

# **THE INTRUDER**

by

MAURICE MAETERLINCK

## CHARACTERS

The Three Daughters  
The Grandfather  
The Father  
The Uncle  
The Servant

*A dimly lighted room in an old country-house. A door on the right, a door on the left, and a small concealed door in a corner. At the back, stained-glass windows, in which the color green predominates, and a glass door opening on to a terrace. A Dutch clock in one corner. A lamp lighted.*

THE THREE DAUGHTERS

Come here, grandfather. Sit down under the lamp.

THE GRANDFATHER

There does not seem to me to be much light here.

THE FATHER

Shall we go on to the terrace, or stay in the room?

THE UNCLE

Would it not be better to stay here? It has rained the whole week, and the nights are damp and cold.

THE ELDEST DAUGHTER

Still the stars are shining.

THE UNCLE

Ah! stars -- that's nothing.

THE GRANDFATHER

We had better stay here. One never knows what may happen.

THE FATHER

There is no longer any cause for anxiety. The danger is past, and she is saved....

THE GRANDFATHER

I fancy she is not going on well....

THE FATHER

Why do you say that?

THE GRANDFATHER

I have heard her speak.

THE FATHER

But the doctors assure us we may be easy....

THE UNCLE

You know quite well that your father-in-law likes to alarm us needlessly.

THE GRANDFATHER

I do not look at these things as you others do.

THE UNCLE

You ought to rely on us, then, who can see. She looked very well this afternoon. She is sleeping quietly now; and we are not going to spoil, without any reason, the first comfortable evening that luck has thrown in our way.... It seems to me we have a perfect right to be easy, and even to laugh a little, this evening, without apprehension.

THE FATHER

That's true; this is the first time I have felt at home with my family since this terrible confinement.

THE UNCLE

When once illness has come into a house, it is as though a stranger had forced himself into the family circle.

THE FATHER

And then you understood, too, that you should count on no one outside the family.

THE UNCLE

You are quite right.

THE GRANDFATHER

Why could I not see my poor daughter to-day?

THE UNCLE

You know quite well -- the doctor forbade it.

THE GRANDFATHER

I do not know what to think....

THE UNCLE

It is absurd to worry.

THE GRANDFATHER

*(pointing to the door on the left)*

She cannot hear us?

THE FATHER

We shall not talk too loud; besides, the door is very thick, and the Sister of Mercy is with her, and she is sure to warn us if we are making too much noise.

THE GRANDFATHER

*(pointing to the door on the right)*  
He cannot hear us?

THE FATHER

No, no.

THE GRANDFATHER

He is asleep?

THE FATHER

I suppose so.

THE GRANDFATHER

Someone had better go and see.

THE UNCLE

The little one would cause me more anxiety than your wife. It is now several weeks since he was born, and he has scarcely stirred. He has not cried once all the time! He is like a wax doll.

THE GRANDFATHER

I think he will be deaf -- dumb too, perhaps -- the usual result of a marriage between cousins....

*A reproving silence.*

THE FATHER

I could almost wish him ill for the suffering he has caused his mother.

THE UNCLE

Do be reasonable; it is not the poor little thing's fault. He is quite alone in the room?

THE FATHER

Yes; the doctor does not wish him to stay in his mother's room any longer.

THE UNCLE

But the nurse is with him?

THE FATHER

No; she has gone to rest a little; she has well deserved it these last few days. Ursula, just go and see if he is asleep.

THE ELDEST DAUGHTER

Yes, father.

*THE THREE SISTERS get up, and go into the room on the right, hand in hand.*

THE FATHER

When will your sister come?

THE UNCLE

I think she will come about nine.

THE FATHER

It is past nine. I hope she will come this evening, my wife is so anxious to see her.

THE UNCLE

She is certain to come. This will be the first time she has been here?

THE FATHER

She has never been into the house.

THE UNCLE

It is very difficult for her to leave her convent.

THE FATHER

Will she be alone?

THE UNCLE

I expect one of the nuns will come with her. They are not allowed to go out alone.

THE FATHER

But she is the Superior.

THE UNCLE

The rule is the same for all.

THE GRANDFATHER

Do you not feel anxious?

