

Little Demons

By Danny Elfman

First Draft

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Song Lyrics can be located on the following pages...

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- 1) "The Come-Along Song p.15
 - 2) "The Cat is Dead p.46
 - 3) "Dance on my Grave" p.65
 - 4) "Mother Dear" p.80
 - 5) "Little Angels" p.102

Lyrics for singing narrations are on the following pages...

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Three faces fade up, floating against black. They stare directly at us. One is slightly portly, one lean and bony, and one in between. They all, however, wear sharp-edged sardonic expressions... a bit of a smirk perhaps. Their eyes tell us they know something we don't. They are the story's NARRATORS. They begin to sing in unison.

*Pay attention, chew on this.
A riddle for your tender ears.
Where does good and evil come from?
Is it acquired over many years?
Can a child have a black heart?
can you tell when you see its face?
Is a new born always pure?
or can it begin from a darker place? ... Little Demons...*

They smile.

As their faces fade away, the black background gradually becomes deep-red velvet curtains. Faintly, we begin to hear a ragged little musical ditty from a small band.

The curtain opens to reveal a colorful, banner which reads "THEATRE MACABRE" in fanciful blood-red lettering.

Pulling back, we see in smaller script: "A little scare, some bloody fun, there's something here for everyone. To entertain you, that's our job, so come enjoy our Dance Macabre! "

PULL-BACK -- reveals ...

...AN OUTDOOR CARNIVAL-LIKE SETTING ON A LOVELY DAY IN THE ENGLISH COUNTRYSIDE. THE YEAR IS 1921.

We glide past a ticket-taker with two eager children as they scamper into the show grounds. Following them, we see various small stages with fire-eaters and sword-swallowers, fortune tellers, magic shows, and concession stands. They delight at everything. We continue to follow them as they buy cotton candy and arrive at a small performing stage.

THE STAGE is framed by a painted backdrop depicting a grim reaper shoving a line of protesting aristocrats into a grave. The reaper wipes his brow with his bony hand.

Over his head is scrolled... "So much work so little time!" The children point and giggle at the Grand Guignol melodrama which plays in front of them. We see...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

-- An oafish BUTCHER with a meat cleaver chases a PEASANT WOMAN around the stage. She shrieks and dodges as he swings the cleaver at her... just missing every time. In the corner of the stage is a BIG BABY with a painted wooden head sitting in a grossly oversized high-chair.

BUTCHER-MAN

(out of breath)

Madam, please! Slow down. I'm too old for this strenuous exercise. I do wish you'd cooperate just a little.

VARIOUS ANGLES --

-- The BUTCHER swings again, missing the woman's head by inches as she ducks with precision timing.

-- The AUDIENCE, half covering their eyes in mock-horror, can't help but giggle.

-- The BIG BABY pounds his fists and screams with the horrible raspy voice of an adult baritone.

-- BUTCHER-MAN swings and misses again. He pauses to lean on a table and pleads in anguish...

BUTCHER-MAN

Madam. I implore you. Can't you hear? The child is hungry.

The WOMAN stands between BUTCHER-MAN and BIG BABY, who screams louder then ever. He approaches her slowly.

BUTCHER-MAN

How can you be so heartless? If you'd just settle down the whole thing would be over in... an.... instant....

He swings at the WOMAN, who ducks, revealing the BIG BABY, whose wooden head is completely severed!

BUTCHER-MAN and the WOMAN freeze with terrified expressions and the head lands on the stage with a loud thunk.

THE HEADLESS BABY JUMPS OUT OF ITS CHAIR AND BEGINS RUNNING AROUND THE STAGE WILDLY GROPING WITH ITS ARMS. BLOOD SPURTS OUT THE BABY'S BIB COLLAR.

A LITTLE BOY breaks out in hysterical laughter. The rest of the audience follows suit... pretending not to look but peeking just the same with guilty glee.

PUSH IN -- past the frantic stage action over the actors, to a small hole in the backdrop, we see

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

AN EYE PEEKING THROUGH THE HOLE -- It blinks...

CUT TO:

EXT. BACKSTAGE -- SAME TIME

Amidst a clutter of paraphernalia, we see a giggling TEENAGE GIRL peeking through the hole. Around her are three children wearing devil costumes and makeup. (obviously part of the troupe.) They watch the girl with keen interest. They are....

JONATHAN. Fine boned and delicate, he's 11 years old. He turns to his younger brother BRADLEY, a cute, precocious 7, who likewise turns to his sister CYNTHIA, the ringleader.

We get a good look at her. She's 10 years old, but her features are well-formed. Her eyes display a sharp cunning and intelligence. She silently conveys something to her brothers, who nod in agreement. For those few beats, they seem not like children at all, but like three cats sharing some perfect silent communication. It feels a touch eerie...

As the TEENAGER turns from her peep-hole the three children instantly transform to normal perky kids.

TEENAGER

(excited)

Oh! I just can't believe this. It's so wonderful. Are you sure I won't get in trouble being back here?

CYNTHIA

Don't be silly, dear...

JONATHAN

You're with us.

BRADLEY

You're our *special* friend.

The TEENAGER runs her fingers through little Bradley's hair.

TEENAGER

(baby talk)

What an absolute sweetie-pie.

BRADLEY smiles serenely. What's he thinking?

CYNTHIA

(to Jonathan)

I'll bet our new friend would love to see the Magic Wagon. Don't you?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Jonathan smiles coyly and shrugs.

JONATHAN
Well, I'm sure that... ahhh..

TEENAGER
... Judy...

JONATHAN
... I'm sure that Judy's folks will be
looking all over for her by now...

JUDY
(emphatically)
Oh, no. They don't even know I'm here. To
be honest, they'd be furious if they knew
I was here. They're such tyrants!

JONATHAN
(to Cynthia)
Really

CYNTHIA
(to Jonathan)
How sad...

TEENAGER
Truly, I'd love nothing more than to see
the magic wagon. But, I suppose I should
be getting back soon...

CYNTHIA
Pity. Well, if we're ever in town again
you must come see our crystal ball.

Judy's eyes go wide and her mouth practically drops open

JUDY
Crystal ball? Gosh...

The children share another moment.

CUT TO:

EXT. SHOWGROUNDS-- MOMENTS LATER

We glide past the line of wagons and trailers. The "Come-Along
Theme" begins lightly.

JUDY (O.S.)
I've always dreamed of seeing a real
crystal...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

The magic wagon comes into view. It has a distinctive creepy vibe to it, with its old painted frescos peeling off.

JUDY (CONT'D)
...ball!

Judy hesitates for a beat.. The three share a quick glance.

