

LEISURE, LABOR, LUST

By
Sara Farrington

LEISURE, LABOR, LUST

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LEISURE, LABOR, LUST

For Reid, my consigliere.

And for the fearless Jack & the ferocious Levi.

LEISURE, LABOR, LUST

Leisure, Labor, Lust premiered in New York City at The Tank, 312 West 36th Street NY NY in March, 2018. It was directed by Sara Farrington and featured the following cast and crew:

Grace Hunter.....	Gabriella Rhodeen
Lucy, her maid.....	Stephanie Regina
Harry Hunter, her husband.....	Kyle Stockburger
Gilbert, their butler/Delancey Morris.....	Christopher Tocco
Lighting Design.....	Brian Aldous
Sound Design.....	Sam Schloegel
Stage Manager.....	Alex West

Prior to its NYC premiere in 2018, this play was workshopped, in parts, between 2014-2017 at the following:

Leisure, presented in workshop at JACK, Brooklyn, NY, Aug. 2014.

Leisure, toured in workshop to The Mount, Edith Wharton's estate in Lenox, MA, presented in her ballroom, Jan. 2015.

Leisure and *Lust*, presented in workshop at the Sublet Series at HERE Arts Center, NY NY, May 2015.

Labor and *Lust* toured to The Mount again, presented site-specifically in Wharton's boudoir and bedroom, Jan. 2017.

Leisure, Labor, Lust was performed in workshop as the full trilogy at Art House, Jersey City, NJ Nov. 2017.

LEISURE, LABOR, LUST

CAST: 2 Women, 2 Men

LEISURE: Part 1

GRACE HUNTER, 30s-40s, a successful novelist and wealthy woman of leisure, inspired, in part, by the novelist Edith Wharton. Grace has a boiling rage, an electric intelligence, a razor-sharp wit, a hunger to understand the human heart and an insatiable craving for romance, which blinds her to everything else.

LUCY, 20s-30s, Grace's maid, an Irish immigrant. She speaks with an Irish brogue only when she's playing Lucy. Other than Grace, Lucy plays all the roles in *Leisure*: Delancey Morris, Harry Hunter, Party Guest at The Fisher Dinner, Concierge at The Stentorian Hotel. Lucy, like her boss, also has a boiling rage, one she struggles to hold back. Lucy is prideful, compassionate, desperate to help the needy and suffering, no matter who.

LABOR: Part 2

GILBERT, 30s-40s, the Hunter's butler. He is a Brit, speaks the Queen's English. He has a restrained demeanor, controlled emotions and tightly held beliefs. The more stiffly mannered Gilbert is, the more the animalistic sexuality of his Delancey pops and crackles later.

LUCY, Same as in *Leisure*.

LUST: Part 3

HARRY HUNTER, 30s-40s, Grace's husband. This is the same Harry Hunter from *Leisure*, only now played by the real man, not Lucy, and his age changes as the story jumps around in time. He is a closeted gay man, skilled at playing straight, macho, when needed. Harry is mentally ill, but not mad, and should not be played "crazy," but true. Harry is kind, gentle, loving, but because of his insurmountable cowardice, his own worst enemy.

GILBERT, Same as above.

DELANCEY MORRIS, 30s-40s, but, like Harry, his age changes with the story's time jumps. This is the same Delancey Morris from *Leisure*, only now, as mentioned above, played by the actor playing Gilbert. Technically, Delancey doesn't actually appear until the final scene in the Bowery gay bar. Delancey, also a gay man, is rough-edged, street smart

LEISURE, LABOR, LUST

and working class. He's a forgotten New York laborer with no family, but he is evolved, wholly accepting of his and Harry's queerness.

SETTING

LEISURE: Grace Hunter's boudoir.

LABOR: 4 days earlier, The Hunter kitchen.

INTERMISSION

LUST: 2 days after that, Harry's Hunter's study.

TIME & PLACE

A rainy spring in New York City in 1907, with indicated time jumps.

LEISURE, LABOR, LUST

PLAYWRIGHT'S NOTE

This script is equal parts play and score for performance. This play jumps in time, place, character and gender freely, which I have rigorously indicated throughout the script.

In *Leisure* and *Lust* the characters' "when" and "who" are marked next to their names, in parentheses all the time. For example: GRACE (Day 2), LUCY (as Harry, Day 2), HARRY (1897), GILBERT (as Delancey, 1887), etc...

The character flips in and out of time, place and person are instant, physical changes on the part of the actors. Resist the urge to drag emotional residue from one flip to the next or to execute the flips slowly. It's as quick as a film edit, an emotional dropping and lifting, a cinematic cut or, as I nicknamed it while building this show, "live editing." This rule, of course, bends and breaks in *Lust* during Harry's mental breaks, but, as with everything, I have indicated when and where.

Tech-wise, this play can be done with an elaborate sound and light design to support the "live editing" moments, or, it can be done with no technology at all, relying only on the physicality and emotional shifts of the performers. I've done it both ways and both aesthetics work beautifully. If using tech, the lights and sound flip as quickly as the actors.

This play should not have a set, but rather accents and suggestions of a set: A Queen Anne style desk to represent Grace's boudoir, a leather club chair to indicate Harry's study, etc... Anything more than that undermines the fluidity of time and place. I designed the "set" as a triptych: Grace's boudoir in *Leisure* at SR, the kitchen for *Labor* far DSC, and Harry's study for *Lust* at SL. Each part of the play does bleed into the other rooms, as do the actors, when needed, but generally, the parts live in those stage locations.

Grace Hunter is inspired, in part, by the novelist Edith Wharton. Harry Hunter was inspired by Edith's husband Teddy Wharton, who most likely

LEISURE, LABOR, LUST

suffered from bi-polar disorder when there was no awareness or diagnosis for it. Delancey Morris is inspired, in part, by Morton Fullerton, who was Edith Wharton's lover toward the end of her marriage to Teddy. Fullerton was handsome, charming and intelligent, but a mystery in New York society circles. He was also openly bisexual.

Lucy and her storyline are inspired by Jacob Riis' book *How The Other Half Lives*.

"But I have sometimes thought that a woman's nature is like a great house full of rooms: there is the hall, through which everyone passes in going in and out; the drawing-room, where one receives formal visits; the sitting-room, where the members of the family come and go as they list; but beyond that, far beyond, are other rooms, the handles of whose doors perhaps are never turned; no one knows the way to them, no one knows whither they lead; and in the innermost room, the holy of holies, the soul sits alone and waits for a footstep that never comes."

—From *The Reef*, by Edith Wharton, published in 1912

"I saw not what she saw, and that's the tragedy of it."

—Morton Fullerton, when asked about his love affair with Edith Wharton.

LEISURE, LABOR, LUST

Part 1: LEISURE

GRACE HUNTER's boudoir. There is a Queen Anne-style desk piled with letters and envelopes, an inkwell with pens and a small bell. There are two chairs near the desk as well as an elegant, Tiffany-style standing lamp. Grace stands DSR, staring out an unseen window. She is frozen in horror and shock.

Soon, LUCY enters, carrying more letters. She too is in a state of shock, only hers is tinged with fear.

LUCY. Miss?

GRACE. Mm hm.

LUCY. More letters have come. People sending their condolences.
(Without looking away from the window, Grace silently points to the large pile of letters on her desk.)

LUCY. *(Placing the letters on the pile)* And— you have a visitor, Miss.

GRACE. Send them away, I don't want to see anyone.

LUCY. It's Delancey Morris, Miss.

