

JACK

Shall I squeeze your finger for you?

*LULU aims the gun at JACK.*

JACK (cont'd)

All right, don't pretend. No false alarms!

*LULU fires into the ceiling then aims at JACK again. MARTHA runs in as RODRIGO, sees what's happening, and dashes back into the bedroom.*

JACK (cont'd)

How many men are you hiding here?

LULU

That was Rodrigo. He's an acrobat.

JACK

I'm losing my mind! Have I lost my mind?

LULU

Yes, darling, yes! You have! Please!

*MARTHA comes back in playing themself.*

MARTHA

I'm so sorry, but I forgot- Oh! Mister Schön what are you-?  
Mister Schön!

*JACK has rushed at MARTHA and grabbed them by the collar, pushing them toward a window as if to throw them out of it.*

JACK

And this animal too?

MARTHA

Help! Help me!

JACK

Is she another of your men? Are you an acrobat as well?

MARTHA

You're hurting me!

*JACK throws MARTHA to the floor, then goes toward LULU again.*

LULU

Darling, Alva has a show tonight. Let's go to the show and see Alva.

*MARTHA hears this and runs back into the bedroom.*

JACK

You think I'd end my last day with a show? We're going to hell. Pull that trigger! Blast me with fire! It will be the greatest memory of my life!

LULU

You can divorce me!

JACK

I'd still never leave you. You've always been right about that. Shoot me, and there will still be bullets left for you, her, Alva, and whoever else you're hiding back there. Put us all out of our misery and save anyone else we might have destroyed! I have poured my life into you! Divorce you? Never! Maybe you do deserve me but I've earned you! We're bound up together like vines and branches. I can't even tell which of us is which anymore. Give me the gun and I'll spare you the trouble.

LULU

You know why you married me as well as why I married you! You'd lied to the world about me forever but you couldn't go on lying to yourself! If now you give me your death you'll have taken all my youth for it! And you know far better than me which is worth more! I have never in my life wished to be taken for anything other than what I am! You want to force me to aim this at myself and pull the trigger? I'm not sixteen anymore but I'm still too young to fire a bullet through my heart!

JACK

Down on your knees! And never get up again!

LULU

Why? So you can leap over me and be done with me forever?

*MARTHA bursts in again as Alva.*

MARTHA/ALVA

Father! Don't touch her!

*JACK heads for MARTHA. LULU fires the gun at JACK four times. HE reacts, but remains standing.*



JACK

There's one more for you.

MARTHA/ALVA

Father!

JACK

Don't let her get away, Alva. You're next.

LULU

I shot him. The only man I love.

JACK

Monster.

*JACK falls to the floor.*

LULU

Get some water.

*MARTHA runs into the kitchen. LULU goes to JACK, pulls him up into her lap and kisses him. JACK opens his eyes, and sits up on his own. LULU speaks to JACK with a mix of unnerved surprise and restrained exhilaration:*

LULU (cont'd)

That was so good. That was really good.

*JACK stands up, a bit shaken by everything that's just happened. MARTHA comes back in from the kitchen. LULU looks at them.*

LULU (cont'd)

That was good.

*LULU looks at Jack again.*

LULU (cont'd)

...Okay. ...Okay. ...Just one more.

**ACT FIVE**

*LULU looks to MARTHA again, then goes into action, changing her clothes. MARTHA and JACK look at one another, then also go into action - MARTHA by setting things up for Act Five and JACK by removing his tuxedo jacket, which he folds up neatly, then stands to the side near the front door, waiting for what's next. Finally:*

LULU

"Act Five. The End."

*LULU starts the music. MARTHA is playing Alva, bent over in a chair hugging their knees and sleeping. LULU hugs MARTHA from above.*

LULU (cont'd)

Alva, darling, you have to go. Sister has to work.

MARTHA/ALVA

Is the day over?

LULU

Yes. Get up now and go to the pub.

MARTHA/ALVA

I wrote another poem for you. Would you like to hear it?

LULU

Maybe later.

MARTHA/ALVA

I dreamt just now we were dining at Olympia. Corticelli was there with us, and the table cloth was dripping on all four sides with champagne.

