

The Ghoul Next Door – Scene 6 – Th/Tr

Unaccompanied Scene

Th: (Enter R in Traveling clothes)

Neptune, my undying thanks, that you gave me leave

From sea to shore till I'm home alive – barely!

You've gotten, I trust, all the trust I'll entrust.

If hereafter you hear I've set foot on a wave,

Don't hesitate to do me in the way you almost did. 435

Tr: (aside) Neptune, you blew a perfectly good opportunity. (crossing to house L)

Th: Home from Egypt after three long years; (out to audience) 440

I bet they all can't wait to see me. (trying to open door, unsuccessfully, surprised)

Tr: What they really can't wait for is news that you are dead!

Th: Why are the doors locked during the day?

I'll knock (vigorous) Yoo-HOOO! Anybody there? Open up (musical quality first) 445

Tr: (broad and melodramatic, weary as if wandering from R) What man has approached our home?

Th: (turning, a bit startled) Well, if it isn't my slave, Tranio. **Tr:** (troubled) Ohh, Theopropides.

Master, welcome, glad you've come home...well (roll eyes to audience).

Th: Are you all unwell? **Tr:** Why? **Th:** Cause you're the only man walking about, 450

and not a living soul at home. With my knocking, I might have broken the door.

Tr: Oh, woe (mock fright) YOU TOUCHED the (gulp) HOUSE? (start to wander) **Th:** Why wouldn't I?

Tr: (mock fright) YOU TOUCHED IT? (start to wander) **Th:** Yeah, I touched it, I knocked **Tr:** Wahhhh!

Oh, god, bad business. **Th:** What's going on? **Tr:** I can't begin to relate

What an awful, dreadful deed you've done, ooh it's baaaaad.

Th: What is it? **Tr:** Run, I beg you, abandon your abode. 460

(frantic move L then R) Run from here (Th moves a little) Run over here, near me. **Tr:** (big, shaking

him) DID YOU TOUCH THE DOOR? **Th:** How could I knock and not touch?

Tr: By god, you've killed—**Th.** What? Who? **Tr:** all of your nearest and dearest.

Th: (xing nervously farther R of Tr –appeal up) All the gods and goddesses avert such doom...

Tr: I'm afraid with all that touching you may not get a good word in at this point for any of you. 465

Th: (biting nails, then suspicious) Hey, why no touching

Tr: (thinking on his toes, cautious approach to house) For seven months none of us has set foot in this house – we moved out. 470

Th: But why? **Tr:** Look all around to see no one overhears our chat. (move in funny ways, looking in weird places past each other). **Th:** (back C) Coast is clear.

Tr: (obviously stalling) Look again. (only Th moves this time) **Th:** No one. Tell me now.

Tr: It was a crime...murder. **Th:** What? I don't understand. 475

Tr: A crime, I tell you, way way back in ancient, olden times.

Th: Ancient? **Tr:** Yes, we just found out of late.

Th: How criminal was it? Who did it? Go on.

Tr: The owner murdered a guest – bare handed (hands around ownthroat melodramatic), I think the one who sold you the house. 480

Th: Murdered? (scared) **Tr:** He stole the guest's gold, and buried him right there inside. **Th:** How did you get wind of this?

Tr: (thinking hard) I'll... tell you. Your son returned from dinner one night, 485
Everybody went to bed, sound asleep, when suddenly he screamed an awful scream.

Th: Who? My son? **Tr:** Shhhhh, quiet, listen.

He said there came to him in a dream, the dead man himself. 490

Th: (slight relief) So, just in a dream, right? **Tr:** Yes, but listen!

He said the dead said...**Th:** In a dream? (scared again) **Tr:** Well, he'd have a hard time talking to him awake, now wouldn't he? He'd been dead 60 years. You're really pretty dumb sometimes. 495

Th: I'll shut up. **Tr:** So, IN A DREAM, he said (ghosty tone)

"I am the guest Transmarinus from...across the sea (make it sound obvious).

I inhabit here the house designated for my habitat—

for Hades won't admit me to his kingdom underground, 500

since I died before my time, cheated, murdered by my host, victim of a secret cover-up in his house—without proper burial.

A crime, for gold. Now move from here.

This house is scandal-plagued, its habitation doomed."

I couldn't recount in a year or more the ghoulish happenings here. (laughs inside) 505

(Tr running over to door loudly to inside) – ShHhh, Shhhhh (looking back over shoulder nervously)

Th: By god, what is it? **Tr:** (trying to cover up) The door creaked.

It's HIM – he knocked! (More noise from inside, chair knocked over) **Th:** My blood's run cold;
The dead are dragging me right down to Hades – alive. (clutch heart/head). (Noise again)

Tr: (to audience at L) I'm the one who's dead! Those idiots in there will botch my story line out
here. I really worry what he'll do when he catches on. 510

Th: What are you saying to yourself? **Tr:** (pushing him back R) Get away from the door!

My god, please run! **Th:** Where can I run (in circles – then pause)? Why aren't you running?

Tr: I'm not afraid; the dead and I are at peace. (approaching house confidently)

INSIDE VOICE: Hey Tranio. **Tr:** (loudly whispering to inside) Don't be calling my name! 515

(nervous laugh, then fake confidence to ghost) I don't deserve it and I didn't knock on the door.

Th: What's wrong with you, Tranio? Who are you talking to? **Tr:** (out of fake trance) Did you call
me, sir? Gods forbid, I thought it was the dead guy, 520

Wondering why you knocked on his door. (scared stiff) Why are you still here?

Run, as fast as you can and call for help to Hercules. **Th:** I beseech you, Hercules! (run off R)

Tr: I beseech him too—to give you some bad business. (gesture, moving R toward Tr's exit)

Bad business (proudly), just what I've been transacting today.