THE UNCLE

Why should we feel anxious? What's the good of harping on that? There is nothing more to fear.

THE GRANDFATHER

Your sister is older than you?

THE UNCLE

She is the eldest of us all.

THE GRANDFATHER

I do not know what ails me; I feel uneasy. I wish your sister were here.

THE UNCLE

She will come; she promised to.

THE GRANDFATHER

I wish this evening were over!

*THE THREE DAUGHTERS come in again.*

THE FATHER

He is asleep?

THE ELDEST DAUGHTER

Yes, father; very sound.

THE UNCLE

What shall we do while we are waiting?

THE GRANDFATHER

Waiting for what?

THE UNCLE

Waiting for our sister.

THE FATHER

You see nothing coming, Ursula?

THE ELDEST DAUGHTER

*(at the window)*

Nothing, father.

THE FATHER

Not in the avenue? Can you see the avenue?

THE DAUGHTER

Yes, father; it is moonlight, and I can see the avenue as far as the cypress wood.

THE GRANDFATHER

And you do not see anyone?

THE DAUGHTER

No one, grandfather.

THE UNCLE

What sort of night is it?

THE DAUGHTER

Very fine. Do you hear the nightingales?

THE UNCLE

Yes, yes.

THE DAUGHTER

A little wind is rising in the avenue.

THE GRANDFATHER

A little wind in the avenue?

THE DAUGHTER

Yes; the trees are trembling a little.

THE UNCLE

I am surprised that my sister is not here yet.

THE GRANDFATHER

I cannot hear the nightingales any longer.

THE DAUGHTER

I think someone has come into the garden, grandfather.

THE GRANDFATHER

Who is it?

THE DAUGHTER

I do not know; I can see no one.

THE UNCLE

Because there is no one there.

THE DAUGHTER

There must be someone in the garden; the nightingales have suddenly ceased singing.

THE GRANDFATHER

But I do not hear anyone coming.

THE DAUGHTER

Someone must be passing by the pond, because the swans are scared.

ANOTHER DAUGHTER

All the fishes in the pond are diving suddenly.

THE FATHER

You cannot see anyone?

THE DAUGHTER

No one, father.

THE FATHER

But the pond lies in the moonlight....

THE DAUGHTER

Yes; I can see that the swans are scared.

THE UNCLE

I am sure it is my sister who is scaring them. She must have come in by the little gate.

THE FATHER

I cannot understand why the dogs do not bark.

THE DAUGHTER

I can see the watch-dog right at the back of his kennel. The swans are crossing to the other bank!...

THE UNCLE

They are afraid of my sister. I will go and see.

*(He calls)*

Sister! sister! Is that you?... There is no one there.

THE DAUGHTER

I am sure that someone has come into the garden. You will see.

THE UNCLE

But she would answer me!

THE GRANDFATHER

Are not the nightingales beginning to sing again, Ursula?

THE DAUGHTER

I cannot hear one anywhere.

THE GRANDFATHER

And yet there is no noise.

THE FATHER

There is a silence of the grave.

THE GRANDFATHER

It must be some stranger that scares them, for if it were one of the family they would not be silent.

THE UNCLE

How much longer are you going to discuss these nightingales?

THE GRANDFATHER

Are all the windows open, Ursula?

THE DAUGHTER

The glass door is open, grandfather.

THE GRANDFATHER

It seems to me that the cold is penetrating into the room.

THE DAUGHTER

There is a little wind in the garden, grandfather, and the rose-leaves are falling.

THE FATHER

Well, shut the door. It is late.

THE DAUGHTER

Yes, father.... I cannot shut the door.

THE TWO OTHER DAUGHTERS

We cannot shut the door.

THE GRANDFATHER

Why, what is the matter with the door, my children?

THE UNCLE

You need not say that in such an extraordinary voice. I will go and help them.

THE ELDEST DAUGHTER

We cannot manage to shut it quite.

THE UNCLE

It is because of the damp. Let us all push together. There must be something in the way.

THE FATHER

The carpenter will set it right to-morrow.

THE GRANDFATHER

Is the carpenter coming to-morrow?

