

VIGILS: INTERIOR

CHARACTERS

[In the Garden]

Grandfather

Mary & Martha, his granddaughters

[In the House]

(marionettes or dancers, silent)

Father

Mother

Two young daughters

SCENE

An old garden planted with cottonwoods. At the back, a simple house, with three of the ground floor windows lighted up. Through them a family is distinctively visible, gathered for the evening around the lamp. The Father is seated at the fireplace. The Mother, resting one elbow on the table, is gazing into vacancy. The two young girls, dressed in white, sit with their books, basking in the tranquility of the room. When one of them rises, walks, or makes a gesture, the movements appear grave, slow, apart, as the distance, the light, and the transparent film of the windowpanes makes them appear to be ghosts.

[MARY is seen upstage, spot-lit, trance-like.]

MARY

Ô maison au milieu des forêts...

Examinez au clair de lune...

Ô rien n'y est à sa place...

Mon Dieu! Quand aurons-nous la pluie?

[O house in the middle of the woods...

Scrutinize in the moonlight...

O nothing is in its place...

My God! When will we get some rain?]

[MARY steps offstage into the shadows.]

[The GRANDFATHER enters the garden cautiously.]

GRANDFATHER

They never come here... to the garden.

They are still sitting up in the lamplight.

Ah, they have not heard me.

Then what would I have done?

They are all in the room...

The father at the fireplace...

The mother at the table.

They do not know...

But whom shall I tell?

The father is ailing, the mother, too.

Her sisters are too young.

And they all loved her as they will never love again...

I should not be alone. Tragedy announced by a single voice, too definite, too crushing.

I dread the silence, when the heart is broken.

Ayez pitié de mon absence

Au seuil de mes intentions!

Mon âme est pâle d'impuissance

Et de blanches inactions.

Mon âme aux œuvres délaissées,

Mon âme pâle de sanglots.

Regarde en vain ses mains lassées.

Trembler à fleur de l'inéclus.

[Have mercy on my distraction

At the threshold of my prayers!

My soul is pale with impotence

And with wan negligence.

My soul (full) of forsaken deeds.

My spirit sallow with sobs.

Look in vain at its weary hands.

Tremble at the blooming of the unhatched.]

I will tell them simply.

I was heading to the village, it was late, the dusk was falling on the riverbank.

I saw her face. She was floating on the stream, her hands were clasped. I saw her hair swaying in the current.

She was living this morning! I met her coming out of the church. She said she was going away. She did not know when I would see her again.

She smiled as people smile who want to be silent. Her eyes were veiled, and she scarcely looked at me.

[Looking again towards the family in the windows.]

See them, in their silence.
 She was as beautiful as her sisters.
 They are not anxious.
 They seem to be happy.
 They think they are safe.
 The doors are closed, the windows barred.
 And all is foreseen that can be foreseen.
 Sooner or later, I must tell them.
 This was supposed to be simple.

[Enter MARY.]

MARY
 Grandfather, they are coming.

GRANDFATHER
 How far?

MARY
 At the top of the riverbank.
 They are coming silently.
 I told them to pray quietly.
 Martha is with them.

GRANDFATHER
 Are there many?

MARY
 The whole village is around the bier.
 They are moving slowly.
 Have you told them?
 Do they know?

GRANDFATHER
 I have told them nothing.
 Look, there they are, living in the lamplight.
 Look, my child, and you will see what life is.

MARY
 I feel as though I were seeing them in a dream.

[At this moment, one of the two sisters comes up to the first window, the other to the third. Resting their hands against the panes, they stand gazing into the darkness.]

GRANDFATHER
 No one comes to the middle window...

MARY
 Can they hear us?

GRANDFATHER
 They smile at what they do not see. Take care, who knows how far the soul extends around the body.

MARY
 Grandfather?

GRANDFATHER
 Be still, my child. Poor things, they can see nothing, the night is too dark. They look this way, though grief comes from the other side.

[He looks and listens for the villagers.]
 Ah, I can see the villagers in the moonlight.

BOTH:
 Grief is approaching, step by step. They cannot stop it and have only to serve it. They mourn, but still they come. Their hearts are full of pity, but still they come.

[The girls leave the windows.]

[Enter MARTHA.]

MARTHA
 Vous avez, Seigneur, ma misère!
 Voyez ce que je vous apporte!
 Des fleurs mauvaises de la terre,
 Et du soleil sur une morte.