BRADLEY
(cheerfully)
We're here!

JUDY
A real crystal ball, huh?

CUT TO:

INT. MAGIC WAGON -- CONTINUOUS TIME

BLACKNESS -- The door opens. Light streams in. Judy cautiously enters with the children close behind.

The interior looks something like a Gypsy's fortune telling room, but far creepier. Panning around, we see...

-- a bust of Edgar Allen Poe, dusty old books, exotic fabrics, strange *scientific* looking brass objects... and finally, in the back...

-- A LARGE CRYSTAL BALL on a Chinese table with an plush chair behind it.

-- JUDY. Her eyes open wide...

JUDY
My gosh... my golly, golly gosh. You weren't kidding.

The children sit her down in the chair, and move quietly behind her. We push in tight on Judy's face. She gingerly touches the glass ball and peers inside.

JUDY (CONT'D)
Can it really tell my future?

CYNTHIA (O.S.)
Oh, yes. Indeed it will.

O.S. sound of a metal latch and wooden hinges. Light floods in on Judy. She whips around to see ...

A SMALL HATCH IN THE REAR IS OPEN AND THE CHILDREN ARE OUTSIDE SMILING AT US.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JONATHAN
It most certainly will.

BRADLEY
Bye.

The hatch slams shut, dimming the light.

Judy jumps to her feet and stifles a scream as the front door swings open, once again flooding the frame with light.

JUDY. Her eyes flash fear.

The silhouette of A LARGE MAN appears.

JUDY
Oh my God.

We can just make out his the soft features of his pudgy face and the glint of a knife in his hand.

MAN
(gently)
I'm afraid God can't hear us now... my
dear, sweet, Lenore.

HE ENTERS AND THE DOOR SLAMS SHUT.

CUT TO BLACK:

SCREAM.... TITLE MUSIC!

We begin a series of vignettes that fade up and down to black, against which the credits appear. The Overture rises and falls accordingly... we see ...

-- Our three youngsters drive a horse-drawn wagon against a background of black menacing clouds. They merrily sing along.

-- The rear of the wagon splashes through deep puddles as rain pours down.... Their high voices can still be heard...

-- Setting up a show in a new town. Men and women work hard. Pan over to the three children huddled under a small make-shift tent playing a game...

-- A parade with acrobats, fire breathers, and musicians. Flyers are handed out to the spectators along the street. A TEENAGE GIRL picks one up and reads it. Her eyes light up.

BIG OVERTURE ENDS.

As the last beat hits, a sledge-hammer flies into frame and strikes a stake into the ground. Pulling back, we see...

EXT. SHOW GROUNDS -- DAY

Two men in sweaty undershirts bang away at tent stakes. A third man hauls a large sack of grain INTO FRAME. When he reaches the center, they all FREEZE and look directly at us.

They are our NARRATORS. The lights dim and they sing:

*Now I think you get the picture
Things aren't what they seem to be.
Underneath a hidden veil...
Behind doors where they can't be seen.
Aren't you curious, aren't you morbidly
compelled to take a peek?
Do you think the virtuous will
be rewarded for their good deeds?
Come along you voyeurs now and we shall see what
we shall see!*

The lights normalize and the narrators resume their work.

The three children prance INTO FRAME narrowly missing a collision with the man carting the sack. We follow them through the hustle and bustle...

JONATHAN

Mother will be pleased, don't you think?

CYNTHIA

Yes, indeed. I think we chose well.

The children come upon an older man and woman just sitting down to a hot sausage lunch. The trio screech to a halt and stare longingly at the food.

BRADLEY

That smells really good.

The older couple squirm as they notice the children.

WOMAN

What a lovely surprise. We'd love to have you join us for a little bite, but as you see....

CYNTHIA

(interrupting)

How kind of you to offer, Auntie....

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JONATHAN

If you're sure it's no trouble.

The children dive in and fix sausage sandwiches while the adults look on helplessly.

MAN

(grimly)

No trouble at all. What's ours is yours.

CYNTHIA

You're so kind to us. Mother would be pleased.

BRADLEY

(mouth full)

Quite pleased....

JONATHAN

(also chewing)

...indeed.

ALL THREE IN UNISON

Thank you! Good-bye!

As the children leave, the woman looks on and shudders.

WOMAN

Mother would be pleased? Lord have mercy!

They return to what's left of their meal.

CUT TO:

EXT. THE MAGIC WAGON -- MOMENTS LATER

BLACK. --- Bang. bang. bang. A door opens to reveal...

A LARGE UNSHAVEN MAN shielding his eyes from the glare of the sunlight. This is UNCLE TIM -- the man we saw enter the wagon with the poor girl, Judy.

UNCLE TIM

What do you want?

CHILDREN, looking up.

CYNTHIA

Really, Uncle. You know very well why we're here.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JONATHAN

I believe you have something for us?

UNCLE TIM. His eyes grow blurry for a moment.

UNCLE TIM

(distant)

Something? Something...

He smiles at some secret joke.

UNCLE TIM

Well, maybe I do and... maybe I don't.

CYNTHIA

(sternly)

Please don't try our patience, Uncle dear. That would be rude.

Uncle Tim looks at the children and blinks.

CHILDREN -- They're not in any mood for games.

UNCLE TIM

Yes, yes. Of course I do. I have a little present for you, don't I?

He fumbles for something inside as he mumbles excitedly.

UNCLE TIM (CONT'D)

Just like bloody Christmas, isn't it. A little present, just like always. I'm not bloody stupid you know? I know how it works, you monsters. Just like always.

He reappears with a small package. He's about to hand it to Cynthia when suddenly his eyes get blurry and he withdraws it.

UNCLE TIM

Where...?

CYNTHIA

(patiently)

Where... what, Uncle dear?

UNCLE TIM

(pleading)

Where did you find her again? Where did you find Lenore?

Cynthia holds out her hand.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CYNTHIA
The package.

Uncle Tim stares helplessly at them for a few beats, then throws down his package and slams the door.

BRADLEY carefully picks it up and hands it to Cynthia.

CYNTHIA
(thinking out loud)
Sometimes I worry about our dear uncle.

The boys nod in agreement.

CUT TO:

INT. THE CHILDREN'S WAGON. LATER.

Three pair of hands eagerly open their present, which is nothing more than a clump of butcher's paper wrapped with a sloppy mess of string, to reveal...

A locket of blond hair.

Cynthia holds it up. She is pleased.

Pulling back we see the meager but neatly-kept wagon with its tattered furniture.

TIME CUT TO:

BLACK -- Two cupboard-style doors open to reveal the children's smiling faces looking at us. Cynthia holds up the locket of hair and moves it INTO THE CAMERA.