THE DAUGHTER

Yes, grandfather; he is coming to do some work in the cellar.

THE GRANDFATHER

He will make a noise in the house.

THE DAUGHTER

I will tell him to work quietly.

*Suddenly the sound of a scythe being sharpened is heard outside.*

THE GRANDFATHER

*(with a shudder)*

Oh!

THE UNCLE

What is that?

THE DAUGHTER

I don't quite know; I think it is the gardener. I cannot quite see; he is in the shadow of the house.

THE FATHER

It is the gardener going to mow.

THE UNCLE

He mows by night?

THE FATHER

Is not to-morrow Sunday? -- Yes. -- I noticed that the grass was very long round the house.

THE GRANDFATHER

It seems to me that his scythe makes as much noise...

THE DAUGHTER

He is moving near the house.

THE GRANDFATHER

Can you see him, Ursula?

THE DAUGHTER

No, grandfather. He stands in the dark.

THE GRANDFATHER

I am afraid he will wake my daughter.

THE UNCLE

We can scarcely hear him.

THE GRANDFATHER

It sounds to me as if he were mowing inside the house.

THE UNCLE

The invalid will not hear it; there is no danger.

THE FATHER

It seems to me that the lamp is not burning well this evening.

THE UNCLE

It wants filling.

THE FATHER

I saw it filled this morning. It has burnt badly since the window was shut.

THE UNCLE

I fancy the chimney is dirty.

THE FATHER

It will burn better presently.

THE DAUGHTER

Grandfather is asleep. He has not slept for three nights.

THE FATHER

He has been so much worried.

THE UNCLE

He always worries too much. At times he will not listen to reason.

THE FATHER

It is quite excusable at his age.

THE UNCLE

God knows what we shall be like at his age!

THE FATHER

He is nearly eighty.

THE UNCLE

Then he has a right to be strange.

THE FATHER

He is like all blind people.

THE UNCLE

They think too much.

THE FATHER

They have too much time to spare.

THE UNCLE

They have nothing else to do.

THE FATHER

And besides, they have no distractions.

THE UNCLE

That must be terrible.

THE FATHER

Apparently one gets used to it.

THE UNCLE

I cannot imagine it.

THE FATHER

They are certainly to be pitied.

THE UNCLE

Not to know where one is, not to know where one has come from, not to know whither one is going, not to be able to distinguish midday from midnight, or summer from winter -- and always darkness, darkness! I would rather not live. Is it absolutely incurable?

THE FATHER

Apparently so.

THE UNCLE

But he is not absolutely blind?

THE FATHER

He can perceive a strong light.

THE UNCLE

Let us take care of our poor eyes.

THE FATHER

He often has strange ideas.

THE UNCLE

At times he is not at all amusing.

THE FATHER

He says absolutely everything he thinks.

THE UNCLE

But he was not always like this?

THE FATHER

No; once he was a rational as we are; he never said anything extraordinary. I am afraid Ursula encourages him a little too much; she answers all his questions....

THE UNCLE

It would be better not to answer them. It's a mistaken kindness to him.

*Ten o'clock strikes.*

THE GRANDFATHER

*(waking up)*

Am I facing the glass door?

THE DAUGHTER

You have had a nice sleep, grandfather?

THE GRANDFATHER

Am I facing the glass door?

THE DAUGHTER

Yes, grandfather.

THE GRANDFATHER

There is nobody at the glass door?

THE DAUGHTER

No, grandfather; I do not see anyone.

THE GRANDFATHER

I thought someone was waiting. No one has come?

THE DAUGHTER

No one, grandfather.

THE GRANDFATHER

*(to the UNCLE and FATHER)*

And your sister has not come?

THE UNCLE

It is too late; she will not come now. It is not nice of her.

THE FATHER

I'm beginning to be anxious about her.

*A noise, as of someone coming into the house.*

THE UNCLE

She is here! Did you hear?

THE FATHER

Yes; someone has come in at the basement.

THE UNCLE

It must be our sister. I recognize her step.

THE GRANDFATHER

I heard slow footsteps.

THE FATHER

She came in very quietly.

THE UNCLE

She knows there is an invalid.

THE GRANDFATHER

I hear nothing now.

