

TALES OF DARK IMAGINATION:
The many Ghosts of Doctor Lazarus

Written By

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Characters

Dr. Lucinda Lazarus	<i>A Physical Medium</i>
Victor Valiant	<i>A Shaman</i>
Abigail Prescott	<i>A woman being haunted</i>
Mary Jane Prescott-Felton	<i>A Ghost</i>
Betty Sinclair	<i>A Ghost</i>
Isabelle	<i>A Ghost</i>
Laura Throckmorton	<i>Wife of Josiah</i>
Josiah Throckmorton	<i>A man being haunted by a ghost hound</i>

“The Oval Portrait”

Written by
Edgar Allan Poe

Adapted by
David Schmidt

ACT ONE
The Phantoms of Foxmoor

SETTING: *The walls of the chamber are made of polished wood. UC is an archway with a staircase leading up. DR is a writing table. C is a sofa and an overstuffed chair. Entrances and exits are made from the archway. A single spot comes up on **LUCINDA** who is writing in her casebook.*

LUCINDA:

My name is Dr. Lucinda Lazarus. I am not a medical doctor rather I am a doctor of the metaphysical. When I was a young girl I suffered a near death experience. When I returned to the land of the living I realized I could see and talk to the dead and they talked back. I am known in my profession as a Physical Medium because I can physically interact with the dead. I have witnessed many frightening things, survived horrors no other person has, suffered physical attacks upon my very person. One such case was the phantoms of Foxmoor. Foxmoor is an all- girl's school on the outskirts of Boston. It is an imposing; ivy covered stone edifice set at the end of a wooded lane. Before it was a school it was a manor house built in the eighteenth century by a prominent lawyer named Jerome Felton. Felton lived there with his wife Mary Jane Prescott until tragedy struck. Mary Jane had fallen down the grand staircase and died. Now she was back terrorizing the current director of the school Abigail Prescott, or so that's what it seemed. Abigail had even suffered physical attacks upon her person. What made this haunting particularly dangerous was Abigail was pregnant; I enlisted the help of a close friend and fellow metaphysician Victor Valiant. Victor was a practitioner of Shamanism. A shaman is a person regarded as having access to, and influence in, the world of benevolent and malevolent spirits. They can, through a trance-like state, enter supernatural realms and dimensions to obtain solutions to problems affecting people and places. I often enlisted his help when I may be faced with a particularly violent entity. *(Here the spot goes out and the lights come up full on the hall. From the archway come **LUCINDA, VICTOR, and ABIGAIL PRESCOTT** . After they enter **MARY JANE** appears on the stairs)*

ABIGAIL

(As they enter) Thank you for coming so quickly.

LUCINDA

Your message was most disturbing to me. Especially since the hauntings have become violent.

ABIGAIL

*(crossing to the overstuffed chair)*Please sit *(She indicates the sofa and then sits in the chair)*.

LUCINDA

*(Sitting on the sofa)*Thank you.

VICTOR

*(Looking Around the room)*How long have the hauntings been going on?

ABIGAIL

There's always been a belief that Foxmoor is haunted. But there's nothing that has ever been this violent.

LUCINDA

Until now.

ABIGAIL

Until now. I mean the girls have claimed to hear footsteps in the hallway, others have said they have seen an apparition of a woman in revolutionary- era clothes on the stairs. But she never acted hostile to any of them.

LUCINDA

What can you tell us about Foxmoor?

VICTOR

*(Crossing to the sofa and sitting)*Leave nothing out, no matter how insignificant you might think it is. The more information you can give us the more we will be able to understand your current situation.

ABIGAIL

Before Foxmoor became a school it was the manor house of a prominent Revolutionary-era lawyer named Jerome Felton.

VICTOR

Was he married?

ABIGAIL

He was, to Mary Jane Prescott. That's her picture hanging in the hallway as you came in.

LUCINDA

Prescott? Any relation to you?

ABIGAIL

Not me, my husband. He is a direct descendant of May Jane. His family owns Foxmoor and the land around it. The story of Mary Jane and Jerome is a pretty dark tale.