GRACE. *(Pause)* What?

LUCY. Delancey Morris. He's waiting in the foyer.

GRACE. Now?

LUCY. Yes.

GRACE. *(Beat as Grace's shock grows at this name.)* Did he— ? But.
(The rain picks up suddenly. Grace closes her eyes.) Is it still raining, Lucy?

LUCY. Lashin' rain, Miss.

GRACE. *(Suddenly composed)* Well, don't keep the man waiting, Lucy, send him up.

LEISURE, LABOR, LUST

LUCY. Yes, Miss. (*She heads for the exit, but then—*)

GRACE. (*Desperately*) LUCY!

LUCY. Yes, Miss!

GRACE. Did I tell you about the Fisher dinner?

LUCY. The Fisher dinner on Friday night?

GRACE. Yes! There were two hired chefs.

LUCY. How lovely. (*She turns to exit again, but then—*)

GRACE. And! Two borrowed footmen! And Roman punch and roses from Henderson's. And menus on gilt-edged cards.

LUCY. My.

GRACE. I was a vision in ivory silk. Although I'm humiliated to say I forgot to wear gloves.

LUCY. I'm sure no one noticed.

GRACE. Wouldn't you like to know who was there?

LUCY. Who was there?

GRACE. Ooooh, the usual set. The Beauforts, the Van Degans, the Van Der Luydens, the Fishers of course, the Dagonets, the Royalls, the little Georgie Howards. Oh! And Gerty Gryce? (*With disgust*) She wore a new dress— from *this season*.

Day 1: The Fisher dinner

Grace becomes GRACE (Day 1) and Lucy becomes LUCY (as Party Guest) at The Fisher Dinner. It's very clear here Grace revels in being a New York socialite as Grace (Day 1) joyfully gossips to Lucy (as Party Guest). This is a quick shift in tone and physicality for both actors, quickly jumping from the tension of the boudoir to the magic of the Fisher dinner. As mentioned, lights and sound can follow suit just as quickly, if desired, or not, if not.

GRACE (Day 1). Doesn't Gerty Gryce know to hang a *new* dress in the closet for a year first before wearing it?

LUCY (as Party Guest). Déclassé.

GRACE (Day 1). What do you *expect*? She isn't really a *Gryce*, she's a *Spicer*. From Staten Island. And Ned Gryce is a lawyer now although I

LEISURE, LABOR, LUST

know he's surreptitiously written a book of sonnets. Can you *imagine*? It makes sense though doesn't it? *Ned* writing *sonnets*? He's always been a bit *funny*— (*She gives a limp-wristed hand gesture, indicating that Ned is gay*) —if you know what I mean. And I *don't* think Gerty does. (*Both women laugh gleefully at the scandal of this clueless woman married to a closeted man.*) Why, I'm surprised Ned's not brought one of his *friends* tonight! But who am I to judge anyone else? After all, I didn't wear gloves for God's sake! Can you imagine? Not wearing *gloves* to a *dinner*? Like an *animal*? (*Quick beat*)

Now: Grace's boudoir.

Grace (Day 1) returns to Grace. Lucy (as Party Guest) returns to Lucy. It's as if that flip never happened.

GRACE. Anyway, same old set.

LUCY. Well. That sounds just. Well. I'm off to get Mr. Morris. (*Turning to leave again*)

GRACE. Where was it I met Mr. Morris on Friday night?

LUCY. Uh... the Fisher dinner, Miss, or so you've said.

GRACE. Yes, but *where*? Oh yes! It was in the library! I went in there. Why? Oh I remember why! James Wetherall had just returned from London and suddenly everything was fetching— “You look just *fetching*, darling.” “Your hat is simply *fetching*!” That's why I went into the library, to escape him, the bore. Delancey and I had a sort of simple introduction, nothing noteworthy, something like: (*Remembering, inwardly*) Aren't you Grace Hunter? I am. (*As Delancey*) Delancey Morris. (*back to herself*) Hello, Mr. Morris. (*Presenting an elegant hand*) Charmed. Something like that.

Day 1: The Fisher dinner, in the library.

Grace again flips to Grace (Day 1). Lucy becomes Lucy (as Delancey Morris, Day 1.) The tense tone of Grace's boudoir changes instantly into the romantic, rose-colored romance of the Fisher library. In here, Grace is

LEISURE, LABOR, LUST

elegant, composed, witty, confident. Lucy's Delancey carries himself handsomely, cultured, but with an undeniable working class quality, something scrappy and rough. He is also cautious, testing Grace with inquiries about her husband.

LUCY (as Delancey, Day 1). Aren't you Grace Hunter?

GRACE (Day 1). I am.

LUCY (as Delancey, Day 1). Delancey Morris.

GRACE (Day 1). Hello Mr. Morris. *(Again presenting her elegant hand)* Charmed.

LUCY (as Delancey, Day 1). Forgive me, I saw you go into the library and so I took my chance. I'm a great admirer of your writing.

GRACE (Day 1). How kind.

LUCY (as Delancey, Day 1). And how is Mr. Hunter?

GRACE (Day 1). You know my husband?

LUCY (as Delancey, Day 1). Oh yes, Harry and I are very close.

GRACE (Day 1). Close? Are you a friend from the club?

LUCY (as Delancey, Day 1). Oh— no.

GRACE (Day 1). From Newport then?

LUCY (as Delancey, Day 1). No, no uh actually— we met at a bar. Ages ago.

GRACE (Day 1). A *bar*? What did you say your name was?

LUCY (as Delancey, Day 1). Delancey Morris.

GRACE (Day 1). Delancey Morris... That's funny. He's never mentioned you. I thought I knew all Harry's friends.

LUCY (as Delancey, Day 1). Well, as I said. It's been ages. I trust Harry's doing well?

GRACE (Day 1). *(Dismissively)* He wants to die.

LUCY (as Delancey, Day 1). *(Beat.)* He does?

GRACE (Day 1). Yes. But that's just something he says. He's fine.
(Longish beat as the two look at each other.)

LUCY (as Delancey, Day 1). Look at me— I've become a star struck idiot, haven't I? Gawking at the great lady novelist, Grace Hunter.

GRACE (Day 1). I am not a *lady* novelist Mr. Morris. I'm a *novelist*.

LEISURE, LABOR, LUST

(A waltz is heard from the ballroom. In the version I directed, I used The Masquerade Waltz, by Aram Khachaturian, which is anachronistic, but fits perfectly.)

LUCY (as Delancey, Day 1). Of course. Forgive me. *(Turning to go)* And I'm sure you wanted a moment alone.

GRACE (Day 1). *(Overly eager)* Not at all, I only came in here because someone kept saying fetching.

LUCY (as Delancey, Day 1). How awful that must have been. I—huh...I really feel as though I've known you for years.

GRACE (Day 1). You do? But— how?

LUCY (as Delancey, Day 1). *(Inventing a reason)* Having read your books. Isn't that funny?

GRACE (Day 1). *(Laughing too hard at this, quickly composing herself)* It sounds as though a waltz has broken out in the ballroom. Shouldn't we join them?

LUCY (as Delancey, Day 1). When we have all the room in the world down here?

GRACE (Day 1). In the library?

LUCY (as Delancey, Day 1). Why not? *(Offering his hand)* Might I have the honor?

(Grace (Day 1) takes this mysterious stranger's hand. They waltz around the room as the music grows louder, more present, until it suddenly throws itself back into the far away ballroom with—)

LUCY (as Delancey, Day 1). *(Catching Grace's wrists)* Mrs. Hunter?