THE UNCLE

She will come up directly; they will tell her we are here.

THE FATHER

I am glad she has come.

THE UNCLE

I was sure she would come this evening.

THE GRANDFATHER

She is a very long time coming up.

THE UNCLE

However, it must be she.

THE FATHER

We are not expecting any other visitors.

THE GRANDFATHER

I cannot hear any noise in the basement.

THE FATHER

I will call the servant. We shall know how things stand.

*(He pulls a bell-rope)*

THE GRANDFATHER

I can hear a noise on the stairs already.

THE FATHER

It is the servant coming up.

THE GRANDFATHER

It sounds to me as if she were not alone.

THE FATHER

She is coming up slowly....

THE GRANDFATHER

I hear your sister's step!

THE FATHER

I can only hear the servant.

THE GRANDFATHER

It is your sister! It is your sister!

*There is a knock at the little door.*

THE UNCLE

She is knocking at the door of the back stairs.

THE FATHER

I will go and open myself.

*(He partly opens the little door; THE SERVANT  
remains outside in the opening)*

Where are you?

THE SERVANT

Here, sir.

THE GRANDFATHER

Your sister is at the door?

THE UNCLE

I can only see the servant.

THE FATHER

It is only the servant.

(to *THE SERVANT*)

Who was that, that came into the house?

THE SERVANT

Came into the house?

THE FATHER

Yes; someone came in just now?

THE SERVANT

No one came in, sir.

THE GRANDFATHER

Who is it sighing like that?

THE UNCLE

It is the servant; she is out of breath.

THE GRANDFATHER

Is she crying?

THE UNCLE

No; why should she be crying?

THE FATHER

(to *THE SERVANT*)

No one came in just now?

THE SERVANT

No, sir.

THE FATHER

But we heard someone open the door!

THE SERVANT

I was shutting the door.

THE FATHER

It was open?

THE SERVANT

Yes, sir.

THE FATHER

Why was it open at this time of night?

THE SERVANT

I do not know, sir. I had shut it myself.

THE FATHER

Then who was it that opened it?

THE SERVANT

I do not know, sir. Someone must have gone out after me, sir....

THE FATHER

You must be careful. -- Don't push the door; you know what a noise it makes!

THE SERVANT

But, sir, I am not touching the door.

THE FATHER

But you are. You are pushing as if you were trying to get into the room.

THE SERVANT

But, sir, I am three yards away from the door.

THE FATHER

Don't talk so loud....

THE GRANDFATHER

Are they putting out the light?

THE ELDEST DAUGHTER

No, grandfather.

THE GRANDFATHER

It seems to me it has grown pitch dark all at once.

THE FATHER

(to *THE SERVANT*)

You can go down again now; but do not make so much noise on the stairs.

THE SERVANT

I did not make any noise on the stairs.

THE FATHER

I tell you that you did make a noise. Go down quietly; you will wake your mistress. And if anyone comes now, say that we are not at home.

THE UNCLE

Yes; say that we are not at home.

THE GRANDFATHER

*(shuddering)*

You must not say that!

THE FATHER

... Except to my sister and the doctor.

THE UNCLE

When will the doctor come?

THE FATHER

He will not be able to come before midnight.

*He shuts the door. A clock is heard striking eleven.*

THE GRANDFATHER

She has come in?

THE FATHER

Who?

THE GRANDFATHER

The servant.

THE FATHER

No, she has gone downstairs.

THE GRANDFATHER

I thought that she was sitting at the table.

THE UNCLE

The servant?

THE GRANDFATHER

Yes.

THE UNCLE

That would complete one's happiness!

THE GRANDFATHER

No one has come into the room?

THE FATHER

No; no one has come in.

THE GRANDFATHER

And your sister is not here?

THE UNCLE

Our sister has not come.

THE GRANDFATHER

You want to deceive me.

THE UNCLE

Deceive you?

THE GRANDFATHER

Ursula, tell me the truth, for the love of God!

THE ELDEST DAUGHTER

Grandfather! Grandfather! what is the matter with you?

THE GRANDFATHER

Something has happened! I am sure my daughter is worse!...

THE UNCLE

Are you dreaming?