LUCINDA

Go on.

ABIGAIL

As the story goes Mary Jane became mentally ill and violent. To safeguard her and others around her Jerome kept her chained in the attic.

VICTOR

That seems a bit extreme.

ABIGAIL

By today's standards, yes. But back then it was the only way they knew how to deal with the mentally ill.

LUCINDA

So what happened next? I suspect the story doesn't end there.

ABIGAIL

No. One day Mary Jane escaped from her chains and fell down the grand staircase and died. It was believed she was pregnant at the time. When Jerome came home from his trip to Philadelphia he was given the tragic news of Mary Jane's death and he had her buried under her favorite tree in the garden.

LUCINDA

Do you think Mary Jane is the ghost haunting Foxmoor?

ABIGAIL

It wouldn't surprise me.

VICTOR

Any particular reason you can think of that would explain why she has suddenly become violent?

ABIGAIL

I can't think of anything. I have never had a problem with her before.

LUCINDA

A mad ghost doesn't need a reason, Victor.

VICTOR

She has been passive to this point, Lucy. Why now, all of a sudden, would she suddenly decide to become violent? Something must have triggered her madness.

LUCINDA

When did the violence start?

ABIGAIL

A few weeks ago. At first they were only small, annoying things. It's only been recent the attacks have become physical.

LUCINDA

What happened a few weeks ago?

ABIGAIL

Nothing much other than I found out I was pregnant.

LUCINDA

That must be it.

VICTOR

You think her pregnancy is the trigger?

LUCINDA

It seems the most logical conclusion. If Mary Jane was pregnant at the time of her death, the loss of her child may be the reason she seeks to hurt Abigail, she's jealous.

VICTOR

If that's true Abigail needs to leave Foxmoor at once before the attacks escalate and Mary Jane tries to kill her.

LUCINDA

Victor is right, Abigail. Until we can put Mary Jane's spirit to rest it isn't safe for you to be here.

ABIGAIL

I can't abandon my girls. They depend on me. If I'm gone who will watch out for them?

VICTOR

If you're dead who will watch out for them then?

LUCINDA

Victor is right, you can't stay here. You owe it to your girls.

VICTOR

Where is your husband now?

ABIGAIL

Out of town until tomorrow.

LUCINDA

Is there some place you can go tonight?

ABIGAIL

I have a sister who lives nearby.

LUCINDA

Then go there. Let Victor and I see what we can do tonight to put Mary Jane's spirit to rest. We'll watch out for your girls tonight.

ABIGAIL

Alright (*Rising*) I will go to my sisters tonight. I just need to pack a few things. (*Starting to exit*) Please do what you can (*She exits through the arch. MARY JANE'S ghost is still on the stairs.*)

LUCINDA

What do you think?

VICTOR

I think there is something else going on here. I am sensing the presence of two different spirits, one is benevolent; the other one dark and malevolent. Tell me, Lucy, is Mary Jane nearby?

LUCINDA

She's been on the stairs since we came in here.

VICTOR

She's the benevolent spirit I am sensing then.

LUCINDA

Are you saying she isn't the one attacking Abigail?

VICTOR

I am. I believe it is the other entity that is the violent one.

LUCINDA

Any idea what this dark entity is?

VICTOR

Not yet, let me commune with the spirits, find out what they know, meanwhile talk to Mary Jane, see what she can tell us. (*He exits through the arch*)

LUCINDA

(*Rises and crosses to the stairs*) You can come in now, Mary Jane.

MARY JANE

(*Descending the stairs and entering the hall*) You can see me?

LUCINDA

I've known you have been on those stairs since we came in here.

MARY JANE

How?

LUCINDA

When I was a small girl I had a near-death experience. When I was brought back to life I had acquired the ability to see and talk to the dead and they could talk back.

MARY JANE

I've missed talking to someone.

LUCINDA

Can you sit?

MARY JANE

Of course (*she makes her way to the sofa and sits down. LUCINDA crosses to the chair and sits down*). I can't stay too long or she'll find me.

LUCINDA

Who?