GRACE (Day 1). Yes?

LUCY (as Delancey, Day 1). You aren't wearing gloves.

GRACE (Day 1). *(Suddenly mortified)* Oh. Oh God. I must have forgotten, how embarrassing.

LUCY (as Delancey, Day 1). *(Taking her neck in his hand)* How adventurous.

Now: Grace's boudoir.

Grace (Day 1) returns Grace now. Lucy (as Delancey, Day 1) returns Lucy now. Again, it's like the scene flip never happened.

LEISURE, LABOR, LUST

GRACE. It was one of the better Fisher dinners.

LUCY. Well, that's just— great. Shall I bring Mr. Morris in now, Miss?

GRACE. Lucy! I keep meaning to ask you: How is your charity work with the Sisters of Mercy?

LUCY. Oh— wonderful! Last week we served soup to the insane.

GRACE. How kind. I must tag along with you one of these nights.

LUCY. Oh Miss, yes! You must! You can't imagine the horrors downtown. We could certainly use another lady, especially one as illustrious as you! Oh Miss, do come tonight, shall I alert the Sisters? Shall I count you in?

GRACE. Did I tell you what was on the menu at the Fisher dinner on Friday night?

LUCY. *(A horrified beat)* No you didn't.

GRACE. *(Fighting tears)* Ham cooked in champagne, broiled blue-fish, crabs in celery mayonnaise, turkey stuffed with oysters and the creamiest lima beans you could ever imagine.

LUCY. How nice. *(A silence)* Well— which dish did you have, Miss?

GRACE. Hm?

LUCY. What did you eat at the Fisher dinner, Miss? I'm dying to know.

GRACE. *(As if confessing to a crime)* Oh. I had the turkey stuffed with oysters.

LUCY. My! You wouldn't think turkey stuffed with oysters, but knowing the Fishers, I've no doubt it was decadent.

(Thunder from the storm outside cracks through the scene.)

LUCY. Listen to that! One thing I hope is that the rain doesn't make the electric lights go out. We'd be *plunged* into *darkness* and I don't want that. Perhaps I should set up some candles! With rain like this I mourn the loss of candlelight, I certainly do. But it is convenient to just flick on a light isn't it? *(She clicks the Tiffany style lamp on and off as Grace goes to the door and cautiously peers down the hall. About the lamp—)* My God it's like magic, isn't it? *(click click click)* It's more than magic, it's a miracle! An honest to God miracle. *(click click click)* I'm almost sure I could do this for hours. *(click click click)* How on earth does it work? *(Overly urgently)* Miss you must tell me, I'm dying to know, how does this electric light work?

LEISURE, LABOR, LUST

GRACE. A sewing thread.

LUCY. Really? (*Studying the lightbulb*) A sewing thread! There I was going about my business starching collars and buffing silver and then— a sewing thread lights up a room! What an age we live in!

(*Grace is not listening, still gazing intently out the exit and down the hall.*)

LUCY. The lima beans! Miss I'm dying to know: what sort of sauce was on the lima beans at the Fisher dinner? Perhaps I could suggest it to the cook if you enjoyed it. Come on, Miss! Please you *must* tell me! We won't be able to go on if you don't!

GRACE. Oh, a sort of— Hollandaise.

LUCY. You can't go wrong with a Hollandaise, you certainly can't!

(*A doorbell is heard.*)

GRACE. (*Gasp!*) Did you hear that? What was that?

LUCY. It's no doubt Delancey Morris, Miss, growing impatient in the foyer. Shall I bring him up now?

GRACE. The morning after the Fisher dinner, I'm sure Delancey Morris came calling for me too. Although because of Harry I was— that is to say, Harry wasn't.... I was unavailable.

Day 2: The Hunter dining room, at breakfast the morning after the Fisher Dinner, which, as we know, happened on Day 1.

Grace becomes GRACE (Day 2). Lucy becomes LUCY (as Harry, Day 2). The married couple face each other, sitting in two distantly placed chairs, suggesting a long dining room table. Lucy (as Harry, Day 2) is clearly depressed, flat in both physicality and vocal tone, but lucid, with a suicidal calm. Grace (Day 2), in contrast, is blissfully happy, consumed with thoughts of the mysterious man she met last night at The Fisher Dinner. Soon, the doorbell rings again.

GRACE (Day 2). The doorbell, Harry? At breakfast? Who would call on us at breakfast? It must be some sort of joke. Probably the Van Degan children. Those two are sent from the devil, they certainly are. A relief we never had any. Isn't it a *relief* we never had any children? Just ignore it, Harry. (*Tiny beat*) Oh but you know what? I did hand my card out quite

LEISURE, LABOR, LUST

liberally last night at the Fisher dinner. Perhaps someone *is* calling on me at this early hour. It wouldn't be out of the question. (*Leaping up, rushing to the exit, sure it's Delancey*) I'd better see who—

LUCY (as Harry, Day 2). Grace?

GRACE (Day 2). Yes, Harry darling?

LUCY (as Harry, Day 2). I'd like to kill myself.

(*Grace (Day 2) freezes at this.*)

LUCY (as Harry, Day 2). So, I think you should move into a hotel. The Stentorian Hotel. I've booked you a room there. Please use it. Stay there. Until this passes.

GRACE (Day 2). Harry— we're *married*. How will that look if I move into a hotel and you remain here?

LUCY (as Harry, Day 2). Look? To who?

GRACE (Day 2). *Who?* The Beauforts, the Van Degans, the Van Der Luydens, the Fishers, the Dagonets, the Royalls, the little Georgie Howards. They'd gossip about us until their tongues rotted off. Evangeline Beaufort gossips a blue vein out her forehead at even the slightest *sartorial* transgression— imagine if I moved into a hotel.

LUCY (as Harry, Day 2). Before you go—

GRACE (Day 2). I'm not going anywhere, Harry—

LUCY (as Harry, Day 2). —and before this thing takes hold—

GRACE (Day 2). That spa upstate has electric baths! And gardening, lots of gardening! And they motor about in cars which they say does wonders for the nerves! Let's give that spa a try, huh?

LUCY (as Harry, Day 2). There is something I want to tell you.

GRACE (Day 2). Oh good God Harry.

LUCY (as Harry, Day 2). There was once, when we first met. We strolled through the park—

GRACE (Day 2). (*Increasingly enraged*) Can't we just have breakfast like everyone else!?

LUCY (as Harry, Day 2). We didn't say much to each other— we never really have.

GRACE (Day 2). (*Exploding in anger*) Oh for God's sake exhibit some self-control for once in your life! (*Beat. With quick composure Grace (Day*

LEISURE, LABOR, LUST

2) returns to her chair and then, ever so sweetly, says—) I mean, go on, darling.

LUCY (as Harry, Day 2). I was terribly nervous. Nervous you'd dislike me, or had heard rumors about me, or that you'd find me boring or ugly or stupid or, that I guess, you'd see that I wasn't— uh. That I'm not who I— appear to be. But then, at the pond near 59th Street, when you didn't think I was looking, you reached between your breasts and you grabbed the top of your corset, which must have been slipping or ill-fitting, and you yanked it up, hard.

GRACE (Day 2). I did?

LUCY (as Harry, Day 2). Yeah. So what I wanted to say was: I loved it when you did that. Grace?

GRACE (Day 2). Yes?

LUCY (as Harry, Day 2). Goodbye.

Now: Grace's boudoir.