LULU

That was the rain outside.

MARTHA/ALVA

It's cold in here. Why do we prolong this. Let's starve to death together. Tonight. Aren't we at the bitter end, after all? Penniless. Hidden away like mice. How much farther down can we sink?

LULU

Why don't YOU go out and get us something to eat? Because you've never earned a penny of your own in your life.

MARTHA/ALVA

How? Sell poems on the street in the rain?

LULU

Look at me, with what little blood I still have left, I'm to stuff our mouths?

MARTHA/ALVA

I don't touch that money you make.

LULU

You don't turn down the food I buy with it.

MARTHA/ALVA

How did this happen? How did I get here?

LULU

I never trusted property.

MARTHA/ALVA

Just one more fine meal, one more cigarette, and then I'll gladly die.

LULU

Everything your father piled up, gone in minutes. What a waste. At least he didn't have to see it finally happen. At least there's that.

MARTHA/ALVA

...Have you heard from Martha?

LULU

Don't get any ideas about her. She's given me enough of herself already. She can't possibly have anything left. Besides, she wouldn't dare come here. They'd follow her for sure.

MARTHA/ALVA

I don't want you to go out there anymore. You're mine.

LULU

Are you going to do it? Are you going to do anything?

MARTHA/ALVA

I can't move anymore, I can't. You made me a murderer.

LULU

Did YOU shoot him? No. That was me. Me! You've never done a thing! Now go to the pub.

*MARTHA stands and takes LULU's face in their hands, which LULU clasps lovingly.*

MARTHA/ALVA

When I think back. You and your blue dress. You should have been born an empress.

LULU

Go find me a crown.

*LULU puts her hand through MARTHA'S hair. MARTHA slumps out the front door and closes it. LULU sighs disdainfully. SHE slips on her ratty old coat, then catches sight of her painting. SHE takes it down and faces it against the wall. There is a knock at the front door. LULU stops. Another knock. LULU goes to the door and listens at it.*

MARTHA/RODRIGO

It's me. Don't worry, I'm alone.

*LULU carefully opens the door to reveal MARTHA playing Rodrigo, who walks right in.*

LULU

Rodrigo-.

MARTHA/RODRIGO

-I said don't worry, I'm alone.

LULU

How did you find me?

MARTHA/RODRIGO

I'm clever, remember?

LULU

That's right. What do you want?

MARTHA/RODRIGO

Take a wild guess.

LULU

I don't have anything, as you know.

MARTHA/RODRIGO

You've got something. You've always had something.

LULU

May I offer you a drink? Let me hold a mug out the window. It will only take a minute. That's plenty of time for you to call the police.

MARTHA/RODRIGO

I'm done with the police. And they're done with me. I think I actually made them mad when I told them it was you and not that old dike who took the blame for you. They thought they'd buried that case. "Jealous Freak Kills Newspaper King In Degenerate Love Triangle!" That's what the headline would 'a' screamed if I ran the papers. Anyway, let the truth prevail, I always say. They're after you but I'm not bringing them to you. No, I'm done with the police. Liars, all of 'em. I hate liars.

LULU

What do you want then?

MARTHA/RODRIGO

I had an idea to help you get out o' here.

LULU

Help me?

MARTHA/RODRIGO

I know a man in Cairo. You know, Egypt? He runs a kind of harem. Only it's not for him. Business men. Dignitaries. Big shots only. The women are dressed like queens, have their own place, and can even choose how far they go, so long as they at least light the gentlemen's cigarettes and dance with 'em a bit. A real classy establishment. And the police here would never find you there.

LULU

What makes you think I'd go to a place like that?

MARTHA/RODRIGO

By the looks o' you you're already hard at work. Why not work in style, nice clothes from Paris, warm weather, all the dates you can eat?

LULU

Why would you help me?

MARTHA/RODRIGO

This Cairo man pays well for white women. And he's already read about you. I'll be able to take a long vacation off what he's paying.