Please purchase to read the full version of act 1. Sample of act 2 to follow

ACT TWO
THE OVAL PORTRAIT

Adapted from the story by Edgar Allan Poe

SETTING: *The walls of the chamber here are made of polished wood. UC is an archway leading on and off stage. R of the archway is a cold fireplace. Hanging above the fireplace is an oval portrait of a beautiful young woman. C is a sofa. DR of the sofa is a writing desk. LUCINDA is seated at the desk with a spot on her.*

LUCINDA:

After our ordeal with the Phantoms of Foxmoor a storm forced Victor and I to seek refuge in a gloomy old chateau not far from Foxmoor where I, in my desperately wounded conditioned hoped to rest. Unfortunately it wasn't meant to be. While there, in that gloomy chateau, we experienced the strange case of The Oval Portrait. *(The spot goes out. LUCINDA rises from the desk and exits through the UP CENTER arch. As soon as she exits the lights come up dimly. As the lights come up we hear a clap of thunder and see a flash of lightning VICTOR with LUCINDA enters, VICTOR supporting LUCINDA.)*

VICTOR:

It's lucky this place was here, Lucy.

LUCINDA:

Shut up and find me a place to lie down.

VICTOR:

(Spotting the sofa) There's a sofa over this way.

LUCINDA:

Good, how about getting me into it.

VICTOR:

(Helping LUCINDA to the sofa) I must say, Lucy, you're not a very good patient.

LUCINDA:

(Settling on the sofa) I'm sorry, Victor, but being nearly killed by an angry specter tends to put one in a lousy mood.

VICTOR:

I would think you would be a little nicer to the person who saved your life.

LUCINDA:

Don't get me wrong, Victor, I am grateful to you for what you did for me, I'm just not very good company at the moment.

VICTOR:

No kidding.

LUCINDA

Could you open the drapes over those windows it's a bit too dark in here.

(VICTOR moves to open some unseen drapes. As he does the stage is bathed in blue-white light. We hear another clap of thunder and see another flash of lightning)

VICTOR

Better?

LUCINDA:

Yes that's.....*(Looking around the chamber she sees the painting over the fireplace)*
What the..... Do you see that, Victor?

VICTOR:

See what?

LUCINDA:

(Gingerly gets off the sofa and moves slowly over to the fire place to look at the Oval Portrait) This portrait of a young girl.

VICTOR:

It's hard to miss. Shouldn't you be resting?

LUCINDA:

(Absorbed in the painting) There will be time enough for that. Would you look at the exquisite brush work of this painting.

VICTOR:

One painting is the same as another to me.

LUCINDA:

Barbarian.

VICTOR:

Not everyone has your passion for art, Lucy.

LUCINDA:

(Ignoring VICTOR) Whoever did this picture was a master painter.

VICTOR:

I'll take your word for it.

LUCINDA:

He obviously took great pride in his work. He even framed it in rich golden arabesque; Magnificent.

VICTOR:

Magnificent?! There's something unnatural about that painting.

LUCINDA:

What do you mean?

VICTOR:

When I first saw it, it seemed to come alive.

LUCINDA:

This is a vignette.

VICTOR:

A vignette?

LUCINDA:

Yes, much in the style of the favorite heads of Sully.

VICTOR:

Who is Sully?

LUCINDA:

A renowned American portrait painter. The arms, the bosom, and even the ends of her radiant hair melt imperceptibly into the vague, yet deep shadows which form the background of the whole. Much like the portraits painted by Sully. But I see your point, the absolute life – likeness of this particular painting is very unnerving.

VICTOR:

I think I'll take a last look around to see if anyone is here.

LUCINDA:

(Preoccupied with the oval portrait) Yes, alright, go ahead. (As VICTOR exits ISABELLE drifts in from LEFT.)

ISABELLE:

Beautiful isn't she.

LUCINDA:

(Startled) HuhWha..!

ISABELLE:

I startled you. Forgive me.

LUCINDA:

No, forgive me. We..... that is Victor and I did not realize the chateau was occupied.