Lucy (as Harry, Day 2) returns to Lucy. Grace (Day 2) returns to Grace, who is now hunting wildly through the mountain of letters, condolences, notes and envelopes on her desk for something very specific. The tension from the previous breakfast scene becomes the tension in the boudoir.

LUCY. I don't know that turkey with oysters would have been my first choice.

(Grace digs through the letters even more feverishly. Lucy masks her helplessness by keeping the conversation on food.) I would probably have gone for the crabs. I wonder, were the oysters in their own liquor or just soaked in butter?

GRACE. *(Finding the letter she was hunting for)* Ah HA!

LUCY. I'd like to think liquor.

GRACE. This is the letter Delancey Morris delivered that morning at breakfast. *(Reading)* "Dear Mrs. Hunter, please accept my invitation to Wallack's Theater tonight."

LUCY. I'll bet there was nutmeg in there somewhere.

GRACE. *(Reading)* "Mine is box number 13."

LEISURE, LABOR, LUST

LUCY. That's *my* secret ingredient, too.

GRACE. (*Reading*) "I'll look for you at 8:30. Oh and Grace---"

LUCY. When in doubt— nutmeg!

GRACE. (*Reading*) "Don't bother with the gloves. Sincerely Yours," — *sincerely mine?* "Delancey Morris." Now that's a letter I need to destroy. This happened to me? *Me?* A miserable, middle-aged woman?

LUCY. (*Suddenly angry*) *Miserable? You?!* (*Reigning it in*) That is to say— *Middle-aged?! You?!* Why, I'm a goat's uncle if you're a day over twenty, Miss.

GRACE. The day you took my response to Mr. Morris—
(*The doorbell rings again.*)

LUCY. (*Delancey waiting very present in her mind*) Miss!

GRACE. —you remember it was like—
(*Grace rings the little bell on her desk and Lucy physically rewinds and flips to—*)

Day 2: Grace's boudoir, right after that previous breakfast scene with Harry.

Lucy becomes Lucy (Day 2) and Grace becomes Grace (Day 2).

LUCY (Day 2). You rang, Miss?

GRACE (Day 2). Take a letter! On pigeon's blood!

LUCY (Day 2). On *what*, Miss?

GRACE (Day 2). Pigeon's blood, white ink.

LUCY (Day 2). I don't—

GRACE (Day 2). Oh good heavens dear girl—
(*Grace (Day 2) procures pigeon's blood colored paper and white ink as she explains the next bit as if to a dimwitted child.*)

GRACE (Day 2). Look: An RSVP to dinner: Blonde with charcoal black. For a weekend visit: Eggshell with indigo. But for an RSVP to the theater, especially in spring, pigeon's blood stationery and alabaster ink. It's those little peep holes into people that matter the very most!

LUCY (Day 2). You want me to *write a letter* for you?

LEISURE, LABOR, LUST

GRACE (Day 2). (*Ignoring her, dictating*) “Dear Mr. Morris. I would be delighted to join you in your box tonight. How kind of you to think of me. I await this evening on tenterhooks with baited breaths and I don’t know something like that. Sincerely Yours, Grace Hunter.” Did you get that?

LUCY (Day 2). (*Writing*)...tenterhooks, baited breaths...

GRACE (Day 2). And now I must ask you for one thing, Lucy. One very important thing before we send this letter?

LUCY (Day 2). Yes, Miss.

GRACE (Day 2). Your *discretion*. Now I know you’re *Irish* but do you know what *discretion* means?

LUCY (Day 2). (*Gritting her teeth*) Yes, Miss.

GRACE (Day 2). Good. Prepare my blood-red brocaded gown tonight would you. The one with the plunging breast. You’ll help me into it after my bath, won’t you? Oh I simply must take another bath before tonight, there won’t be time after dinner. Dinner. Oh I’ll have to tell Harry I don’t know what at dinner. What should I tell him, what do you think?

LUCY (Day 2). I wouldn’t know, Miss.

GRACE (Day 2). Well what do you do at night?

LUCY (Day 2). Charity work.

GRACE (Day 2). Perfect, I’ll tell him charity work. Thank you Lucy.

LUCY (Day 2). (*Uneasy, now an accomplice*) Very well, Miss. (*She turns to go—*)

GRACE (Day 2). Lucy?

LUCY (Day 2). Yes, Miss?

GRACE (Day 2). Have you ever... had someone who just knocked the breath right out of you?

LUCY (Day 2). (*Beat*) Yes.

GRACE (Day 2). (*Like a school girl*) Oh! Who?

LUCY (Day 2). My husband.

GRACE (Day 2). (*Dismissing this answer*) Oh no no, I mean—someone who—you couldn’t even look at, who—who you *couldn’t even look at*.

LUCY (Day 2). Like I say, Miss, my husband.

GRACE (Day 2). (*A condescending scoff*) Well I find that very hard to believe.

LUCY (Day 2). Well he doesn’t do it anymore.

LEISURE, LABOR, LUST

GRACE (Day 2). Of course not because he's your *husband*.

LUCY (Day 2). No because he's dead.

GRACE (Day 2). Oh. Lucy, I'm. Sorry. But— *how?*

LUCY (Day 2). On Rivington Street there's bad water.

GRACE (Day 2). What?

LUCY (Day 2). Drinking water, Miss? On Rivington Street? It's bad.

GRACE (Day 2). Is it?

LUCY (as Day 2). Very bad. It killed my husband and almost killed my son. It's a miracle I've still got him. See you at dinner, Miss.

Day 2: The Hunter dining Room, dinner, later that evening.

Lucy (Day 2) becomes Lucy (as Harry, Day 2) who is no longer depressed and calm, but manic, frighteningly quick to respond, laser-focused. He knows something now (how and what he knows is revealed in Labor) and so has the upper hand. Grace (Day 2) is laser-focused, too— on establishing her lie for the evening and exiting the house as quickly as possible.

GRACE (as Day 2). Harry?

LUCY (as Harry, Day 2). Yes, treasure?

GRACE (Day 2). I'm going out tonight.

LUCY (as Harry, Day 2). Oh? Where?

GRACE (Day 2). I'll be attending a Sisters of Mercy meeting.

LUCY (as Harry, Day 2). Uh huh. What's that?

GRACE (Day 2). Well they do *good*. They provide aid to New York's poor and infirm—you know: orphans, widows, the insane. Lucy volunteers there. Why, she tells me that when a horse dies downtown, they just heap its corpse atop the rest of the garbage to rot out there in the street for all to see. Can you imagine? Anyway, today, as luck would have it, I received one of their mailers soliciting new recruits. I thought, Grace Hunter, you've been blessed with all the privilege and wealth in the world— it's time to give back. So I sent word to the Sisters that I'd like to attend. The meeting is at 8:30 and will likely run *long, long* into the night.

LUCY (as Harry, Day 2). No no— (*Pointing to her neck*) *That*.

LEISURE, LABOR, LUST

GRACE (Day 2). My necklace?

LUCY (as Harry, Day 2). Yeah.

GRACE (Day 2). It's my necklace. You gave it to me.

LUCY (as Harry, Day 2). Oh yeah. When?

GRACE (Day 2). In Paris, Harry— on our honeymoon.

LUCY (as Harry, day 2). Oh yeah— our honeymoon. What a stumbling, idiotic farce that was!

GRACE (Day 2). Harry—!

LUCY (as Harry, Day 2). And that's opal, isn't it?

GRACE (Day 2). Yes.

LUCY (as Harry, Day 2). Did you know, Grace, that opal eats itself?