THE CHILDREN stand in front of a makeshift wooden altar perched upon a dresser. Inside we see ...

A TATTERED PHOTOGRAPH -- Of a beautiful, smiling, statuesque woman... MOTHER. Something about it suggests that it might have once been an advertisement, cut from a magazine and faded with time.

Surrounding the photo are five other lockets of hair. Cynthia carefully takes the new locket and ties it with gold thread to the inside of the altar.

CYNTHIA
Here, Mother. A new handmaiden to help
you with your chores.

Cynthia pauses. Her eyes get dreamy and distant. She listens.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JONATHAN
Well...?

BRADLEY
What is she saying, Cynthia?

She shushes them...

CYNTHIA
Yes... yes, Mother. I understand. Of course. Good-bye, Mother. We love you....

JONATHAN
Good-bye, Mother....

BRADLEY
Bye....

They share a moment of silence.

CYNTHIA
Mother couldn't be more pleased.

Jonathan and Bradley clap their hands together excitedly.

CYNTHIA (CONT'D)
But...

The boys listen...

CYNTHIA (CONT'D)
She still has a few problems with Number Two.

JONATHAN
Wendy, I believe...

CYNTHIA
That's right ... Wendy. I'm afraid she's still a scatter-brain, but she's showing signs of improvement.

JONATHAN
Anything else?

CYNTHIA
Yes. She says she's worried about Uncle. She says he's getting sloppy, and that we should keep a close eye on him.

BRADLEY
Did she say anything about us, Cynthia?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CYNTHIA

Only that she's proud of us and we should
keep up the good work.

--Sound of knocking

VOICE (O.S.)

Children. Showtime.

POV from the inside of the altar as the doors swing shut.
...SOUND OF LOUD METALLIC COUGHING...

CUT TO:

EXT. COUNTRYSIDE -- DAY

CLOSEUP -- RADIATOR GRILL of an automobile zooms into camera
with a tremendous clamor.

An OPEN JALOPY with two couples. The driver is ELEANOR
WITHERTON. Sitting next to her is SIR LIONEL RICHARDS. In the
back are her friends, SARAH AND FRANKLIN DAVENPORT.

Wearing long scarves and goggles, they holler to be heard above
the racket.

LIONEL

My God, ELEANOR. Slow down, you'll kill
us all.

ELEANOR laughs.

FRANKLIN

(pointing)

Eli... Over there...

THE THEATRE MACABRE, spread out in a lovely field.

The car pulls off to the side of the road

CUT TO:

EXT. SHOWGROUNDS - DAY

The two couples stroll through the showgrounds with their
driving gear off. They're all thirtyish and well off. ELEANOR
is trim and attractive with a confident, regal air. SIR LIONEL
has a somewhat stuffier manner than the others.

They stop in front of a sword swallower.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ELEANOR

Oh. Damnit all... I love this.

LIONEL

ELEANOR!

She puts her hand on her mouth, startled by her own outburst.

ELEANOR

Forgive me, darling, but I've always wanted to come to one of these. It all feels so... so alive! It's simply the best stroke of luck.

They begin to stroll.

SARAH

Not luck, my dear... fate.

LIONEL

Poppycock!

FRANKLIN

Admit it Lionel. Science does not have all the answers. Some things are simply pre-ordained.

LIONEL

Oh, really...

ELEANOR

Save your breath, Frankie. You know our dear Lionel as well as I do. If it can't be found in Darwin's journals or the Gentleman's Quarterly, he'll have nothing whatsoever to do with it.

LIONEL

Here, here.

They all laugh and Eleanor grabs Lionel's arm.

ELEANOR

I only wish you wouldn't always be so stubborn. Hmmm?

LIONEL

Just because I don't jump on every passing fad, that doesn't make me stubborn.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SARAH
Fad? Like Professor Freud, I assume.

LIONEL
Especially Professor Freud. But....!

He throws up his hands in submission... ELEANOR fumes.

LIONEL (CONT'D)
I give up. I don't want to get into that
one again. I know when I'm licked.

ELEANOR
Thank you, dear.

SARAH
Look ...

A show is going on as they reach the

MAIN STAGE -- Our three children dance around a man tied to a classic-looking torture rack. His arms and legs, obviously phony, are stretched out to twice their normal length. A masked inquisitor slowly turns the rack's giant wheel.

A bell rings O.S.

INQUISITOR
Ahh. Tea time. Won't be but a moment,
dears. Now mind, you three. Don't let the
prisoner escape.

CHILDREN
We won't, Papa. Don't worry.

The man on the rack tries to take advantage of the moment.

MAN
Oh, children. I don't suppose you'd
loosen up these straps just a bit so I
might get you some... ahhh ...some
...chocolate? Yes, that's it. I have some
chocolate hidden away.

The children eagerly gather around him. Cynthia grabs on to the rack wheel...

CHILDREN
Chocolate? We loooove chocolate. Don't we
just loooove chocolate? There's nothing we
loooove more than that.

With each "love", she tugs on the wheel for emphasis. This, of course, stretches out the man into more and more absurd

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

proportions while he squeals comically. FRANKLIN AND SARAH burst out in hysterical laughter with the rest of the audience. Eleanor can't suppress her giggles.

LIONEL -- simply looks confused by it all.

ELEANOR -- can't take her eyes off the children.

ELEANOR
(to herself)
Just look at them. What little darlings.

Pan across faces in the audience until we come to the same YOUNG WOMAN we saw picking up the flyer earlier. She smiles as Eleanor's voice echoes once again "little darlings"....

Begin Musical intro to "The Come-along Song"

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. BACKSTAGE -- LATER.

We're still on the YOUNG WOMAN'S happy face, but now she's playing with THE CHILDREN backstage. While they sing, they playfully lead her back to the magic wagon.

[SONG] "THE COME-ALONG SONG"

(Cynthia) *Wouldn't ya like to see what really happens backstage?*

(trio) *Come along, come along, come along, come along.*

(Jonathan) *It's really quite intriguing and you don't have to pay.*

(trio) *Come along, come along, come along, come along*

*Wouldn't you like to see our hiding places?
Here in our happy world, of laughing faces.*

*Every now and then, some fortunate child that we befriend can ...
come along and join in ... won't you come into our Magic Wagon?*

(Bradley) *If ya promise not to tell, we'll take you to a secret place...*

(trio) *Come along, come along, come along, come along.*

(Cynthia) *Though we're not supposed to it'll be O.K.*

(trio) *Come along, come along, come along, come along*

*Every now and then, a special child.
Enters our little world, just for a while.*

*Every now and then, we're lucky to make a special friend
to join us in all our fun won't you come and see our Magic Wagon?*

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

[The children do a strange little jitterbug dance around the teenager. This, we will come to know as their death dance]

(trio) *Come along now and join us
 come along now and have some fun and ...
 Leave all your cares behind, now we'll take you to our Magic Wagon.
 Come along, come along, come along, come along*

Another jitterbug ... the song finishes in front of...