ISABELLE:

Do not apologize. It is not often I receive visitors any more. Do you like it?

LUCINDA:

What?

ISABELLE:

The portrait.

LUCINDA:

I do, very much. The subject seems to be a maiden of rare beauty, and not more lovely than full of glee.

ISABELLE:

Yes she does. But the history of that particular painting is a tragic one.

LUCINDA:

Tragic? Really? I'd be most interested to hear about it.

ISABELLE:

(Indicating the couch) Please sit, you look like you're about to collapse.

LUCINDA:

(Crossing gingerly to the couch) Yes, thank you. Some recent injuries have made me weak. *(As she and ISABELLE sit down)* Tell me about the painting.

ISABELLE:

Your first observations were correct. She was indeed a maiden of rare beauty and full of glee. But evil was the hour when she saw, and loved, and wed the painter.

LUCINDA:

Their marriage wasn't a happy one I take it.

ISABELLE:

No it wasn't. You see he already had a bride.

LUCINDA:

I'm not sure I follow. If he was already married and she knew about it why did she go through with it.

ISABELLE:

This bride was his work.

LUCINDA:

I see. Tell me about these star crossed lovers.

ISABELLE:

(Rising) He was passionate, studious, and austere. She was a maiden of rare beauty. All light and smiles, and frolicsome as the young fawn: Loving and cherishing all things except one.

LUCINDA:

What was that?

ISABELLE:

(Crossing to the fireplace and the portrait) The art which was her rival. She dreaded only the pallet and brushes and other untoward instruments which deprived her of the countenance of her lover.

VICTOR:

(Entering from the archway) Are you alright, Lucy?

LUCINDA:

I'm fine, Victor. I was just conversing with our charming hostess.

VICTOR:

Hostess?

LUCINDA:

(Indicating ISABELLE) Don't be rude, Victor. She's standing right here.

VICTOR:

(Looking to where LUCINDA is pointing) There's no one there, Lucy.

LUCINDA:

Of course there's.....*(Sudden realization)* No, I suppose you don't see her. But I do. Thank you, Victor.

VICTOR:

Is there anything I can do to help?

LUCINDA:

Not at the moment, Victor.

VICTOR:

Very well, I sense there is something off about this house I shall commune with the spirits to learn if there is anything we should be worried about here. I shall leave you with your ghostly companion. *(He turns and exits back out through the archway.)*

LUCINDA:

(To ISABELLE) Who are you?

ISABELLE:

Haven't you figured it out?

LUCINDA:

Of course. *(Rising and crossing to join ISABELLE at the fireplace)* You're the girl in this portrait.

ISABELLE:

I am. My name is Isabelle, and I need your help.

LUCINDA:

To do what?

ISABELLE:

To release me.

LUCINDA:

Release you from what?

ISABELLE:

Let me tell you the rest of my story and then you'll understand.

LUCINDA:

You have my undivided attention as well as my curiosity peaked. (crossing back *to the sofa*) Please continue.

ISABELLE:

I have already spoken of my hatred for his art, and dreading only the pallet and brushes that deprived me of my husband.

LUCINDA:

What happened next?

ISABELLE:

He wanted to paint a portrait of me, his bride.

LUCINDA:

You could have said no.

ISABELLE:

I could have, but I was humble and obedient and I agreed to do it.

LUCINDA:

So what happened?

ISABELLE:

For weeks I sat meekly in his dark, high-turret chamber where the single light from above fell upon his pale canvas. He took glory in his work, which went on from hour to hour and day to day, and in all that time I felt something was happening to me.

LUCINDA:

What?

ISABELLE:

I was growing weaker. Each stroke of his brush seemed to take something out of me.

LUCINDA:

Didn't he realize something was wrong?

ISABELLE:

He was a passionate, wild and moody man who became lost in his reveries. He never saw that the light which fell so ghastly in this room withered the health and spirits of his bride. Yet through it all I smiled on, uncomplainingly, even though I knew I was dying and that somehow he was responsible.

LUCINDA:

You should have said something, Isabelle. Why didn't you?