GRACE (Day 2). Does it?

LUCY (as Harry, Day 2). Yeah. It does. So? What do you think about that?

GRACE (Day 2). I don't think anything about it.

LUCY (as Harry, Day 2). Come on now, what do you think about it? I spent all that money all that time ago on something that is, as we live and breathe, now *dying*.

GRACE (Day 2). Well, I imagine, if that happens, it won't be for a long, long time.

LUCY (as Harry, Day 2). It's not a matter of if, Grace, it's a matter of when. One day, that necklace will simply—poof!—disappear.

GRACE (Day 2). Harry?

LUCY (as Harry, Day 2). Yeah?

GRACE (Day 2). Stop saying "yeah."

LUCY (as Harry, Day 2). Sure.

GRACE (Day 2). Don't say "sure," either.

LUCY (as Harry, Day 2). Why not?

GRACE (Day 2). Because it's *common*.

LUCY (as Harry, Day 2). You got it! Now! What were you saying about the Ladies of Charity?

GRACE (Day 2). Sisters of Mercy. I'll be attending a meeting tonight.

LUCY (as Harry, Day 2). Well, that is just great. Here we are up to our collars in dollars while little Bowery children starve to death. Doesn't seem fair, does it?

LEISURE, LABOR, LUST

GRACE (Day 2). Just what I thought.

LUCY (as Harry, Day 2). I'll go with you.

GRACE (Day 2). You can't.

LUCY (as Harry, Day 2). Why not?

GRACE (Day 2). *Sisters of Mercy.*

LUCY (as Harry, Day 2). Ah. Maybe there's a men's version.

GRACE (Day 2). Maybe. Well, I suddenly have an icepick headache.

LUCY (as Harry, Day 2). Oh no. I hope it clears up in time for Delancey.

GRACE (Day 2). What?

LUCY (as Harry, Day 2). I said I hope it clears up in time for the Sisters of Mercy. Now remind me because I always forget— what sort of flower might a man wear in his lapel if attending the theater?

Now: Grace's boudoir.

Grace (Day 2) returns to Grace. Lucy (as Harry, Day 2) returns to Lucy.

GRACE. He knew.

Day 2: The Hunter Dining Room, back to the dinner scene.

Grace becomes Grace (Day 2). Lucy becomes Lucy (as Harry, Day 2) both returning to the dining room table staging.

GRACE (Day 2). The *theater*? Why do you ask that?

LUCY (as Harry, Day 2). Oh just boning up. Don't tell me don't tell me don't tell me— a *gardenia*! A *white gardenia*! Am I right? Oh I'm not right, I can tell by the look on your face. Alright hang on a minute—

Now: Grace's boudoir.

Grace (Day 2) returns to Grace now. Lucy (as Harry, Day 2) returns to Lucy now.

GRACE. How did he find out? You told him, didn't you?

LEISURE, LABOR, LUST

LUCY. No.

GRACE. You were the only one who knew. I told you when I got home from the Fisher dinner Friday night. I told you in the bath.

LUCY. Yes. And I didn't say a word, Miss.

Day 2: The Hunter dining room, back to the dinner scene

Grace becomes Grace (Day 2). Lucy becomes Lucy (as Harry, Day 2), both returning to the dining room table staging.

LUCY (as Harry, Day 2). —perhaps it's *lavender delphinium*?

Now: Grace's boudoir.

Grace (Day 2) returns to Grace now. Lucy (as Harry, Day 2) returns to Lucy now.

GRACE. You *must* have!

LUCY. I didn't.

GRACE. Then Lucy: *How did he know?*

Day 2: The Hunter dining room and the dinner scene.

Grace becomes Grace (Day 2). Lucy becomes Lucy (as Harry, Day 2), both returning again to that same dining room table staging.

LUCY (as Harry, Day 2). Could it be I've been donning the incorrect color and species right there on my jacket all these years? I must have looked like a *madman*! *Is* it lavender delphinium? *Men can wear lavender* now, you know, surely you read that in *The Times*.

Now: Grace's boudoir

Grace (Day 2) returns to Grace now. Lucy (as Harry, Day 2) returns to Lucy now.

LEISURE, LABOR, LUST

GRACE. It doesn't matter.

Day 2: The Hunter dining room, the dinner.

Grace becomes Grace (Day 2). Lucy becomes Lucy (as Harry, Day 2), back to that table.

GRACE (Day 2). It doesn't matter.

LUCY (as Harry, Day 2). Doesn't matter?! It's *all* that matters! It's those little peep holes into people that matter the very most. Or is it a red carnation? Well now I'm stumped, which is it, Grace? You may as well tell me.

GRACE (Day 2): *(Beat)* It's a white gardenia, Harry. You're fine.

LUCY (as Harry, Day 2). Phew! Thank heavens! *(Beat)* You'll tell Delancey hello, won't you?

GRACE (Day 2). You're mad.

LUCY (as Harry, Day 2). You'll give him my very best?

GRACE (Day 2). You're absolutely mad, Harry, you should be locked up!

Now: Grace's boudoir.

Grace (Day 2) returns to Grace now. Lucy (as Harry, Day 2) returns to Lucy now, who goes to the lamp and clicks the light switch on and off several times.

LUCY. On. Off. On. Off. On. Off. *(Quickly)* Onoff.

GRACE. Did I tell you what was playing at Wallack's Theater Saturday night?

LUCY. What was playing?

GRACE. *Simone*, by a Frenchman named Eugene Brieux. It was awful.

LUCY. What was it about?

GRACE. Well, it began with the murder of an adulterous wife.

LUCY. *(An uncontrollable laugh, then a quick correction)* Uh huh.

LEISURE, LABOR, LUST

GRACE. The husband shoots her, but then feels terribly guilty and depressed about it and so shoots himself.

LUCY. Intriguing!

GRACE. He lives, but loses all memory of the incident, despite the fact that he shot himself in the heart.

LUCY. Not the head?

GRACE. No, it was the heart, I've no doubt. Anyway it was terribly overwrought and utterly implausible and much of it was told in flashbacks.

LUCY. A cheap device!

Day 2: Wallack's Theater, shortly after the previous dinner scene with Harry.

Grace and Lucy become the actors in Simone, by Eugene Brieux. They act out the following series of highly melodramatic and exaggerated frozen poses in succession. These poses, in essence, are the first act of Brieux's play. The poses should be big, wild and wacky, with a vocalization attached to each one. They are:

Pose #1) Lucy (as actor) woo-ing Grace (as actor)

Pose #2) Lucy (as actor) kissing Grace (as actor)

Pose #3) Lucy (as actor) making love to Grace (as actor)

GRACE (as actor) then becomes Grace (Day 2) waiting nervously in the theater box. Her eyes dart. Simultaneously, LUCY (as actor) becomes Lucy (as Delancey, Day 2). He's late, probably intentionally so. He smoothly enters the box and sits next to Grace (Day 2). The following exchange should be hushed, without much eye contact, rather looking out at the "play." Both are aware that they are very much in public.

GRACE (Day 2). Mr. Morris.

LUCY (as Delancey, Day 2). Mrs. Hunter.

GRACE (Day 2). I thought for a moment you weren't coming. Did you have any trouble?

LUCY (as Delancey, Day 2). Only a miserable rainstorm.

LEISURE, LABOR, LUST

GRACE (Day 2). Seems it won't ever stop raining.

Grace (Day 2) and Lucy (as Delancey, Day 2) leap up to become actors in the "play," continuing with their Simone poses:

Pose#4) Lucy (as actor) catches Grace (as actor) in the act of adultery.