LULU

When I was sixteen I might have considered it. I was desperate then. I thought I'd never be happy. I even bought a gun. With my own money; I'd saved it up selling flowers I picked in the park. (*Grandly:*) I thought I'd go to the river and shoot myself. ...The night I was going to do it, I ran bare-foot into a cafe and I met happiness there. From that moment, I was all done being a stupid little girl. I got to know myself real well. Since then I can see just by looking at someone, anyone, man or woman, in a pitch-dark night and a hundred feet away, whether we can find a way to get along. And whenever I've betrayed that insight I've felt it the next day, body and soul. I know myself better than anyone. And you think I'd let myself be sold and bought? That's worse than prison.

MARTHA/RODRIGO

What were you about to go out and do when I showed up and interrupted you?

LULU

Nobody owns me here. Go to the police. I'm not going to Cairo.

MARTHA/RODRIGO

The police don't pay as much as Cairo.

LULU

Anyway you're done with the police.

MARTHA/RODRIGO

Not if you keep working here instead of Cairo. ...Sleep on it. I'll come back in the morning. And if you're bags aren't packed, I'll find a way to get over my hatred for liars.

*MARTHA exits out the front door. LULU sits and puts her head in her hands. SHE stands and opens a window, puts her hand out it into the rain for a moment, then wipes her face with it and closes the window again. There is another knock at the door, much friendlier this time.*

LULU

Change of heart already?

*LULU goes to the door and listens at it. The gentle knock comes again. MARTHA speaks through it as herself.*

MARTHA/MARTHA

It's me.

*LULU flings open the door and there MARTHA is with their suitcase. LULU embraces them and pulls them inside, shutting the door behind them.*

LULU

Martha! Martha you're HERE!

MARTHA/MARTHA

Nobody followed me, I made sure of it.

LULU

Did you see Rodrigo?

MARTHA/MARTHA

Yes but he didn't see me.

LULU

Oh, Martha!

*LULU hugs MARTHA and kisses them all over their face. MARTHA leans into an embrace. Eventually MARTHA pulls back and looks at LULU.*

MARTHA/MARTHA

You look like you're on your way out.

LULU

Yes.

MARTHA/MARTHA

To get away from me?

No!

LULU

Don't let me stop you.

MARTHA/MARTHA

No, Martha! I'm so happy to see you!

LULU

I gave everything for you.

MARTHA/MARTHA

Yes, everything.

LULU

My money, my name, my life.

MARTHA/MARTHA

Everything.

LULU

You seduced me.

MARTHA/MARTHA

No, Martha. I did not.

LULU

I gave myself to you.

MARTHA/MARTHA

And I will always be grateful. And I will never be able to repay you.

LULU

Did you mean what you said that last time we saw each other?

MARTHA/MARTHA

What did I say?

LULU

That you'd always love me.

MARTHA/MARTHA

Of course. Yes. Of course.

LULU

...I'm sorry. I'm sorry. I'm sorry.

MARTHA/MARTHA

/Shhh. You're tired. You should lay down and rest. You can stay here. I have to go out. But I'll be back. And you can stay here.

LULU

MARTHA/MARTHA

Where's Alva.

LULU

He won't be back until later. He'll be so happy to see you.

MARTHA/MARTHA

Oh really? What's happened to HIM?

LULU

*(smiling)* He will be glad. He'll be delighted. You rest now. I'll be back soon. I may have someone with me. But it won't take long. And then we'll have all the time in the world to catch up. Okay? ...Okay.

*...LULU heads for the front door and MARTHA follows her. LULU hugs and kisses MARTHA goodbye and closes the door behind her. MARTHA turns and leans against the door. If music was still playing, it ends here.*

*MARTHA looks at JACK and seems to come a bit out of "character." Or rather it's hard to tell if they're MARTHA or "Martha." Nor is it clear whether they are talking to JACK or only incidentally looking at him while they speak. There's something chilling about them.*

MARTHA/?