ISABELLE:

Because he was taking great pleasure in the task, and what wife doesn't want to please her husband.

LUCINDA:

But he was killing you.

ISABELLE:

But we were together.

LUCINDA:

He should have noticed how weak you were becoming. Wasn't there anyone else who could have pointed that out to him?

ISABELLE:

Some, for a while.

LUCINDA:

And yet they said nothing?

ISABELLE:

My husband was a painter of great renown with an even greater temper. No one dared say anything to him. Then after a time no one was permitted into the turret room.

LUCINDA:

Why not?

ISABELLE:

My husband forbade it. As the work drew near to its conclusion he had grown wild with the fervor of his work. At that point he rarely looked up from the canvas to gaze upon me. He failed to see that the colors he spread upon the canvas were mine. With each pass of the brush I grew paler and paler, but still I said nothing. Then came the final brush strokes. When he had finished his work he looked up from the canvas at me, and I was dead. He had stolen my soul and trapped it in that damn portrait! I discovered in my death that he was a fiend. He brought life to his work by draining the life from his subjects.

LUCINDA:

What do you mean? Like a Vampire?

ISABELLE:

Something like that, yes.

LUCINDA:

Where is he now?

ISABELLE:

Gone. Taken, perhaps, by the same dark powers that created him.

LUCINDA:

What do you want from me?

ISABELLE:

I want you to destroy the portrait.

LUCINDA:

Destroy it!

ISABELLE:

*(Kneeling down next to **LUCINDA**)* You must. It is the only way I shall ever be free of this wretched place. As long as that portrait exists I will never be free. My soul will be forever trapped in this world.

LUCINDA:

But, Isabelle, it's a masterpiece.

ISABELLE:

A masterpiece of evil.

LUCINDA:

It should be in a museum for the entire world to admire.

ISABELLE:

Don't you understand?

LUCINDA:

Understand what?

ISABELLE:

It is the painting that holds me in this world. Wherever it goes, I must go with it
(**VICTOR** enters.)

VICTOR:

I see our spectral hostess is still here.

LUCINDA

You can see her?

VICTOR

Yes, the spirits bestowed the ghost sight upon me so that I would be able to see her. What does she want?

LUCINDA:

She wants me to destroy this portrait.

VICTOR:

I know. (*Crossing to the fireplace and starting a fire in it*) Her soul is trapped inside it. The spirits told me. They also said to set her spirit free the picture must be removed from the frame. It is the frame that is evil not the portrait. It is imbued with a dark energy that acts like a prison keeping her soul trapped in this world. Once her portrait is removed the frame must be burned so her soul can be set free from the portrait.

LUCINDA:

How can I destroy so breathtaking a piece of art, Victor?

ISABELLE:

You must. There have been others whom I have asked to destroy that painting. They couldn't either. It's as if the painting held some sort of spell. That it has a dark will of its own that it forces upon those with a passion for art.

LUCINDA:

I cannot do it. I am sorry, Isabelle.

ISABELLE:

You must, or I shall never be free.

LUCINDA:

I cannot. But Victor can. He does not have the passion for art I do. the painting cannot enthrall him like it has me. Take it and burn it.

VICTOR:

With pleasure. *(He takes down the portrait, removes the portrait from the frame and casts the frame into the fire. Once the frame is put into the fire an inhuman scream erupts around the room and then it is silent. Then ISABELLE slowly starts to back out of the room her figure appearing to get smaller as she exits)* Lucy, take a look at this.

LUCINDA

(Crossing up to VICTOR) What is it? *(He shows her the portrait)* it's disappearing!

ISABELLE:

(Just before she exits) Thank you. *(Then she exits)*.

LUCINDA

The portrait is gone. There's nothing left but a blank canvas. I have seen a lot of disturbing things in my time, Victor, but this one has disturbed me the most. That poor girl. I cannot fathom how long she has been trapped here. *(Starts to exit)* Come on, Victor, let's go home. Suddenly I feel I want to get as far away from here as possible.