Pose #5) Lucy (as actor) holds hands up to God in a "Why?!" gesture as Grace (as actor) falls to her knees begging for forgiveness.

Pose #6) Lucy (as actor) angrily points an accusing finger at Grace (as actor) who collapses to the floor in fear.

Grace (as actor) then becomes Grace (Day 2) and Lucy (as actor) becomes Lucy (as Delancey, Day 2) again watching the "play" from the box.

GRACE (Day 2). Mr. Morris?

LUCY (as Delancey, Day 2). Delancey.

GRACE (Day 2). Delancey. I pride myself on knowing everyone who's anyone in New York. But I don't know you.

LUCY (as Delancey, Day 2). How embarrassing that must be for you.

GRACE (Day 2). And though I'm sure I could inquire as to who you are and where you came from and what your designs upon me might be, I haven't. Of course, I could simply ask my husband who you are— as you say you and Harry are so close.

LUCY (as Delancey, Day 2). Your curiosity must be killing you.

GRACE (Day 2). It is.

LUCY (as Delancey, Day 2). Then why haven't you asked him?

Grace (Day 2) and Lucy (as Delancey, Day 2) again leap up and become actors in the "play," with another set of Simone poses:

Pose #7) Lucy (as actor) brandishing a finger gun at Grace (as actor) who runs!

Pose #8) Lucy (as actor) shooting Grace (as actor) who takes a bullet in the chest.

LEISURE, LABOR, LUST

Pose #9) Lucy (as actor) holding Grace (as actor)'s lifeless head in hands.

Grace (as actor) then becomes Grace (Day 2). Lucy (as actor) then becomes Lucy (as Delancey, Day 2) again watching the “play” from the box as before.

GRACE (Day 2). Well—

Grace (Day 2) and Lucy (as Delancey, Day 2) again leap up to become the actors in the “play.”

Pose #10) Lucy (as actor) is regretting murdering Grace (as actor) whose head is still slumped over.

Pose #11) Lucy (as actor) holds the finger gun to his chest and fires.

Pose #12) Lucy (as actor) falls over dead on to the already dead Grace (as actor)'s lifeless head/upper body.

Grace (as actor) then becomes Grace (Day 2) and Lucy (as actor) becomes Lucy (as Delancey, Day 2) again watching the “play” from the box.

GRACE (Day 2). Because I don't want to pull a single thread.

LUCY (as Delancey, Day 2). Well then I won't breathe a word.

GRACE (Day 2). Thank you.

LUCY (as Delancey, Day 2). Sure.

(They watch the “play” in silence, reacting in tandem with a gasp! or an “oh” to an awful moment or hackneyed line of dialogue.)

LUCY (as Delancey, Day 2). I do have one question about you, Mrs. Hunter— before we refrain from asking them.

GRACE (Day 2). Yes?

LUCY (as Delancey, Day 2). Why did you wear gloves? I specifically asked you not to.

GRACE (Day 2). I—

LUCY (as Delancey, Day 2). Here.

LEISURE, LABOR, LUST

(Lucy (as Delancey, Day 2) presents her hand and Grace (Day 2) hesitantly lays hers on top of it. Lucy (as Delancey, Day 2) then reaches his other hand around and pulls Grace (Day 2)'s glove off finger...by...finger...by...finger...by...finger. With each glove-finger pull, both take a restrained, but impassioned inhale. Once the whole hand is free, Lucy (as Delancey, Day 2) slides the loosened glove over Grace (Day 2)'s hand, freeing it completely. By the end, it's as if both have had a nearly silent, public orgasm, right in the theater. NOTE: There should not be any actual glove involved here, just two bare hands. A real glove undermines the sexiness of the scene. Just pantomime it, it's much better skin on skin.)

GRACE (Day 2). Thank you, Mr. Morris.

LUCY (as Delancey, Day 2). Thank *you*, Mrs. Hunter.

Now: Grace's boudoir.

Grace (Day 2) returns to Grace. Lucy (as Delancey, Day 2) returns to Lucy. Grace immediately begins pacing wildly, circling her desk like a caged animal.

LUCY. You know if you ask me— which I know you didn't, but if you did— I'd say that you and Mr. Morris don't communicate very well.

GRACE. We don't need to communicate. A current of understanding crackles between us.

LUCY. Uh huh. But perhaps, and forgive me for speaking out of turn, you could explain your... uh, motivations a bit more?

GRACE. Do you mean declare my feelings?

LUCY. *(Reminding her he's in the foyer!)* Why not *now*?!

GRACE. Can you imagine his reaction were I to tell him that at the moment I saw him he shred my heart to ribbons?

LUCY. I suppose that would be a bit forward.

GRACE. I may as well come after him with a gun. *(Halting abruptly in her pacing)* Lucy?

LUCY. Yes?

LEISURE, LABOR, LUST

GRACE. Do you think Mr. Morris would like a cup of tea while he waits for me in the foyer?

LUCY. I could inquire.

GRACE. Do.

(Lucy rushes out. Grace looks directly at Harry's chair, across the stage in the study. She walks to it, slowly, hesitantly. She reaches out a hand to touch it. Just as she's about to make contact, Lucy re-enters. Grace snaps away from the chair, ashamed to show any remorse, affection or longing for her husband.)

LUCY. I asked if he'd like a cup of tea, but he said no, then he said "Here," and gave me this. *(She holds out a letter.)*

GRACE. *(Snatching the letter, reading it, first hopefully, then darkly)*

"Dear Mr. Morris," Why it's from me. What on earth—? *(Reading)* "After last night's foray into bad French drama, might you be interested in assisting me in my eternal struggle to translate a book of mine into French? There's lots to be done and I am so awfully poor at translating my own work. I happen to have a room at The Stentorian Hotel on Sunday night. I'll be there at 8. Sincerely, Mrs. Grace Hunter." But— why would he be returning my letters to him?

(During the following exchange, Lucy pulls a long white bandage out of her dress pocket, wraps it under her jaw and knots it at the top of her head, a la Jacob Marley. She then takes a paintbrush from the desk and paints her teeth black. She should stand as far DSC as she can, in full view of the audience. NOTE: Squeeze charcoal toothpaste into an empty tin of shoe polish. The actor should simply and without emotion paint it on until the teeth are completely blacked out. Nothing is out of ordinary for Grace yet as this is a meta-theatrical moment.)

LUCY. *(While painting her teeth black)* I wouldn't know, Miss.

GRACE. They're his to keep, I have no use for them.

LUCY. And how'd you guess he spoke French, Miss?

GRACE. A gentleman like him?! Re-reading this now... I think it's a fine letter, don't you?

LUCY. Completely fine.

GRACE. Nothing in there, really, nothing incriminating. Right?

LEISURE, LABOR, LUST

LUCY. Nothing at all! Just a simple invitation from a married woman to an unmarried man to join her alone in a hotel room to translate her novel into French!

GRACE. Happens every day!

LUCY. Do you suppose then that what he's asking is that you return the letters he wrote to *you*?

GRACE. But why? There was only *one* of any *real* significance and I'm sure I've misplaced it—*(Immediately pulling from her bodice)* Ah here it is! "Dearest Mrs. Hunter, what a privilege it would be to contribute to your body of work in my own small way. Although my French is surely not what it should be, j'aimerais obtenir mes mains sur vos pages." I would love to get my hands on your pages. *(Suddenly struck with enormous guilt)* "I'll be at The Stentorian at 8. Sincerely, Delancey." *(Pulling herself together again)* Nothing to worry about there.