*[Thou knowest, Lord, my misery!
 See what I bear unto Thee!
 Perverse flowers of the earth
 And sunlight on her corpse.]*

Grandfather, I am here.
 The villagers are here, too,
 they wait in the road.
 Is everything ready?
 I have the little girl's ring.
 I laid her on the bier myself.
 She looks as though she is asleep.
 I tried to arrange her hair.
 I told them to gather flowers.
 What are you doing here?
 Why are you not with them?

[*She looks in at the windows.*]

They are not weeping. Do they know?

GRANDFATHER
 Martha, Martha, there is too much life in your
 soul, you cannot understand.

MARTHA
 What? Why not?
 Grandfather, you should have told them.

GRANDFATHER
 Martha... Please.

MARTHA
 I will go and tell them myself.

GRANDFATHER
 Martha, my child, wait...look at them.

MARTHA
 Oh, how I pity them. They must wait no longer.

GRANDFATHER
 Come here, my child.

MARTHA
 Grandfather!
 I don't know what to do!

GRANDFATHER
 Be still, my child.

MARTHA
 I want to go with you.

GRANDFATHER
 No, Martha, stay here. Stay with your sister and
 look away. You cannot bear this.

ALL:
 When Death passes through—you cannot know
 what a face looks like in that moment.

GRANDFATHER
 If they cry out, do not turn around.

MARY *and* MARTHA
 Grandfather!

GRANDFATHER
 If there is no sound, do not turn and look.

MARY *and* MARTHA
 Grandfather!

GRANDFATHER
 We cannot see the course that sorrow will take.
 Kiss me, before I go.

[GRANDFATHER *goes out.*
 MARY *and* MARTHA *seat themselves on the*
ground with their backs to the windows of the
house.]

Libretto from *Intérieur (1895) & Serres Chaudes*
(1889) by Maurice Maeterlinck

Translations by William Archer (1908),
 and Joseph Z. Pettit (2022)

VIGILS: FITCH

CHARACTERS

Cornelius Fitch, a ruthless scion of wealth

Drucy Fitch, Fitch's Mother

Madame Moricia, the psychic

Dr. Hogue, the physician

Cephas & Brash, attorneys

Silverlaine, a poisoner (silent, a dancer)

SCENE

A Great Hall in the "Ambersonian" Fitch Manor House. DRUCY FITCH is sitting with face turned to a psychic, MADAME MORICIA, who stands looking out of a great bay window watching the stars. SILVERLAINE is partially obscured by a tall potted plant at the right. A meteor strikes across the sky. MADAME MORICIA, pointing upwards, comes to the center of the room.

MADAME MORICIA

These meteors flame the dazzling doom of kings...

[DRUCY FITCH rises apprehensively as DR. HOGUE enters the room.]

DR. HOGUE

The Commodore is dead!

DRUCY FITCH

The drug found his heart...
Silverlaine! Silverlaine!

[SILVERLAINE the poisoner, steals forward and begins to dance a Sarabande. The cast remains still, but on the repeats they join her in a similar movement.]

ALL

Silencium est aureum. (*Silence is golden*)
Mors me dives. (*Death makes me rich*)

DRUCY FITCH

Silverlaine, take your money and go!
Your part is done.

[Exit SILVERLAINE.]

[To DR. HOGUE.]

Hogue, your silence will buy you endless riches...

DR. HOGUE

Indeed!

DRUCY FITCH

But, we must keep Blaine under wraps.

DR. HOGUE

Ah..., the younger brother...

[Exit DR. HOGUE.]

[She turns to MADAME MORICIA.]

Read the scroll of the sky...
Will Cornelius inherit?

MADAME MORICIA

Fitch will inherit.

DRUCY FITCH

What else?

MADAME MORICIA

Fitch will inherit.

DRUCY FITCH

What else, I said!

MADAME MORICIA

Peril...

DRUCY FITCH

Peril? His or mine?

MADAME MORICIA

Yours then.

DRUCY FITCH

Tell me.

MADAME MORICIA

Fitch will inherit, but kill his family.

DRUCY FITCH
Kill me, but still inherit!

[Enter CEPHAS.]

CEPHAS
The butler called me,
I'm here.

DRUCY FITCH
Cephas!
The Commodore is dead!
Cornelius will inherit.