VICTOR:

(Following LUCINDA off) Right behind you. *(As they exit the lights slowly fade to black)*

ACT THREE

THE PHANTOM HOUND OF DREARY LANE

SETTING: *At rise the spotlight is placed on the desk. Seated at the desk is **LUCINDA**. She is once more writing in her journal.*

LUCINDA:

I have encountered all manner of spirits from gentle, lost souls to cruel vicious specters bent on revenge. But none compare to the cruelty of the human spirit. It has always amazed me that a race capable of showing great love can also commit great evil. Sometimes it is the love that leads us to that evil. So it was with the case of the Phantom Hound of Dreary Lane. Dreary Lane is a forlorn pile of gloom and grandeur. A plantation house that was most cold and unwelcoming on the fringes of a mist shrouded swamp in southern Louisiana. Within its cold, gray walls resided my friend Laura Throckmorton. Laura and I loved each other once upon a time then she met her first husband Ambrose Tempelton, fell in love with him and eventually married him. Then tragedy struck. While out hunting on the swamp with Josiah Throckmorton, who happened to be Ambrose's best friend, Tempelton died tragically in a hunting accident. Now Laura was married to Josiah. I had not seen Laura in over a year, so it came as quite a surprise to me when I received a message from her asking for my help. Laura claimed Josiah was being haunted, haunted he claimed, by a phantom hound only he could see or hear. *(The spot light goes out and the lights are brought up full. Seated in the chair is **LAURA THROCKMORTON**. DR is an agitated **JOSIAH THROCKMORTON**. As the lights come up we can hear the haunting baying of a large hound. The baying continues under the following dialogue)*

JOSIAH:

(He is obviously frightened) Don't tell me you don't hear that.

LAURA:

(Concentrating on her book) Hear what, Josiah?

JOSIAH:

That infernal howling.

LAURA:

(Looking up from her book) I don't hear anything, Josiah.

JOSIAH:

How can you not hear that!

LAURA:

You're tired, Josiah. Why don't you go upstairs and get some sleep.

JOSIAH:

Sleep?! I haven't been able to sleep since that beast began its infernal caterwauling three nights ago. Why is it haunting me, Laura. What does it want?

LAURA:

(Becoming annoyed) What does what want? There is nothing out there. The only sounds I hear are the croaking of bullfrogs and the occasional night bird. There is nothing out there, Josiah. You have to get a hold of yourself. Look at you, you're a wreck. You need to get yourself some help before you have a nervous breakdown.

JOSIAH:

(Struggling to regain his composure) Yes, yes you're right. I do need help. But who would believe me?

LAURA:

Let me send for Lucinda Lazarus.

JOSIAH:

That ghost hunting quack-friend of yours?

LAURA:

(Rising from her chair) She's not a quack, Josiah. Lucinda happens to be one of the foremost authorities on the supernatural.

JOSIAH:

(Obviously relieved) So you believe me that there's something unnatural at work here?

LAURA:

What I believe, Josiah, is you believe it, and if anyone can get you answers Lucinda can.

JOSIAH:

I don't know about this.

LAURA:

What other choice do you have, Josiah?

JOSIAH:

I don't know if I can trust her.

LAURA:

I trust her. That should be enough for you, or don't you trust me?

JOSIAH:

Of course I trust you, Laura. Why would you think otherwise?

LAURA:

Then why are you reluctant to let Lucinda help you?

JOSIAH:

What if she uncovers things. *(To himself)* Things better left buried.

LAURA:

What things? What are you talking about?

JOSIAH:

(Quickly changing the subject) Nothing. Forget it. If it will make you feel better go ahead and contact her. If she can rid me of this unnatural creature I will be forever grateful to her .

(The lights go down and the spot comes back up on LUCINDA still sitting at her desk.)

LUCINDA:

Like I said I had not been to Dreary Lane in over a year. The last time was when Laura and Josiah got married. I didn't trust Josiah, maybe I was jealous, but Laura did. That was enough for me to make the trip to Dreary Lane.

(The spot goes out and LUCINDA exits through the UC archway. As she exits the lights come up full and LAURA followed by LUCINDA enters from the archway)

LAURA:

(As she enters) Thank you for coming, Lucinda.