LUCY. *(Sitting in Harry's chair)* Oh no nothing, nothing at all, but perhaps I could cast it into the fireplace anyway.
(Grace finally sees how Lucy looks, teeth missing, head and jaw bandaged. She is horrified at this vision of her husband, this vision of—)

GRACE. *(Horror-struck)* Harry!

Day 3: The Hunter dining room at dinner.

Lucy becomes Lucy (as Harry, Day 3). Grace becomes Grace (Day 3). The two are having dinner, again, the night after Grace and Delancey's night at the theater, again at that long dining room table. Lucy (as Harry, Day 3)'s maniacal mood has gone, replaced now with a strange, sad clarity. Lucy (as Harry, Day 3) keeps her lips closed, hiding the missing teeth, until indicated.

GRACE (Day 3). Harry?

LUCY (as Harry, Day 3). **silence**

GRACE (Day 3). Are you in pain? Can't you speak?

LUCY (as Harry, Day 3). **silence**

GRACE (Day 3). Harry you—you can't just sit at the dinner table like that with— with no explanation!

LEISURE, LABOR, LUST

LUCY (as Harry, Day 3). **silence**

GRACE (Day 3). Alright well if you won't speak then I will. After an utterly uplifting experience with the Sisters of Mercy last night I have come to the conclusion that charity work is my calling second only to writing novels and so I have accepted another engagement with the Sisters tonight. We'll be going to Mulberry Street to hand out oranges. Believe it or not, there are people on Mulberry Street who have never seen an orange. *(Beat as Grace works to keep her composure despite her husband's strange bandages, inexplicable silence and strange demeanor.)* And so after distributing the oranges to the poor, I'll be spending the night with the Brooklyn Beechers. It's been so long since I've seen the Beechers and I thought, kill two birds with one stone. I'll be leaving this evening at... eight...oh— Harry you're... bleeding.

(Lucy (as Harry, Day 3)'s wraps are now bleeding through. Lucy (as Harry, Day 3) smiles sadly. He has no teeth. He has pulled them all out. Grace (Day 3) is horrified, rises and backs away as Lucy (as Harry, Day 3) approaches her.)

LUCY (as Harry, Day 3). The problem wasn't my brain, Grace.

GRACE (Day 3). How could you— ?!

LUCY (as Harry, Day 3). It was my teeth.

GRACE (Day 3). Don't you come near me.

LUCY (as Harry, Day 3). I'm cured.

GRACE (Day 3). Get away from me— get away!

LUCY (as Harry, Day 3). Please don't go with him. You don't know what you're doing! It will be alright now!

(Grace (Day 3) and Lucy (as Harry, Day 3) physically grapple, nearly pulling each other to the floor. But the scene instantly flips back to the boudoir.)

Now: Grace's boudoir

Grace (as Grace, Day 3) returns to Grace now. Lucy (as Harry, Day 3) returns to Grace now.

GRACE. *(Desperately romantic)* The air was thick with honey-suckle—!

LEISURE, LABOR, LUST

LUCY. There were nights Grace, when Harry would go to your door and knock.

GRACE. A spying maid?! Lucy, you're a cliché in an apron!

LUCY. You never let him in.

GRACE. (*Angrily*) Of course not! A married couple sharing a bed? It's uncivilized! (*Desperately romantic again*) The air was thick with honey-suckle—!

LUCY. He only wanted your companionship. You were married ten years. Did you never have a passing thought, a small suspicion that maybe Harry was—

GRACE. Don't say it, Lucy, don't you dare!

LUCY. (*Beat*) Yes Miss.

GRACE. (*Aggressively romantic*) The air was thick with honey-suckle! Which I noted as I ran out of the dining room, down the stairs, out of the house and straight up Fifth Avenue to the Stentorian Hotel. Ran on foot! Nearly tripped on a charwoman!

Day 3: The Stentorian Hotel, about forty-five minutes after the scene with Harry's teeth reveal.

Lucy becomes Lucy (as Concierge, Day 3). Grace becomes Grace (as Grace, Day 3). She is breathless, frantic, erratic and terribly nervous. Lucy (as Concierge, Day 3) has an all-knowing, gleeful suspicion.

LUCY (as Concierge, Day 3). Welcome to the Stentorian. How may I help you?

GRACE (Day 3). I have a room. Under Grace Hunter. I'm only using the room to translate a book of mine into French.

LUCY (as Concierge, Day 3). (*He might even recognize her...*) Alright. (*Looking at an imaginary reservation book*) I don't have a Grace Hunter. I do have a Harry Hunter. He made the reservation just this morning for you. Might that be yours?

GRACE (Day 3). (*Tiny, heartbreaking beat.*) Yes. That's mine.

LUCY (as Concierge, Day 3). Alright. (*She hands Grace (Day 3) a key, ever so ceremoniously.*)

LEISURE, LABOR, LUST

LUCY (as Concierge, Day 3). Will you be needing anything else, Madam?

GRACE (Day 3). No. Uh, actually yes. Champagne. And I'm expecting a visitor—a translator—the translator who's translating my book into French. Send him up as well. And nevermind about the champagne. Actually nevermind about the whole thing, I don't think I'll take the room after all, I really should be going home right now thank you for your time goodbye.

(Lucy (as Concierge, Day 3) instantly becomes Lucy (as Delancey, Day 3) entering the Stentorian. He's late again, probably intentionally so, but there he is.)

LUCY (as Delancey, Day 3). Mrs. Hunter.

GRACE (Day 3). *(immediately weakened)* Oh— Mr. Morris, hello. I was just— uh. Hi.

LUCY (as Delancey, Day 3). Sorry I'm late. I am feeling particularly *French* tonight, how 'bout you? Concierge? Send up two bottles of champagne to whatever room it is she's got. Shall we?

They shall, as Lucy (as Delancey, Day 3) takes Grace (Day 3)'s hand and leads her to the hotel room.

Now: Grace's boudoir.

Grace (Day 3) returns to Grace. Grace's next speech is a dissociative recollection, a performed memory, of her sexual encounter with Delancey Morris in the hotel room at The Stentorian.

Simultaneously, Lucy (as Delancey, Day 3) becomes Lucy (as Harry, Day 3) who matter-of-factly drags a chair to a good spot from which to hang himself in his study.

NOTE: This scene blends Day 3 and now: While Grace is in the present recalling her night with Delancey, embodying both herself and him in dialogue, another play within a play. Across the stage, we watch Harry on day 3 killing himself. On the Leisure timeline, these two events were simultaneous which, of course, is the root of Grace's guilt.

LEISURE, LABOR, LUST

GRACE. (*Reliving, walking through it*) Old door. Old key. Click. Old brass. Grimy brass. Carpet. Shoes— mine. Streaky window pane. Wallpaper. Carpet. Desk leg. Desk leg. Desk leg. Desk leg. (*as Delancey*) “Nice room.” (*As herself*) “Nice desk.” (*as Delancey*) “It is a nice desk.” (*Lucy (as Harry, Day 3) tosses an imaginary noose up toward the ceiling, over an imaginary beam or light fixture strong enough to hold his weight.*)

GRACE. (*In a growing ecstasy*): An electric light. An electric light. An electric light. (*As Delancey*) “Mrs. Hunter.” (*As herself*) “Mr. Morris.” (*As Delancey*) “Finally, we have a moment alone.” (*As herself*) “Hopefully more than a moment.” (*As Delancey*) “How long do you have?” (*As herself*) “As long as I want.” (*As Delancey*) “And what about Harry?” (*As herself*) “We won’t think of him. Will we?” (*Lucy (as Harry, Day 3) steps onto the chair, puts his head through the imaginary noose, securing it tightly.*)

GRACE. (*Even more out-of-body*) A faint red lamp. Damask curtains. Red. Gold. Musty. Dusty. Dusty light. Streaky pane. Wallpaper seam. Old damask. A painting. Round frame. A sea scape. A glare on it. Streaky pane. City shrieks. Not a nice room. But alright. (*She pushes all the letters, ink, bell and pens off the desk, onto the floor and climbs up on the desk as if it’s a bed.*) The bed— grimy brass.