THE MAGIC WAGON -- close on the YOUNG WOMAN'S wide-eyed gaze with the children right behind her, quietly urging her on.

GIRL
 This is it?

CHILDREN
 (unison whisper)
 Yes! Oh, yes.

GIRL
 And there's really a crystal ball?

CHILDREN
 Yes. Most definitely!

GIRL
 That'll tell my future.

CHILDREN
 Without a doubt. Yes!

As the girl reaches for the doorknob.

GIRL
 Well, I suppose it can't kill me? Right?

DOORKNOB TURNING

VOICE (O.S.)
 Oh, there they are...

The spell is broken. Everyone turns to see

ELEANOR and SARAH waving at them.

ELEANOR
 Helloo. I hope I'm not interrupting.

The YOUNG WOMAN smiles politely. The children are mortified.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ELEANOR (CONT'D)

(approaching)

My name is Eleanor Witherton and this is my friend, Sarah Davonport. We thought your performance was absolutely charming and we just had to meet you.

Cynthia snaps out of it first. She smiles.

CYNTHIA

Why, thank you. You're much too kind.

She gives a little curtsy and shoots a quick sideways glance at her brothers.

JONATHAN AND BRADLEY

Thank you.

SARAH

Have you always been with the theater?

CYNTHIA

Since the day we were born.

ELEANOR

And your parents are here too, I assume?

Uncomfortable pause.

JONATHAN

We, ah, live with our uncles and aunts.

ELEANOR

Oh. I see.

Nobody quite knows what to say

YOUNG WOMAN

We were just going in to see the Magic Wagon. They have a real crystal ball.

ELEANOR

How charming. We'll run along now. Its been a pleasure meeting you.

She smiles warmly -- they smile oddly back.

As they leave, Eleanor and Sarah practically bump into UNCLE TIM, coming from the other way. Uncle Tim glowers for a few beats, then shoots a hard look at the children.

He tromps off. The children share a downtrodden look. The moment has been blown.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

VOICE (O.S.)

Gladys. Gladys, are you back here?

GIRL

Oh, my God. It's Auntie.

JONATHAN -

I thought you came alone?

GIRL

I kind of fibbed. She's such a bitch. I must run. Maybe next time. Bye.

Gladys runs off and the children sit down, looking dejected.

CYNTHIA

It was blown anyhow.

BRADLEY

Who was that strange lady?

JONATHAN

Bad luck. That's who.

UNCLE TIM

Excuse me.

The children look up, startled.

UNCLE TIM (CONT'D)

May I enter? I just happen to live here.

He gruffly pushes past the children into his wagon and proceeds to take of his ratty coat. Reappearing in the doorway, we see he's drunk.

UNCLE TIM (CONT'D)

What's the matter, children? Things not going well today?

He chuckles. The children are not amused.

UNCLE TIM (CONT'D)

The best laid schemes of mice and men.

He proceeds to uncork a bottle of something and pour himself a drink. He giggles some more.

UNCLE TIM (CONT'D)

Little schemers. Little dreamers. Little planners. Nasty manners.

(he drinks)

Will the children have their fun?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

He turns to the bust of Poe and suddenly gets dewy-eyed.

UNCLE TIM (CONT'D)
Seems their plans have come undone.

INT. MAGIC WAGON -- CONTINUOUS

The children come inside and close the door.

CYNTHIA
Uncle ...

UNCLE TIM
(toasting the bust)
Tis some visitors, these children.
Tapping at my chamber door.

JONATHAN
Forget it Cynthia. He's useless tonight.

UNCLE TIM
...only this. And nothing more.

BRADLEY
Mother will be very displeased.

UNCLE TIM
(snaps at them)
Mother? Mother will be displeased? Oh.
That's a rich one. Displeased!

He downs another drink.

-- THE CHILDREN... look very serious.

UNCLE TIM (CONT'D)
When was your mother ever pleased about
anything? God in heaven!

CYNTHIA
Careful, Uncle.

UNCLE TIM
Oh. Now I've done it. Now I'm being
threatened by a 10-year-old girl. What
horrible little creatures you are. Why
can't you just leave me alone? Forever!

JONATHAN
Forever, uncle? That's a long time. And
how would you ever get by without us?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

UNCLE TIM
(venomously)
Or you without me!

CYNTHIA
Exactly. We're one big happy family.

JONATHAN
Like peas in a pod.

BRADLEY
Just the way mother wants it.

UNCLE TIM
(morose again)
It's not my fault. You tempt me. You know
how weak I am. I'm a poet, and no poets
are perfect. Our souls are fatally
flawed. We're born to suffer.

CYNTHIA
Yes, uncle dear, we're all aware of your
little problems. But you'd be well
advised to leave Mother out of it.

UNCLE TIM
(low and gruff)
Believe me, my dear. If I could but erase
from my brain your mother's wicked image,
I would do so in an instant.

He throws back a drink.

QUICK CLOSE-UPS -- Three burning pairs of eyes.

CYNTHIA
(firmly)
Take it back!

UNCLE TIM
(slurring)
One can never take back what has been
done... is done...

UNISON
Apologize!

CYNTHIA
Now!

UNCLE TIM
Appo...calypse. Eulogize... for my poor,
lost Lenore.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

THE CHILDREN nod in silent agreement... and turn to leave.

CYNTHIA
Good night, Uncle.

UNCLE TIM
Good night.. oh, wicked wife... honed by
the caress of my tainted knife. Ohh ...

CUT TO:

EXT. MAGIC WAGON -- ONE BEAT LATER

The door slams shut. Music begins. Sneaky scheming music.

CYNTHIA
A lesson...

BRADLEY AND JONATHAN
(unison)
A lesson ...

CUT TO:

EXT. MAGIC WAGON -- NIGHT

In a musical montage, we see ...

A LANTERN FLARES, lighting Cynthia's face

THREE LITTLE PAIRS OF HANDS carefully pull the wedges out from under the Magic Wagon's rear wheels.

UNCLE TIM snores loudly in his bed. The entire wagon seems to be rolling and shaking in jerks.

THE CHILDREN pull the hitch as hard as they can to pivot the wagon to a new angle. With a final heave, it's done.