LUCINDA:

Your message sounded urgent. Are you alright?

LAURA:

I'm out of my mind with worry for Josiah, Lucinda. *(She crosses to the sofa and sits. LUCINDA joins her on the sofa)* This thing, whatever it is, is starting to take its toll on him. He won't sleep. He won't eat, and lately he's even afraid to come out of his study.

LUCINDA:

How long has it been going on?

LAURA:

Almost a week now; I think he's slowly going mad and I don't know how to help him.

LUCINDA:

When did it start?

LAURA:

What?

LUCINDA:

When did Josiah start hearing the baying hound?

LAURA:

The day of our one year wedding anniversary.

LUCINDA:

The same day?

LAURA:

Yes, why? Do you think it's significant somehow?

LUCINDA:

Maybe. That it occurred a year to the day of your wedding anniversary can't be a coincidence. You said in your telegram that he had seen the beast?

LAURA:

He said he had.

LUCINDA:

What did he say it looked like?

LAURA:

He said it was an enormous black hound with glowing green eyes, a fanged maw and it seemed to glow with an inner fire that gave it a reddish glow.

LUCINDA:

Anything else?

LAURA:

He said it was familiar somehow.

LUCINDA:

Familiar? How?

LAURA:

He didn't know. Only that the beast was somehow familiar to him but he couldn't say why. (*Suddenly we hear the baying of the hound.*)

LUCINDA:

(Hearing the hound) What's that?

LAURA:

What? What are you hearing?

LUCINDA:

It's the hound.

LAURA:

So it is true. There really is a hound. Josiah isn't losing his mind.

LUCINDA:

No, Laura, he's not.

LAURA:

Then why can't I hear it?

LUCINDA:

Because it's not hunting you.

LAURA:

I don't understand. What is it do you think?

LUCINDA:

It sounds like the howl of a Hellhound. In European folklore anyone who hears the howl of the Hellhound is marked for death. I have only heard this howl one other time but once you hear the cry of a Hellhound you never forget what it sounds like. For some reason this hound is hunting Josiah. Where is he now?

LAURA:

In his study, Why? *(We hear a scream from off stage)* Josiah!

LUCINDA:

Stay here. (She draws a revolver and starts to head off stage when **JOSIAH** ignoring **LUCINDA** rushes in and crosses to **LAURA**).

JOSIAH:

Laura, we have to get out of here now.

LAURA:

Why? What's wrong?

JOSIAH:

The hound, it's outside the house and it's not alone.

LUCINDA:

(Crossing to **LAURA** and **JOSIAH**) What do you mean it's not alone?

JOSIAH:

(Seeing **LUCINDA** for the first time) Who are you?

LAURA:

This is Dr. Lazarus. She's here to help us.

JOSIAH:

I'm afraid you might be too late, Doctor.

LUCINDA:

What did you mean when you said the beast wasn't alone?

JOSIAH:

It's master is with it, or rather what is left of him.

LUCINDA:

Where are they now?

JOSIAH:

Back of the house, but you can't go out there.

LUCINDA:

Stay here. Both of you.

JOSIAH:

It's a beast from hell, Doctor. Bullets aren't going to hurt it. We need to get out of here right now before it gets us all.

LUCINDA:

(Losing patience) Just do as I say and stay here. *(She exits through the UC archway).*

JOSIAH:

(Calling after her) Are you insane, Woman! It'll tear you apart.

LAURA:

Josiah, get a hold of yourself. Lucinda knows what she is doing.

LUCINDA:

(From off stage. We hear the growling of the hound) Get back.... Stay back. *(We hear a gunshot.... A yelp... then silence.)*

JOSIAH:

Do you think she got it? I don't hear it anymore.

LAURA:

Don't ask me. I think your both nuts. *(LUCINDA reenters from archway.)*

JOSIAH:

Did you get them?

LUCINDA:

TALES OF DARK IMAGINATION: The Many Ghosts Dr. Lazarus

Please purchase the full script to read the second half of act 2.