"I may have someone with me." "It won't take long." ...I will lean against this door. I'll watch everything and not blink. ...Men and women don't know what they are. Only those of us in between know what men and women are. How they lie. And they have no idea. Today they are this and tomorrow that, according to whether they've eaten, drank, gained, lost. Only the body stays honest. Only children still have their reason. Men and women are like animals. They don't understand what they do. They wail when they're happiest. And in their deepest misery they take pleasure in every speck of it. Hunger takes their strength. But once they're stuffed they make this world a torture chamber. Throw away their lives for a whim. Hope they'll sleep better and forget it all for a moment. I thank God for not making me either a man or a woman. My body has nothing to do with theirs. Where they have a narrow little heart, I have a soul. ...And I gave that away.

*MARTHA goes to their suitcase and digs out from it their gun, which they put to their head, still looking at JACK. After a moment, MARTHA thinks better of this:*

MARTHA

That will make a mess of me.



*MARTHA puts the gun away and takes a sharp knife from a plate on a nearby table. Again looking at JACK, MARTHA considers their throat with it, then heart, then wrists.*

MARTHA (cont'd)

If she sees me lying in my blood she'll not wipe a tear for me.

*MARTHA tosses the knife angrily to the floor.*

MARTHA (cont'd)

Should I jump from a bridge? Which could be colder, the water or her heart? Better to hang myself. The best I can offer her is my last work of art, my body on display, a sculpture of undying love.

**EPILOGUE**

*We hear LULU's voice and a key in the front door. MARTHA looks toward the door, quickly grabs the suitcase, clicks off the light and dashes out into the bedroom just as:*

*LULU enters. SHE notices the lights are off. SHE turns them on and crosses the room, glancing about subtly. SHE gets a candle and lights it for atmosphere. SHE looks at JACK still standing near the door.*

LULU

Come in.

JACK

...Thank you.

LULU

Would you like to sit down?

JACK

Not this time.

LULU

...So. There's something about me.

*MARTHA comes out from the bedroom with their suitcase, sets it down and takes a seat.*

JACK

Yes. I feel I should say thank you.

LULU

If you did I'd say you're welcome, and thank YOU.

JACK

But I won't say thank you.

LULU

Oh. I'm sorry. But you did so well. I thought it went so well.

JACK

I was right when I saw you. I measured you up by the way you walked.

LULU

Did you?

JACK

I can size a person up with one look too. It's something we're born with, I suppose.

LULU

*(smiling)* I knew you were like me.

*JACK laughs ironically.*

JACK

...What IS your name? Your real name.

*LULU stares at JACK for a moment, then decides, yes, she'll tell him:*

LULU

...Lulu.

*MARTHA has never known this:*

MARTHA

Lulu.

JACK

-Lulu? Not Nellie or Eve or Angel or Mignon?

LULU

No. Lulu. That's what my father called me. What's your name?  
...*(smiling)* What's your name?

JACK

Jack.

LULU

...Jack. ...With a father like mine, Jack, I am, with all my faults, a miracle. "He died in a madhouse, my father." That's what I used to say. I always hope he's somewhere, and if he's not happy that he's at least content, finally.

JACK

The men in your life.

LULU

What about them?

JACK

They don't seem to have helped you much.

LULU

They have, in their way.

JACK

How?

LULU

Men get a lot done because they're afraid of dying. Men invented money, bought this world and then broke it. But the earth can heal itself, and I'm patient. In the meantime, those good men can pay my way.

JACK

You're a prostitute.

LULU

No.

JACK

No?

LULU

No, absolutely not. I'm not interested in money. All I care about is freedom.

JACK

Money has bought your freedom.

LULU

Money buys things and food. I'm grateful to the men who have provided me those. I like dancing and Bussi liked my dancing, I could give him that, it was easy and we were content. Mr. Schwarz liked to paint me, and I liked the chance to be still. Alva made me his star, and my champagne glass was kept always sparkling like the northern lights.

JACK

-And you, *gave yourself*, to all of them.

LULU

Yes I did. Because I *like* sex. And *most* men like sex. It's easy to give them that. I get something too, *and* things and food. ...But him. There was nothing else I could trade for him. Love is only worth its weight in love, and I loved him heavily.