THREE SATISFIED FACES. Jonathan blows out the lamp.

BLACK ... END MUSIC

We hear the sounds of crickets and frogs, then Uncle Tim snoring and, finally, as a rooster brings on first light...

the creaking sound of a wooden wheel... we see ...

The wagon begins rolling slowly away from us, down a gentle slope. Gradually, it picks up speed and heads directly towards a large tree on the edge of a dangerous looking cliff... faster and faster until...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SMASH! ... into the tree. The wheel pops off and the whole wagon tilts. From inside we hear screaming and cursing. The door swings open and Uncle Tim staggers out holding onto his loose trousers. He very nearly stumbles over the edge of the cliff. He screams once again, when suddenly...

He calmly turns around and sees...

THE CHILDREN -- Lit serenely in the early light. They stare directly at us with little smiles. At once, they turn and go.

UNCLE TIM is a complete wreck. He drops his head and shakes it sadly from side to side.

....HE UNDERSTANDS THE MESSAGE.

CUT TO:

EXT. THE SHOWGROUNDS -- NEXT MORNING.

There's much hustle and bustle as the troupe prepares to pack up and leave. Horses snort and stomp. The huge tents are all being dismantled.

Panning over the activity, we see ...

UNCLE TIM -- as he finishes fixing his wagon. He curses as he bangs the freshly-repaired wheel in place.

CHILDREN'S VOICES (O.S.)
(cheerfully)
Good morning, Uncle Tim.

Uncle Tim practically jumps out of his skin. He turns and mumbles with his eyes downcast.

UNCLE TIM
Morning, children...

CYNTHIA
Is everything all right? It appears that you're having a bit of difficulty.

JONATHAN
Anything we can do to help?

With his eyes still down, Uncle Tim fidgets while he speaks.

UNCLE TIM
I... uhhh... was drunk last night. Didn't know what I was saying. I ... apologize.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CYNTHIA

Sorry, Uncle dear? Can't hear you.

UNCLE TIM

(more forcefully)

I apologize for anything I might have said. In .. er... particular in regards to your dearest Mother, my sorely missed beloved sister, may her everlasting soul rest in peace... Amen.

The children look pleased.

JONATHAN

Well then, everything's right as rain.
Time to get a move-on.

VOICE (O.S)

Hello... There you are.

GLADYS, the girl who got away, runs towards us with a rag-tag suitcase.

The children share glances, not believing their good luck.

GLADYS

Thank goodness. I thought for sure I'd be too late.

THREE BEAMING FACES.

BRADLEY

(grandly)

Welcome to the theater!

She throws her arms out wide. A big musical chord builds as we PUSH IN on her big dumb smile...the fanfare builds...

BLACKOUT

Screams....

FADE UP:

EXT. THE OPEN ROAD -- DAY

The children are up on the coach seat of the MAGIC WAGON.
Jonathan holds the reins, as the wagon noisily bounces along.

Another scream comes from inside the wagon.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

GLADYS (O.S.)
Help me, heeelp.

A Musical Introduction begins. The children sing in three part harmony ... *Help me, help me... la, la, la, la, la...*

As the grand overture plays on ...we see that the Magic Wagon is at the end of a long caravan. Far enough behind the others to assure their complete privacy.

The HELP ME SONG! begins... Where the girl's cries for help are turned into a gleeful children's melody... culminating in a glorious chord held over a long, drawn-out *HEEEEEEEELP!*

CUT TO:

INT. MAGIC WAGON. CONTINUOUS.

Galdys's "*HELP!*" is stifled as Uncle Tim gags her with a scarf.

Pulling back, we see that Gladys is tied securely to the fortune teller's chair. Uncle Tim tenderly adjusts the gag and sits on a stool beside her. He's dressed in an absurd 18th century costume, and holds a large edition of EDGAR ALLEN POE. Gladys emits muffled cries.

UNCLE TIM
My dear, sweet Lenore. Why do you cry out so? Don't you remember? My ears are extremely sensitive. The volume of your voice is causing me excruciating pain. Excruciating, unendurable pain. More than you could possibly imagine.

He begins to sob and wipes his eyes with a silk hankie. Gladys looks completely confused and terrified. She mumbles something through her gag, though with a softer volume.

UNCLE TIM
What is it, my darling?

She patiently mumbles again.

UNCLE TIM (CONT'D)
If I untie your gag, will you promise not to hurt me again?

She nods enthusiastically and he slowly unties her gag.

UNCLE TIM (CONT'D)
(weeping again)
You know I just can't bear it when you hurt me, Lenore, darling.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

She's finally ungagged.

UNCLE TIM (CONT'D)
Besides. It will all be over soon.

She begins to scream again, but chokes it back, composing herself as best she can.

GLADYS
Why...

It comes out too loudly and Uncle Tim begins to weep again.

GLADYS (CONT'D)
(more softly)
Why do you keep calling me that? My
name's Gladys. Gladys Fernell.

Uncle Tim bursts into hysterical laughter. Gladys is more confused then ever. He wipes the tears from his eyes...

UNCLE TIM
(giggling)
Gladys? Oh, that's a good one...Gladys..
(suddenly serious)
Shall we continue... Lenore?

Gladys, unsure how to react, quickly shakes her head, yes...
no... yes ... no...

GLADYS
Continue with what?

UNCLE TIM
The poem, of course, the poem? The sooner
we finish the poem, the sooner we can get
on with it.

He begins to recite again.

GLADYS
...on with what?

UNCLE TIM
(casually)
Your fate, darling. The rendezvous with
destiny and all that...Ahh. Here we are.

He begins to recite. WE MOVE IN CLOSE on Gladys.

GLADYS
Rendezvous?... With destiny?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

She begins a stifled scream which, hard as she might try to suppress it, escapes and crescendos into a deafening wail....

CUT TO:

EXT. WAGON -- SAME TIME

THE CHILDREN -- Pick up on the piercing high note, and perform a quick refrain of the "Help Me" song, only to...

KLUNK!

The wagon lurches as the wheel pops off. The music stops abruptly as well.

THE CHILDREN look at each other, confused.

BRADLEY

What do we do?

We can hear GLADYS'S muffled cries (gagged again) and the murmur of UNCLE TIM reciting his Poe with the fervor of an insane Shakespearean actor.

CYNTHIA

No help from him. That's for bloody sure.

They dismount and roll the heavy dislodged wheel back to the wagon. Jonathan begins fiddling with it when we hear a motor-car approaching. All three turn to see....

A VEHICLE is emerging through a cloud of dust and glare.

BRADLEY

Maybe they can help us.

JONATHAN

(uncertain)

Maybe...