THE GRANDFATHER

You do not want to tell me!... I can see quite well there is something....

THE UNCLE

In that case you can see better than we can.

THE GRANDFATHER

Ursula, tell me the truth!

THE DAUGHTER

But we have told you the truth, grandfather!

THE GRANDFATHER

You do not speak in your ordinary voice.

THE FATHER

That is because you frighten her.

THE GRANDFATHER

Your voice is changed too.

THE FATHER

You are going mad!

*He and THE UNCLE make signs to each other to signify THE GRANDFATHER has lost his reason.*

THE GRANDFATHER

I can hear quite well that you are afraid.

THE FATHER

But what should we be afraid of?

THE GRANDFATHER

Why do you want to deceive me?

THE UNCLE

Who is thinking of deceiving you?

THE GRANDFATHER

Why have you put out the light?

THE UNCLE

But the light has not been put out; there is as much light as there was before.

THE DAUGHTER

It seems to me that the lamp has gone down.

THE FATHER

I see as well now as ever.

THE GRANDFATHER

I have millstones in my eyes! Tell me, girls, what is going on here! Tell me, for the love of God, you who can see! I am here, all alone, in darkness without end! I do not know who seats himself beside me! I do not know what is happening a yard from me!... Why were you talking under your breath just now?

THE FATHER

No one was talking under his breath.

THE GRANDFATHER

You did talk in a low voice at the door.

THE FATHER

You heard all I said.

THE GRANDFATHER

You brought someone into the room!...

THE FATHER

But I tell you no one has come in!

THE GRANDFATHER

Is it your sister or a priest? -- You should not try to deceive me. -- Ursula, who was it came in?

THE DAUGHTER

No one, grandfather.

THE GRANDFATHER

You must not try to deceive me; I know what I know. -- How many of us are there here?

THE DAUGHTER

There are six of us round the table, grandfather.

THE GRANDFATHER

You are all round the table?

THE DAUGHTER

Yes, grandfather.

THE GRANDFATHER

You are there, Paul?

THE FATHER

Yes.

THE GRANDFATHER

You are there, Oliver?

THE UNCLE

Yes, of course I am here, in my usual place. That's not alarming, is it?

THE GRANDFATHER

You are there, Geneviève?

ONE OF THE DAUGHTERS

Yes, grandfather.

THE GRANDFATHER

You are there, Gertrude?

ANOTHER DAUGHTER

Yes, grandfather.

THE GRANDFATHER

You are there, Ursula?

THE ELDEST DAUGHTER

Yes, grandfather; next to you.

THE GRANDFATHER

And who is that sitting there?

THE DAUGHTER

Where do you mean, grandfather? -- There is no one.

THE GRANDFATHER

There, there -- in the midst of us!

THE DAUGHTER

But there is no one, grandfather!

THE FATHER

We tell you there is no one!

THE GRANDFATHER

But you cannot see -- any of you!

THE UNCLE

Pshaw! You are joking?

THE GRANDFATHER

I do not feel inclined for joking, I can assure you.

THE UNCLE

Then believe those who can see.

THE GRANDFATHER

*(undecidedly)*

I thought there was someone.... I believe I shall not live long....

THE UNCLE

Why should we deceive you? What use would there be in that?

THE FATHER

It would be our duty to tell you the truth....

THE UNCLE

What would be the good of deceiving each other?

THE FATHER

You could not live in error long.

THE GRANDFATHER

*(trying to rise)*

I should like to pierce this darkness!...

THE FATHER

Where do you want to go?

THE GRANDFATHER

Over there....

THE FATHER

Don't be so anxious....

THE UNCLE

You are strange this evening.

THE GRANDFATHER

It is all of you who seem to me to be strange!

THE FATHER

Do you want anything?...

THE GRANDFATHER

I do not know what ails me.

THE ELDEST DAUGHTER

Grandfather! grandfather! What do you want, grandfather?

THE GRANDFATHER

Give me your little hands, my children.

THE THREE DAUGHTERS

Yes, grandfather.

THE GRANDFATHER

Why are you all three trembling, girls?

THE ELDEST DAUGHTER

We are scarcely trembling at all, grandfather.