(more)

LULU (cont'd)

He was the first person to treat me not like a kid, not like a pet, but a person, an equal. For the first time I felt like myself. And I loved how I felt. And his love sank deep into mine and was ours. And *that* love, is the only thing I've never been able to control. That love scared both of us. And as long as that love was not allowed its freedom, that love held me to the ground.

JACK

Lulu. Love is holy. Do you know? And you pervert that. In so many ways. Do you see?

LULU

...If you think that, why are you here with me? A woman like me.

JACK

That IS why. That IS why.

LULU

Why what?

JACK

Why I'm here.

*Jack pulls a knife from his coat.*

MARTHA

Angel.

*JACK walks toward LULU, who starts to move away from him but he quickly reaches out and grabs her, putting the knife to her throat.*

MARTHA (cont'd)

Angel!

JACK

To scrape the scabs off God's earth.

LULU

GOD'S earth?

*MARTHA has grabbed the other knife and holds it up by the tip of the blade like a knife thrower might, poised aiming and ready.*

JACK

Come near me with that and you'll finally be free of her. Now is your chance. And after I leave you can even take the blame if you like.

MARTHA

Suitcase.

*LULU digs into the suitcase fast and gets Martha's gun before JACK can pull her away.*

JACK

Hey. Hey!

*But LULU is aiming the gun at MARTHA.*

MARTHA

Angel!

*A stand-off: MARTHA with their knife aimed at JACK, JACK with his knife at LULU's neck, and LULU with her gun pointed at MARTHA.*

LULU

-Put that down Martha and leave us alone.

MARTHA

What?!

LULU

You're not going to steal this from me.

MARTHA

STEAL this?

LULU

Tell me about God's earth, Jack?

JACK

It's clean. Beautiful. Pure. Good. As He made it. Before the snake tempted Eve.

LULU

That's right. Now Martha. Recite that poem Alva wrote about me. The one you liked? I liked it too. Do you still remember it? Recite it for Jack, would you?

MARTHA

...Nature created her out of course stuff  
And desire draws her to the earth.  
The earth belongs to evil not to good.  
What the angels send us from above  
Are merely common goods:  
Their light pleases but makes no one rich,  
And in their province no property is gained.  
And so that precious stone, ...

LULU

Almighty Gold.

MARTHA

Almighty Gold, ...

LULU

Must be taken up.

MARTHA

Must be taken up from those

LULU / MARTHA

False Powers  
That dwell gravely underground.  
One does not gain Gold's favor without sacrifice,  
And no one lives who has withdrawn  
Her clean soul from its service.

JACK

...Lovely.

LULU

Isn't it?

JACK

So you ARE evil, then. You agree.

LULU

YOU might say so. Alva and Martha might think so from time to time.

MARTHA

-I don't! I love you!

JACK

-And what do YOU think? What does it mean to you, this poetry?

LULU

It means you can take me like a plot of land on God's earth. I'll let you. You can pull my hair out to the roots. Gouge me open. Fill my heart with cement. Poison my blood. Destroy me and build your world on top of me. It doesn't matter. Even if you regret it one day, or have killed yourself in the process, I'll have gone on without a care. I knew what you were when I saw you, Jack. So you cannot threaten me with your straight and holy knife because I'm not afraid of death. (to Martha:) And you can't save me with your unyielding devotion and romantic self-sacrifice because I don't believe in it. ...So go ahead, one of you. At least hell will be warm. And heaven, who knows? Good view I'll bet. Either way, if you bury me I'll find a way to send my thanks.

JACK

Your thanks.

LULU

It will be far better to return to the earth, where perfect necessity reigns with its infinitely passionate dispassion, than to live in this world you two have made.

MARTHA

...Lulu.

LULU

-What's everyone waiting for? It'll be morning soon and Rodrigo will be here with his police.

*A tense silence.*

LULU (cont'd)

...Well then someone put on some music. At least we can dance.

*Still holding her ground, MARTHA reaches over and puts some music on. LULU smiles and moves her legs to it a bit, dancing, without letting up on her end of the stand-off. Fade to black...*

**THE END**