

The Ghoul Next Door – Scenes 8.1&8.2– Si/Th/Tr (Song/Unaccompanied/Song/Accompanied)

8.1 Song

Si: (entering from house downstage, looking over shoulder)

Dinner was great, /best that I ever ate,/ but wait!

690

Wife did real good, /gave her all with the food,/

Then she slipped into something too comfortable for my good mood.

Ordered me to bed,/ she'd laid out a big spread /—I said,

'Whoa, no, /bedding after feting is no go!'

And I slipped out of something uncomfortable here in the road.

Hurray! A swollen up angry old wife awaits me at home.

Tr: That poor guy's evening looks pretty sad;

Being fed to be bed can be dreadfully bad.

Si: Old wife's old money /makes life unsunny/—funny!

Bed is no fun,/ no sleeping gets done.

Working that woman by night makes my day job look bright in the forum.

Tr: The running around our old neighbor is doing

Evading the pleasures of conjugal blis-ters,

Can't match the old runaround I'm gonna give to him;

He's in for a treat of complete deceit from a magical trick-ster.

Simo, hello. / **Si:** (surprised) And to you, / Tranio.

How's life in there? (winking, indicating Th's house and the parties) **Th:** I don't see / why you care.

(blocking him from house and Th)

Si: You get my drift! / Life is short! / Let 'er rip! (silly dance/ party moves, Th tries to suppress)

Live a life that's always full of song and dance;

Lots of food and wine, you got to give life a chance.

Tr: (dampening the dance mood with a noncommittal step)

That's the way it used to be, for all and for one;

Living like we liked was fun, but that life is done.

Si: How'd your luck give you the slip?

Tr: Storm blew in and wrecked our ship.

Si: Your pleasure cruise was sailing smooth, fore and aft.

Tr: Someone else's ship came in and smashed our craft.

8.2 (Unaccompanied)

Simo (Si): I'm with you Tranio, but what's the deal? **Tr:** The master's back from abroad.

Si: Sounds like a real pain—for you! **Tr:** (kneeling humbly) I beg you, don't slip him a hint (point).

Si: Don't worry, nothing from me. **Tr:** Thank you, my patron. **Si:** I'm accepting no new clients...of your ilk. **Tr:** My master would like to look around your house. **Si:** But it's not for sale.

Tr: Yes, I know that, but he wants to build a women's wing in his, 755

Baths, a tree-lined walk and portico. **Si:** Where'd he dream of that?

Tr: He wants his son to bring home a wife—and soon,

Thus the new women's wing; he said some crazy architect 760

Praised to the rafters your house's design.

He wants to copy the plans, unless you object.

He's really wild about copying your...summer shade

which he's heard is superb, at peak sun and all day long. 765

Si: The hell it is, in every other place there's lots of shade,

But mine's always got sun from dawn to dusk,

Like a bill collector always hanging out at your door,

No shade to be found anywhere but down my well.

But, if he wants, he can have a look around, and copy and build

what he likes. **Tr:** Can I call him over? **Si:** Sure.

Tr: They say Alexander the Great and Agathocles of Syracuse were practically tactically 775

the best two at derring-do; shouldn't I be ranked third in line

as the only one to do immortal deeds?

I'm traveling like a muleteer with panniers on his pack-mule, saddled with one old man on either side. They're both heavily burdened, and haul whatever you load on them. 780

Song

Tr: (slyly toward Th) Master, hey, / your faithful slave made quite a save for you today.

Th: Slave, now say, / what's with this song, and why so long with your delay?

Tr: Guy next door, / see how he's standing open-handed looking poor? (Simo standing with puzzled imploring look on face trying to get Tr to bring Th over)

Seller's remorse! / He wants to back out, not to pack out, now of course.

Th: Hell NO! / You tell that creep that all men reap, just what they sow.

Truth be told, / if we had bought a pile of rot he'd say, "It's sold!"

He should know / it's finders keepers, losers weepers – X let's go! (X=childish taunt sticking tongue out at Simo, lots of business)

Accompanied

Th: (to Tr) This operation's in your hands! **Tr:** (to Si) Hey, psst, I got your guy.