CYNTHIA

We must be extremely careful.

THE BOYS

Right...

THE VEHICLE IS GETTING CLOSER.

CYNTHIA

Uh-oh...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JONATHAN
Is it...?

CYNTHIA
Police...

BRADLEY AND JONATHAN
Police?

BRADLEY
Uh-Ooooooh!

We hear the police van stop and the sound of opening doors.
Cynthia grabs her brothers and forms a tight little huddle.

CYNTHIA
(urgently)
Stay calm and let me handle it.

Two large blue trousered legs walk into frame.

POLICE POV -- THREE HELPLESS LITTLE CHILDREN LOOK UP AT US.

POLICEMAN #1
Well, well, well. What have we here?
Where's your dad?

CYNTHIA
He left to get some help, sir. The
wheel's broken, you see.

POLICEMAN #1
Indeed it is...

2nd Policeman appears and begins to examine the broken wheel.

POLICEMAN #2
Ummm, bit of a problem, eh?

O.S. SOUND OF A STRUGGLE FROM INSIDE THE WAGON AND A STIFLED
SCREAM... BARELY AUDIBLE BUT... JUST...

-- Jonathan and Bradley look at Cynthia. She bites her lip...
she's thinking hard...

CYNTHIA
Might it be fixed up temporarily?

POLICEMAN #1
Did you hear something, Harry?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

POLICEMAN #2
Did you?

Several beats ... Policeman #2 begins to move around back.
Another sound from inside.... there's no turning back now.

Cynthia grabs the first policeman around the waist and begins crying hysterically.

CYNTHIA
Please, sir! Please. Don't let him kill
us. Don't let him...

POLICEMAN #1
What? Who?

CYNTHIA
Him...

She points towards the wagon.

CYNTHIA (CONT'D)
Our uncle. He'll kill us all if he sees
us here with you. He'll eat our livers...

Cynthia completely breaks down, clutching desperately to the officer who instinctively takes a protective stance.

POLICEMAN #2 (O.S.)
Over here. Jerry! Frank! ...

We hear the sounds of a big commotion around back.

LITTLE BRADLEY looks straight at us with tears bursting out of his eyes.

BRADLEY
Please, mister. Don't let him get us.

Policeman #1 shields all three children together.

-- We hear UNCLE TIM rant as he's dragged from the wagon and fresh screams from GLADYS who's evidently just been ungagged.

POLICEMAN #1
(earnestly)
You need not fear while I'm here, son.

CLOSE-UP -- THE CHILDREN connect eyes for a quick beat...
They've pulled it off.

SUDDENLY CYNTHIA SCREAMS AT THE TOP OF HER LUNGS AND POINTS.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CYNTHIA

That's him... that's him...

UNCLE TIM. He's manacled and looking right at us... the very image of a madman.

Cynthia faints. The policeman barks out...

POLICEMAN #1

Get him out of here... NOW!

As they lead him away, Uncle Tim looks back one more time at Cynthia who's limp in the policeman #1's arms.

CLOSE - UNCLE TIM... with a hint of a contemptuous smile.

POLICEMAN #1

There, there. It's O.K. now.

PANNING UP AND AWAY, we see hysterical Gladys being wrapped in a blanket and led away. Uncle Tim is shoved into the Police wagon, and the children huddle around their protector.

QUICK REFRAIN OF THE *LITTLE DEMON THEME*

FADE TO BLACK:

ELEANOR'S VOICE (O.S.)

Unbelievable.

WOMAN'S VOICE (O.S.)

Incredible. Absolutely incredible.

Other women's voices humm in agreement as we ...

FADE UP ON:

INT. PARLOR - DAY

ELEANOR, SARAH, and two other ladies huddle around a newspaper. Through the window behind them, we see a beautiful garden.

ELEANOR

(reading paper)

Good God. Says he may be responsible for up to seven murders.

UNISON

Hmmmmmm

Eleanor gasps and slams the paper down. The others immediately snap it up to get a closer look.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ELEANOR

And to think, I was there. I practically collided with that monster. I was two inches from his face.

OTHER WOMEN

Nooo!

SARAH

It's true. So help me God!

WOMAN

Says he forced them to help lure the victims... and that he threatened to eat their livers if they ever told anyone.

UNISON

Good God!

WOMAN

Says they lived in a perpetual state of fear.

We push in on Eleanor's face as her large sympathetic eyes well up with tears.

ELEANOR

Poor things. No one to protect them.

SARAH (O.S.)

They must be ruined for life.

ELEANOR

(barely audible)

Its never too late....

The sound of the women's voices becomes distant and echoey.

WOMAN (O.S.)

The inquest is this afternoon....

ELEANOR

(to herself)

Poor little angels...

FADE TO BLACK:

VOICE (O.S)

Timothy Robert Cunningham

INT. COURTROOM --DAY.

CLOSEUP -- UNCLE TIM. His eyes are red. His mouth conveys mockery and contempt.

VOICE (O.S.)

Do you have anything to say in your defense?

Uncle Tim casually examines his nails.

UNCLE TIM

(softly)

Defense? Hmmm. Welll... if it please the court....

(bursts out gruffly)

Glad I did it and I'd do it again!

He breaks out in hysterical laughter.

PULLING BACK, we find Uncle Tim in the witness box of a courtroom which explodes with excited whispering. The judge bangs his gavel vigorously.

UNCLE TIM (CONT'D)

Glad I did it. Ha ha ha. Do it again. Ha ha. How's that for a defense... That enough remorse for ya? ...

JUDGE

Remove the prisoner at once. Order...

As Uncle Tim is led away, he glares once more at....

-- THE CHILDREN. Huddled together, they look like something out of Oliver Twist. The Judge's authoritative voice fills the room as he passes sentence on Uncle Tim.

Bradley tugs on Cynthia's sleeve. The children stare straight ahead, whispering to each other as the judge rambles on.

BRADLEY

Cynthia, what's going to happen now?

CYNTHIA

Don't worry, we'll be fine. Jonathan, is everything taken care of?

JONATHAN

(nods)

All gone... every trace.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CYNTHIA
You remembered Mother's picture, of course.

JONATHAN
Of course.

She takes both their hands firmly in her own.

CYNTHIA (CONT'D)
Have faith. Everything will work out.

JUDGE (O.S.)
... where he will be hanged by the neck until dead.

We hear a hushed murmur... Cynthia remains perfectly composed.

JUDGE (CONT'D)
... and may God have mercy on his soul.
Now, in the matter of the children Jonathan, Bradley, and Cynthia Cunningham for whom the condemned was sole legal guardian, is there anyone present who is prepared to take custody until further arrangements can be made?