(*Lucy (as Harry, Day 3) steels himself, preparing to step off the chair, to end his pain once and for all. He looks out.*)

GRACE. (*As herself*) “Who are you?” (*As Delancey*) “Nobody. No one.” Fading light. Dusty, fading light. Dust just... Orbiting there. Before I return again to life, to rain, to dull dark dawns, before the crying goodbye, before I stagger into darkness and board again the fixed rail of habit, I’ll drink...the sweet...oblivion!¹

(*Lucy (as Harry, Day 3) jumps from the chair, hanging himself, with a sharp GASP! At that very moment, Grace sexually climaxes with the same sharp GASP! If the climax and death jump are timed perfectly in sync, this*

¹ “Before I return to life... sweet oblivion” is from the poem *Terminus*, by Edith Wharton, written in 1909, thought to be about her relationship with Morton Fullerton.

LEISURE, LABOR, LUST

moment is devastating. Very quickly, Lucy (as Harry, Day 3) returns to Lucy.

LUCY. Miss?

GRACE. **silence**

LUCY. Miss, maybe it would be better if I just— sent Mr. Morris away. He'll understand— this is a trying time, an unspeakably trying time.

GRACE. Send him in.

LUCY. But I—

GRACE. Send him in.

(Lucy exits. Grace walks to the chair from which Lucy (as Harry, Day 3) leapt to his death. She wraps her arms around it, hugging it tightly. Soon, Delancey Morris' shadow darkens the doorway. Grace, sensing his presence, snaps back into composure and rushes away from the chair, landing DSR.)

GRACE. Mr. Morris, hello. I'm sorry to have kept you waiting. It's been mad around here as you can imagine. This has all been quite a surprise. Well— not for me, it wasn't a surprise for me, not really. But it was for Lucy. She found poor Harry strung up from the ceiling...hanging there... didn't she. Poor girl. But now I'm free you see. I'm free now and—
(Grace twirls around only to find Lucy there. She was the shadow all along. Delancey was never there.)

GRACE. Where's Mr. Morris?

LUCY. He left, Miss.

GRACE. Left?

LUCY. Yes.

GRACE. Did he— ? But.

(Thunder rolls, rain beats down.)

GRACE. Is it still raining, Lucy?

LUCY. Lashin' rain, Miss.

GRACE. Nothing to be done about that. Did Mr. Morris--- say anything before he left? Anything at all?

LUCY. He left before I saw him.

GRACE. Oh. *(Silence.)* Lucy?

LUCY. Yes, Miss?

GRACE. Did I tell you about *dessert* at the Fisher dinner?

LEISURE, LABOR, LUST

LUCY. No.

GRACE. There were silver platters heaped with berries— raspberries, strawberries, blackberries and sugared almonds and the very first Delaware peaches.

LUCY. How lovely.

GRACE. *(With a growing misery and desperation)* Oh and cookies, short-cake, even cornbread--- as Madeline Fisher originally hails from Louisiana, originally a Beaumarchais, if you can believe it! *Corn bread!* With golden butter in *big moist blocks!* Of course I didn't have but a nibble or two. Ladies should... only nibble.

(Grace has lowered herself to her hands and knees. She wraps her arms around her servant's legs, desperate for comfort and forgiveness.)

LUCY. *(Beat)* What happened to the dessert that wasn't eaten?

GRACE. What?

LUCY. I asked, what happened to the berries, cookies, cornbread and butter that wasn't eaten.

GRACE. *(Dismissively)* Oh I don't know, the cat, maybe.

(At this, Lucy is struck with a wave of rage, which powers her next exchange, aimed directly at Grace, on the floor throughout.)

LUCY. Oh goodness I forgot.

GRACE. What?

LUCY. Delancey Morris did say something.

GRACE. But I— I thought he left before you saw him.

LUCY. He said it *just* as he was grabbing his hat. It was just a sort of off-hand trifling remark.

GRACE. *(Wildly)* What was it!?

LUCY. *(Toying with her)* It didn't seem important at the time which is probably why it slipped my mind.

GRACE. *(Peak of desperation)* What, Lucy, what!? You've got to tell me!

LUCY. He said: Please tell Mrs. Hunter that she hasn't got diphtheria.

GRACE *(Beat)* What?

LUCY. I thought it strange too!

GRACE. But— but he must have said something more than that?

LUCY. Nothing else really, but let me see if I can remember exactly, uh, let's see, um. He said, you haven't got diphtheria—

LEISURE, LABOR, LUST

GRACE. Yes yes—

LUCY. —and you haven't got cholera either.

GRACE. *Cholera?*

LUCY. He asked that I ask you, Mrs. Hunter, if you have ever seen anyone die of cholera?

GRACE. Uh— no.

LUCY. *(Beginning like a mother to a child, but increasingly impassioned, wild and accusatory)* Ah well he didn't think so so he told me to tell you that when someone dies of cholera their blood turns thick like clotted cream and the skin goes black and if you're lucky, he said, you're dead by sun up. He said you aren't poor— my God, you're nearly suffocating in money! You aren't or infirm or crippled. You aren't blind or deaf. You aren't an Italian living in the dump, he said, you aren't a rag-pickin' Jew, you aren't an African or even a filthy, brutish, drunken Irish, saints be praised for that. You haven't got consumption or a dying child to nurse—you haven't any children at all, have you? You haven't newspapers on your feet instead of shoes. You haven't got to work, you haven't got to *beg* for work, you haven't got to steal or gamble or cheat or kill. He said the only time you starve is when you're having a laugh at a dinner party. "Sell a hat pin, feed a family!" he said, which I got a chuckle out of as I thought it very clever! And then, Miss, his face went dark— oh and what a handsome face it is, Miss, dark eyes, heavy brow, lips full enough to rest your head and dream upon, I don't blame you a bit for pining over that face, not a bit! And if I'm not mistaken, he said—! *(Lucy lunges at Grace on the floor, maybe she's going to hit her or even kill her? But she instead takes her mistress' head in her hands.)* Take care, Mrs. Hunter. *(Lucy lowers herself and holds Grace's head to her breast. Grace allows it, letting go.)* Well. There's loads to be done. Is there anything else, Miss?

GRACE. Oh... no no. Thank you, Lucy.

(Lucy heads for the exit, leaving Grace still on the floor. Lucy halts at—)

GRACE. He vacillated like the moon, didn't he?

LUCY. Who?

GRACE. Harry.

LUCY. Oh--- I suppose he did.

GRACE. Like the moon. How romantic...

LEISURE, LABOR, LUST

LUCY. *(Small beat)* Good night, Miss.

GRACE. Good night, Lucy.

(Lucy exits, leaving Grace alone.)

LIGHTS.

END Part I.

***THE PLAY IS NOT OVER!! TO FIND OUT HOW IT ENDS--
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