Si: (shaking forearms in greeting) Good to see you back safe from abroad, Theopropides. 805

Th: Gods be with you. **Si:** He said you wanted to look my place over. (Tr has countered to Th's L)

Th: If it's no trouble **Si:** No trouble at all. Go on in, peruse. (Th about to enter stops turns back)

Th: But your women folk—**Si:** Don't give a second thought to any women.

Walk anywhere you like in the house just as if you own it.

Th: (confused looking over at Tr) As IF? **Tr:** (Tr collect him to speak aside ROC, Si whistling) Oh, don't go shoving it in his face, in his moment of grief, that you bought his place; See how broken up he is about it inside? (Si looking pretty dumb, nonchalant).

Tr: I do see. **Th:** No laughing or gloating at his expense, then.

Don't mention again that you bought it. **Tr:** Got it.

Good advice, I think it shows off your human nature (ironic reaction from Tr, moving past Si R toward door on next line). 815

Si: Take all the time you need, to look the place over. **Th:** Thank you kindly.

Tr: (move up, inspect house with grand gestures, then touching) Look at that front entrance, and What a front pathway all tree (touch the pathetic bush, maybe even move it over)-lined.

Th: By god, it's just splendid. **Tr:** And look at those door-posts, so thick and sturdy (knock, hollow, double take) **Th:** Never seen such pretty posts. **Si:** God knows even back in the day they were 820 expensive. **Tr:** (to Th) Hear how he said 'back in the day'? Barely holding back tears!

Th: How much? **Si:** 300 drachmas for the pair, plus delivery.

Th: (inspecting, tapping carefully, looking down) My god, they're a good deal inferior to what I first thought! Both of them infested with termites from the base up. 825

Tr: (barges in looking closely at posts, back and forth between the two guys, scan up and down)

Mhm, pretty dilapidated and out of date, if you ask me; that's their problem.

They'll be good as new with a thorough shellacking!

(attending to the doors and hands on the men's shoulders again) No lousy polenta-munching, foreign, I-talian worker made these.

Would you look at how tightly those doors are jambed (indicate doors and men somehow). **Th:** Yes

(a little confused at this admiration). **Tr:** See with what tricks of the trade they just lie there and

seem clueless. **Th:** (very confused) Clueless? **Tr:** Oh sorry, I meant to say, "How wide shut their eyeholes, their seams glueless." 830

(pointing broadly to indicate the current scene, but also trying to focus Th toward the house)

Do you see the big picture: where a crow is making fun of two vultures?

Th: I see nothing, damn it. **Tr:** Well, I do: a crow standing between two scavengers, squarely skewered.

Look right at me. Now do you see the crow? **Th:** No, no crow. 835

Tr: If not the crow, look right around you two for those vultures.

Th: I don't detect any painted bird anywhere – now buzz off!

Tr: Never mind, I can overlook that: everyone loses sight in old age. **Th:** What I see, I like. 840

Si: (approaching door) It'll be worth your while to look it over completely.

(call inside) Hey, boy, this guy needs a tour of the whole house, each room.

I'd take you round myself, but I've got business in the forum.

Th: I don't need to be pandered to. No leading me on. I'm not easily taken in. 845

Si: (hearing the double entendre) I'm talking about the house. **Th:** I'll go in then.

Tr: (jumping in front of him) Whoa, look out for the dog (stick leg in for chewing) **Th:** (scared) You

look **Tr:** Aaah, hey, get dog! Back, bad dog, aaahh. Go to hell, dog. Still there. Go, dog, go! Get. 850

(a stuffed lying dog is slowly slipped out the doorway)

Si: She's harmless; docile in her pregnant state like any other. Go on in, you can brave the peril!

(laughs). I'm off to my meeting in the forum (Off L) **Th:** Most congenial, have a nice walk!

Tranio, take care of the dog, clear her from the entrance,

Ferocious or not. **Tr:** Look how calmly she's lying there. 855

Unless you want to seem grumpy and cowardly. **Th:** All right – whatever you think.

Follow me in. (stepping gingerly over the sleeping dog) **Tr:** Don't worry, I won't leave your side
(entering Simo's house)