THE GRANDFATHER

I fancy you are all three pale.

THE ELDEST DAUGHTER

It is late, grandfather, and we are tired.

THE FATHER

You must go to bed, and grandfather himself would do well to take a little rest.

THE GRANDFATHER

I could not sleep to-night!

THE UNCLE

We will wait for the doctor.

THE GRANDFATHER

Prepare me for the truth.

THE UNCLE

But there is no truth!

THE GRANDFATHER

Then I do not know what there is!

THE UNCLE

I tell you there is nothing at all!

THE GRANDFATHER

I wish I could see my poor daughter!

THE FATHER

But you know quite well it is impossible; she must not be waked unnecessarily.

THE UNCLE

You will see her to-morrow.

THE GRANDFATHER

There is no sound in her room.

THE UNCLE

I should be uneasy if I heard any sound.

THE GRANDFATHER

It is a very long time since I saw my daughter!... I took her hands yesterday evening, but I could not see her!... I do not know what has become of her!... I do not know how she is.... I do not know what her face is like now.... She must have changed these weeks!... I felt the little bones of her cheeks under my hands.... There is nothing but the darkness between her and me, and the rest of you!... I cannot go on living like this.... this is not living.... You sit there, all of you, looking with open eyes at my dead eyes, and not one of you has pity on me!... I do not know what ails me.... No one tells me what ought to be told me.... And everything is terrifying when one's dreams dwell upon it.... But why are you not speaking?

THE UNCLE

What should we say, since you will not believe us?

THE GRANDFATHER

You are afraid of betraying yourselves!

THE FATHER

Come now, be rational!

THE GRANDFATHER

You have been hiding something from me for a long time!... Something has happened in the house.... But I am beginning to understand now.... You have been deceiving me too long! -- You fancy that I shall never know anything? -- There are moments when I am less blind than you, you know!... Do you think I have not heard you whispering -- for days and days -- as if you were in the house of someone who had been hanged -- I dare not say what I know this evening.... But I shall know the truth!... I shall wait for you to tell me the truth; but I have known it for a long time, in spite of you! -- And now, I feel that you are all paler than the dead!

THE THREE DAUGHTERS

Grandfather! grandfather! What is the matter, grandfather?

THE GRANDFATHER

It is not you that I am speaking of, girls. No, it is not you that I am speaking of.... I know quite well you would tell me the truth -- if they were not by!... And besides, I feel sure that they are deceiving you as well.... You will see, children -- you will see!... Do not I hear you all sobbing?

THE FATHER

Is my wife really so ill?

THE GRANDFATHER

It is no good trying to deceive me any longer; it is too late now, and I know the truth better than you!...

THE UNCLE

But we are not blind; we are not.

THE FATHER

Would you like to go into your daughter's room? This misunderstanding must be put an end to. -- Would you?

THE GRANDFATHER

*(becoming suddenly undecided)*

No, no, not now -- not yet.

THE UNCLE

You see, you are not reasonable.

THE GRANDFATHER

One never knows how much a man has been unable to express in his life!... Who made that noise?

THE ELDEST DAUGHTER

It is the lamp, flickering, grandfather.

THE GRANDFATHER

It seems to me to be very unsteady -- very!

THE DAUGHTER

It is the cold wind troubling it....

THE UNCLE

There is no cold wind, the windows are shut.

THE DAUGHTER

I think it is going out.

THE FATHER

There is no more oil.

THE DAUGHTER

It has gone right out.

THE FATHER

We cannot stay like this in the dark.

THE UNCLE

Why not? -- I am quite accustomed to it.

THE FATHER

There is a light in my wife's room.

THE UNCLE

We will take it from there presently, when the doctor has been.

THE FATHER

Well, we can see enough here; there is the light from outside.

THE GRANDFATHER

Is it light outside?

THE FATHER

Lighter than here.

THE UNCLE

For my part, I would as soon talk in the dark.

THE FATHER

So would I.

*Silence.*

THE GRANDFATHER

It seems to me the clock makes a great deal of noise....

THE ELDEST DAUGHTER

That is because we are not talking any more, grandfather.

THE GRANDFATHER

But why are you all silent?