CEPHAS
Dead, but how?
No, say nothing.
Scions cannot err.
Their public good excuses private guile.

[Enter BRASH.]

BRASH
The butler called me,
I'm here.

DRUCY FITCH
The Board of Directors?

BRASH
Staunch, and they will arrive soon.

DRUCY FITCH
Will they have Cornelius?

BRASH
Yes, and pay extra.
A minority murmurs for Blaine.
Let Fitch scatter some cash, they'll stop.

DRUCY FITCH
[Remembering the COMMODORE...]
I made this happen...

[To BRASH.]
You, direct the Board.

BRASH
Yes, Ma'am.

[To CEPHAS.]
You, calm the stockholders.

CEPHAS
Of course, Ma'am.

DRUCY FITCH
Cornelius? Where is he?

CEPHAS
He knows nothing yet...

DRUCY FITCH
My boy must inherit, not Blaine
Unaware of corruption,
Unmoved by wealth.
A lover, and no brute.

CEPHAS
He must be watched...

DRUCY FITCH
What?

CEPHAS
I know him.

The harp, the song, the theatre,
delight this dreamer: he lives in his imagination.
But with boundless power he may unhinge.
His carnivals, yet unimagined,
He'll color his world with our blood,
His music will be dreadful cries,
His orchestra our human agonies,
His scenes will make puppets of the living,
Their death scenes a mere drama,
And all this pulsing world his stage.
[DRUCY FITCH is perplexed by this claim, then
unconvinced, then annoyed. She turns
eventually to MADAME MORICIA.]

DRUCY FITCH
How long?

MADAME MORICIA
Behold the heavens! The moment has come!

[*Exit MADAME MORICIA.*]
[*Outside, FITCH is hailed.*]

CEPHAS
Ah, he's home from the races.

[*CORNELIUS FITCH enters.*]

DRUCY FITCH
[*Taking his hand.*]

Cornelius, your father is dead.

[*He pauses, wondering...*]

What was his, is yours.

CORNELIUS FITCH
[*Sarcastically.*]
Ah, to rule the world...
How will I manage...

CEPHAS
You will need sleep for tomorrow's work.

CORNELIUS FITCH
[*In terror.*]
Do I look tired? Bags under my eyes?

CEPHAS
No, no, no, no, no...

CORNELIUS FITCH
An artist should always be beautiful.
Where is a mirror?

CEPHAS
Sir, a graver word. Tomorrow, when you meet
the board, we're calling the rents due----

CORNELIUS FITCH
[*Gazing at himself in a mirror.*]
Ah! Must I sign those evictions?
I wish this hand had never learned to write.

Such an ugly act.
To scatter joy, not sadness, that's me.

CEPHAS
Today, you are the master of the world.

[*Exit CEPHAS.*]

CORNELIUS FITCH
Mother, I shall go mad!

DRUCY FITCH
No, you won't. I'll help you.

CORNELIUS FITCH
You and me?

DRUCY FITCH
When you need me, then call me.

[*Speaking more seriously.*]

My son, Moricia prophesied:
'Fitch will inherit, but kill his family.'
Tell me the stars have lied.

CORNELIUS FITCH
[*Smiling.*]
The stars have lied...

DRUCY FITCH
Kiss me; we both must sleep awhile.

Libretto by the composer after *Nero*,
by Stephen Phillips (1864-1915)

VIGILS: FERNANDO

CHARACTERS

Fernando Del Castellano

Marguerita, his wife

Spectre

An old family servant (silent)

SCENE

The chamber of an ancient castle in Toledo. This chamber is evidently stripped and dismantled. Pedestals where statues have stood, outlines upon the walls where old pictures have hung, certain figures in armor of FERNANDO's ancestors alone remain. FERNANDO is sitting with his wife by a dying fire. The time is late evening.

FERNANDO

O Marguerita,
this dismantled room,
stripped and bare,
a leafless forest ruined by the blast,
breaks my heart.

Pictures, statues, armor,
all a reliquary!

The glory of our house is forgotten.

I took you young,
from wealth and ease,
and now, here,
in my grief and sorrow,
in this squalor,
I hold you captive.

[She draws closer to the scanty fire as he rises excitedly and paces to and fro.]

Do I deserve this ruin?
I lived simply, no drink,
no games of chance,
but each day, each hour,
tragedy bows me to the earth,
and a remorseless enemy pursues me.