THE CHILDREN smile meekly towards their relatives.

All eyes turn away. Several get up and begin to leave... We sense genuine aversion... even fear.

THE CHILDREN ARE, FOR THE FIRST TIME, TRULY SURPRISED.

Their hands clasp tighter.

BRADLEY
Cynthia?

CYNTHIA
Shhhh! Just wait.

JUDGE
(annoyed)
Well? Is there anyone ...

Cynthia turns to the relatives we saw eating in the first scene. She gives her best innocent little waif look.

CYNTHIA
Auntie? Uncle?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

UNCLE
Sorry.

The relatives quickly depart, keeping their eyes down.

It's painfully obvious to the children that they've been abandoned. They begin to panic.

JUDGE
Under the circumstances. I'm afraid I
must place them in the care of His
Majesty's National Children's Home ...

ALL THREE PAIR OF EYES GROW WIDE WITH HORROR.

JUDGE (CONT'D)
...until which time as...

VOICE
(from the back)
I will take full responsibility.

A collective gasp fills the room.

THE CHILDREN look at each other in disbelief.

Everybody cranes their necks to see who it is.

THE JUDGE lowers his glasses.

ELEANOR WITHERTON, beaming confidently from the back of the courtroom, strides up to the front and addresses the Judge.

ELEANOR
Your Honor. I am willing and able to
assume immediate responsibility.

She turns and smiles at the children.

Jonathan and Bradley start to speak but Cynthia squeezes both their hands to silence them. She smiles back to Eleanor. The boys reluctantly follow suit.

JUDGE
My dear Miss Witherton, I don't think you
understand the implications here.

ELEANOR
I assure you, Your Honor, I do.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JUDGE
(quizzically)
Are you absolutely sure?

She smiles at the Judge.

ELEANOR
Absolutely.

PUSH IN on Eleanor's beaming face. A musical refrain swirls around us... at its crescendo ...

CUT TO:

EXT. WITHERTON MANOR--DAY

It's an enormous English Tudor, complete with vast formal flower gardens, and elegant well-kept lawns.

CAMERA PANS DOWN as Eleanor's car comes to a screeching halt in front. A handful of SERVANTS flock out to help. They unload a mountain of suitcases and boxes from the trunk.

Eleanor leads the whole procession up the path to the huge front door with the bewildered children in tow.

Passing a clump of rose bushes, we notice THREE GARDENERS crouched on the ground with pruning shears. As they turn in unison to face us, we see that they are, of course...

OUR SINGING NARRATORS.-- The background fades to BLACK. The singers become floating heads. Their musical theme begins...

*Well, well, well, are you surprised?
It seems our road has a twist or two.
Can it be our little angels
Will transform into something new?*

*or will nature take it's course?
do they have something up their sleeves?
are they ready to reform?
Well we shall see what we shall see.*

As their faces fade away, a lush red curtain becomes lit behind them. The curtain opens to reveal...

INT. HIGH CLASS BARBERSHOP --DAY

LIONAL RICHARDS sits in an ornate barber chair reading a newspaper while his barber meticulously snips away.

VOICE (O.S.)

What do you make of this ghastly affair?

PULL BACK reveals BERNARD ROSE, a chubby pompous man with a waxed mustache, seated next to Lionel, reading his paper.

BERNARD (CONT'D)

I mean, it's simply incredible that this could happen in modern England.

LIONEL

Do you believe it? I was there. Last Sunday. I actually saw this fiend, in person.

BERNARD

(shocked)

No. You don't say.

LIONEL

I do indeed say. And it confirms what I've been saying for years. One look in those beady eyes tells the whole story. It's breeding! Darwin's worst nightmare.

Bernard murmurs as the barber lathers Lionel for a shave.

LIONEL (CONT'D)

Inferior breeding, tainted blood. Why I think...

Lionel begins to get animated.

BARBER

Please, Sir Lionel, you'll have to be still if I'm to shave you.

BERNARD

Settle down, old boy, and save it for the lecture hall. Personally, I couldn't agree with you more.

Lionel makes a little snort and settles back into his paper.

BERNARD (CONT'D)

Wedding plans must be keeping you busy?

This cheers Lionel.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LIONEL

Yes, yes. Couldn't be better, by George,
the most wonderful girl in England. Bit
of a wild streak in her but... in time...

BERNARD

I dare say you're right. I imagine it
won't be long before the patter of tiny
feet fill those hallowed halls.

He winks at Lionel.

LIONEL

(dour)

Bernie, please! I don't have to tell you
how I feel about children.

BERNARD

(chuckling)

Nonsense. You'll sing a different tune
after the first one arrives. After that,
I'll wager you'll have a dozen more.

LIONEL

I wouldn't put money on that, old boy.

The door-chime jingles as a messenger enters.

MESSENGER

Sir Lionel Richards?

Lionel casually holds out his hand.

MESSENGER (CONT'D)

Urgent message, sir. From Lady Witherton.

SLOW PUSH-IN on Lionel as he tears open the envelope.

LIONEL

Urgent, eh? I suppose she'll want the
yellow tea roses instead of the pink...

The barber begins shaving again as he unfolds the message.

LIONEL (CONT'D)

No, Bernard. I'm looking forward to a
quiet, orderly, tranquil life. Children?
Maybe, well...maybe in good time but...

HE JUMPS UP FROM HIS CHAIR, KNOCKING THE SHAVING TRAY ONTO
THE FLOOR AND CUTTING HIMSELF IN THE PROCESS.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LIONEL (CONT'D)
Good Bloody God!

Lionel rips off his smock and runs out of the barber shop, still covered with lather. Bernard and the barbers stare after him in wonderment.

CUT TO:

INT. ELEANOR'S HOUSE-- LATER

We see a large ornate wood door. BANG! BANG! BANG!

Sound of footsteps. A maid arrives and opens the door....

LIONEL enters brusquely, breathing heavily. He still has patches of shaving cream on his face and he holds a handkerchief to the bloody spot on his cheek.

MAID
Good gracious, sir! Are you all right?

Lionel's speech is fragmented and much too fast.

LIONEL
Where is she? I mean, is she...are they..
(whispering)
...are they actually here? Now? In the house?

MAID
(calmly)
Would you mean the children, sir?

LIONEL
(stuttering)
Well, of course I mean the children. Who else would I be referring to?

Eleanor interrupts as she enters... the maid hurries off.

ELEANOR
Lionel, Darling. You got my message.

She moves to Lionel, kisses him, and gently touches his cut.

ELEANOR (CONT'D)
Oh, dear. tsk...tsk...tsk. Did you have an accident, darling?