THE UNCLE

What do you want us to talk about? -- You are really very peculiar to-night.

THE GRANDFATHER

It is very dark in this room?

THE UNCLE

There is not much light.

*Silence.*

THE GRANDFATHER

I do not feel well, Ursula; open the window a little.

THE FATHER

Yes, child; open the window a little. I begin to feel the want of air myself.

*The girl opens the window.*

THE UNCLE

I really believe we have stayed shut up too long.

THE GRANDFATHER

Is the window open?

THE DAUGHTER

Yes, grandfather; it is wide open.

THE GRANDFATHER

One would not have thought it was open; there is not a sound outside.

THE DAUGHTER

No, grandfather; there is not the slightest sound.

THE FATHER

The silence is extraordinary!

THE DAUGHTER

One could hear an angel tread!

THE UNCLE

That is why I do not like the country.

THE GRANDFATHER

I wish I could hear some sound. What o'clock is it, Ursula?

THE DAUGHTER

It will soon be midnight, grandfather.

*Here THE UNCLE begins to pace up and down the room.*

THE GRANDFATHER

Who is that walking round us like that?

THE UNCLE

Only I! only I! Do not be frightened! I want to walk about a little.

(MORE)

THE UNCLE (CONT' D)

*(Silence)*

-- But I am going to sit down again; -- I cannot see where I am going.

*Silence.*

THE GRANDFATHER

I wish I were out of this place!

THE DAUGHTER

Where would you like to go, grandfather?

THE GRANDFATHER

I do not know where -- into another room, no matter where! no matter where!

THE FATHER

Where could we go?

THE UNCLE

It is too late to go anywhere else.

*Silence. They are sitting, motionless, round the table.*

THE GRANDFATHER

What is that I hear, Ursula?

THE DAUGHTER

Nothing, grandfather; it is the leaves falling. -- Yes, it is the leaves falling on the terrace.

THE GRANDFATHER

Go and shut the window, Ursula.

THE DAUGHTER

Yes, grandfather.

*She shuts the window, comes back, and sits down.*

THE GRANDFATHER

I am cold.

*(Silence. THE THREE SISTERS kiss each other)*

What is that I hear now?

THE FATHER

It is the three sisters kissing each other.

THE UNCLE

It seems to me they are very pale this evening.  
(*Silence.*)

THE GRANDFATHER

What is that I hear now, Ursula?

THE DAUGHTER

Nothing, grandfather; it is the clasping of my hands.

*Silence.*

THE GRANDFATHER

And that?...

THE DAUGHTER

I do not know, grandfather... perhaps my sisters are trembling a little?...

THE GRANDFATHER

I am afraid, too, my children.

*Here a ray of moonlight penetrates through a corner of the stained glass, and throws strange gleams here and there in the room. A clock strikes midnight; at the last stroke there is a very vague sound, as of someone rising in haste.*

THE GRANDFATHER

(*shuddering with peculiar horror*)  
Who is that who got up?

THE UNCLE

No one got up!

THE FATHER

I did not get up!

THE THREE DAUGHTERS

Nor I! -- Nor I! -- Nor I!

THE GRANDFATHER

Someone got up from the table!

THE UNCLE

Light the lamp!...

*Cries of terror are suddenly heard from the child's room, on the right; these cries continue, with gradations of horror, until the end of the scene.*

THE FATHER

Listen to the child!

THE UNCLE

He has never cried before!

THE FATHER

Let us go and see him!

THE UNCLE

The light! The light!

*At this moment, quick and heavy steps are heard in the room on the left. -- Then a deathly silence. -- They listen in mute terror, until the door of the room opens slowly, the light from it cast into the room where they are sitting, and the Sister of Mercy appears on the threshold, in her black garments, and bows as she makes the sign of the cross, to announce the death of his wife. They understand, and, after a moment of hesitation and fright, silently enter the chamber of death, while THE UNCLE politely steps aside on the threshold to let the three girls pass. The blind man, left alone, gets up, agitated, and feels his way round the table in the darkness.*

THE GRANDFATHER

Where are you going? -- Where are you going? -- The girls have left me all alone!

**THE CURTAIN**