MARGUERITA

An enemy?
Can you remember any?
An ancestral foe?
And still unsatisfied?

FERNANDO

I know of none...

MARGUERITA

Unconsciously, perhaps?

FERNANDO

This I know, my wealth has passed
into the hands of one who is nameless;
he wears a mask.

[MARGUERITA rises, shivering, as the first grey of the dawn appears.]

MARGUERITA

Dawn is breaking...
I must go to our son...

[She kisses FERNANDO and passes through the decayed arras into an inner room.]

FERNANDO

[Turning to the armed ancestral statues.]

O statues, ancestral figures,
statesmen dim, captains of long ago,
tell me, what have I done?
Speak to me, one of you,
glimmering in the dawn.
[Dawn begins to touch the armed figures.]

All silent!

I invoke the dead for an answer.
Who has stripped me,
and made me naked before all men?

[The SPECTRE appears, masked and muffled against the stained window.]

SPECTRE

It is I.

FERNANDO

You? Who are you?
Are you a breathing thing?
Or a ghost of a fragile mind?
Show me your face!
Speak to me!

[As FERNANDO slowly approaches the spectre, it vanishes.]

[The same chamber. Midnight. The clock strikes twelve.]

FERNANDO

That spectre, masked and visible in the grey of dawn, he gave me no answer, he vanished, silent as he came.

[He looks into the inner room.]

The child sleeps;
but his mother,
it is midnight,
where is she?

[FERNANDO discovers a letter on a table, breaks the seal and reads.]

MARGUERITA [offstage]

Husband, I leave you, and my home,
and I will not return.
I do not go to the arms of another.
Forgive me and teach the child to forgive.

FERNANDO

My home,
and now my love,
no reason given?

Doubtless the worry,
the despair.

[Suddenly he starts and, softly opening the arras, gazes into the room within.]

Our child, sleeping sweetly.
Even him she leaves,
what terror so moved her,
what compulsion?

SPECTRE

[Again, visible as before.]

It is I.

FERNANDO

You again,
And that mask!
You caused this misery!
What is your name?
Tell me!

[A pause.]

What have I done to you?

[A pause.]

No answer?
Are you flesh and blood?
Are you from the grave?
Why do you pursue me hour by hour?
What God seeks this vengeance?

[He rushes towards the SPECTRE as though to grasp it but again it vanishes.]

[Again the dismantled chamber. Deeper night. FERNANDO in an attitude of suspense is standing at that arras door, which eventually opens, and a white-haired servant enters slow and silent.]

FERNANDO

The child? Is there still hope?
Answer me!

[The servant makes no answer but bows in silence.]

Dead?

[The servant approaches him and mutely endeavors to console him, leading him to a chair, into which FERNANDO helplessly sinks.]

These miseries, this is the last and worst,

I am losing my mind.

With each blow a figure appears to me,
shrouded and masked...

He gave me no answer...
he vanished, silent as he came...

Tell me, is this an apparition,
born of a fevered and tormented mind?
Phantoms...
Ecstasy...

[The servant offers FERNANDO a sleeping pill.]

Will this help me sleep?
Forever?

FERNANDO
Oh God, why do I suffer?
A ruined house
then, my love leaves,
now, my son is dead;
why do I suffer?

SPECTRE
It is I.

FERNANDO
You again!
You are not a ghost;
I see you clearly;
You are my enemy!
I will pursue you over land and sea,
no forest will hide you,
no wall will shield you,
I will pursue you to the end.

I am a lonely man,
I have nothing left,
To this task I devote myself.

I will hunt you sleepless through the world,
until I have justice.

*[He rushes towards the SPECTRE as though to
assail it, but again it vanishes.]*

*[A narrow corridor in the castle. Candles light
the hallway. The spectre is seen. FERNANDO
suddenly appears pursuing, breathless, haggard
and unkempt.]*

FERNANDO
At last, I have you.
There is no escape!
Reveal yourself.

[Drawing his sword.]

SPECTRE

*[Slowly turning and removing his mask discloses
the very features of FERNANDO himself.]*

Fernando, are you satisfied?

FERNANDO
My face!
It was me!
Only me!

*[He falls dead at the feet of the SPECTRE, which
stands over him, beginning to fade as the
curtain falls.]*

Libretto by Stephen Phillips ('*The Adversary*',
1913), adapted by the composer