Lionel looks like he is about to explode. He attempts to compose himself.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LIONEL

Eleanor, this is no joke. What in God's name have you gone and done?

ELEANOR

Lionel...come.

She pulls him over to a small sofa. Lionel is rigid.

ELEANOR (CONT'D)

Lionel. Sit down. Please!

Lionel finally relaxes a little as Eleanor takes his hand.

LIONEL

I'm listening.

ELEANOR

I know this is difficult to understand, but I just don't believe it's an accident the way everything has fallen together. I hate to use this word, but.. for lack of a better one, I believe it is fate!

LIONEL

Oh, Eleanor, for God's sake, listen...

ELEANOR

No, you listen. I've thought this out. These children have no one. They're lost... but I found them. I'd like to try and help rebuild their lives. It's important to me, darling.

Lionel can see that arguing is useless. He softens.

LIONEL

I just wish we could have at least discussed it...

Eleanor looks earnestly into his eyes.

ELEANOR

Lionel, if you really love me, then trust me. This is something I need to do.

LIONEL

(reluctantly)

Well. I suppose I can give it my best.

She smiles and kisses him. They embrace.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ELEANOR
Thank you, darling.

LIONEL
I do, however, assume that this is only temporary. I mean until they find a permanent home..

Eleanor pauses. Her eyes have a far-away look.

LIONEL
Eleanor?

ELEANOR
I suppose... one step at a time.

Suddenly, she snaps out of her reverie.

ELEANOR (CONT'D)
Anyhow, just wait until you to meet them.

LIONEL
Mmm, yes. I suppose we should cancel tomorrow's party...with all the...

ELEANOR
Oh, no Lionel. On the contrary. It's a perfect chance to introduce them to society... to our friends.

LIONEL
Eleanor. You're mad!

ELEANOR
Perhaps. But I've never been happier.

LIONEL
You're absolutely sure about this?

ELEANOR
Absolutely!

LIONEL
God help us!

INT. DRAWING ROOM-- EVENING

TEA IS BEING POURED INTO LOVELY CHINA CUPS. Chamber music plays softly. The camera pans around to various hands picking up biscuits and tiny sandwiches as a tray is passed around. We overhear the whispery gossip...

-- "I can tell you.. I felt very uneasy about this whole thing. I mean, after all I read about it ...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

-- "Personally, I find it all rather intriguing...

-- "I think Eleanor has bitten off more than she can chew ...

-- "I think we should be very quiet around them. After what they've been through, noises might frighten them.

-- "I heard they were horribly disfigured by their Uncle."

-- "Beaten twice a day.. every day...

-- "And kept in a cage at night...

PANNING UP. A well dressed older woman is talking quietly to her husband...

WIFE

Oh, Harold. I wish we hadn't come. Do you think we're safe?

HUSBAND

Relax darling. You forget, during my eight years in India, I saw things that would chill your bones ...

SOUNDS -- of the hallway doors opening. CLACK!

The husband jumps at the sound and spills some tea. They unconsciously grasp each other's hands. The music stops.

SOUNDS -- Little click-clacks of leather shoes approaching.

ALL EYES NERVOUSLY FACE THE PARLOR DOORS.

The parlor doorknob turns...

PANNING ACROSS -- Anxious faces...

THE DOORS SWING OPEN... REVEALING THREE PERFECT LITTLE ANGELS.

Completely dolled up, we can barely recognize them with their hair done and their brand-new uncomfortable-looking clothing. Behind them stands MISS WITHERTON -- smiling proudly.

SHOCKED REACTIONS. It's dead quiet.

ELEANOR

Ladies and Gentlemen, may I introduce our guests of honor. Cynthia Emma Cunningham.

Cynthia curtsies perfectly...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ELEANOR (CONT'D)
Jonathan Robert Cunningham.

A proper dignified nod of the head.

ELEANOR (CONT'D)
And Bradley Allen Cunningham.

Bradley takes a deep theatrical bow, which breaks the tension.

With the first laughter in the room, the music begins playing again and everyone rushes up to get a good look at the new discoveries.

ELEANOR - is very pleased.

LIONEL - raises his eyebrows.

ANGLE - From behind the children, the ogling crowd moves in.

LATER IN THE EVENING,

Eleanor chats with some women. Everything's going very well.

WOMAN 1
Eleanor, what a smashing success.

WOMAN 2
I just can't understand how they turned out so sweet...

ELEANOR
There are many many mysteries in this world... these children are one of them.

WOMAN 1
Are they really going to perform a recital for us?

ELEANOR
(laughing)
So they promised...

She spots Lionel, talking to some men, and tugs at his arm.

ELEANOR
Excuse me, gentlemen, but I must borrow my fiance for a few moments.

He excuses himself and walks with Eleanor.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LIONEL

You must be very pleased.

ELEANOR

(emphatically)

What did I say? And now...it's get acquainted time..

LIONEL

Oh, dear... I... yes, I suppose it is.

ELEANOR

Don't be nervous! Be yourself.

They stroll over to the punch bowl where the children are.

ELEANOR

Children, I'd like you to meet my fiance,
Sir Lionel Richards.

They introduce themselves and Eleanor pretends to spot someone on the other end of the room.

ELEANOR

Back in a minute, darling.

LIONEL

But... uhhh...

It's too late. He's stranded. Squirming uncomfortably, he searches for something to say.

CYNTHIA

(breaking the ice)

Miss Witherton told us that you lecture
at the University.

JONATHAN

Modern biology and Evolutionary Science I
believe she said.

Lionel can't help being a bit taken aback.

LIONEL

Why, yes. I do.

CYNTHIA

Science intrigues us.

BRADLEY

What is revolutionary sinus?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JONATHAN

Evolutionary Science, Bradley. Excuse my little brother, Sir Lionel, but do tell a bit if it's not too much trouble.

LIONEL

It's really rather complicated....

ALL THREE IN UNISON

Please....

Lionel can't help but be flattered by their keen interest.

LIONEL

Well... simply speaking, Evolutionary Science really began in the last century with Professor Charles Darwin.

CYNTHIA AND JONATHAN

Oh....

JONATHAN

We've heard of him...

CYNTHIA

He's a very great man....

LIONEL

I, um.. yes, I think so too. Anyway, without getting too complicated, the principal of evolution is based on the theory that every species changes, or evolves over time as its surroundings change. That the fittest, and most adaptable survive... and pass on those traits. He taught us that adaptability is the key to survival.

The children seem enthralled.

CYNTHIA

...adaptability is the key to survival. That's beautiful.

JONATHAN

Yes it is.

LIONEL

Well... yes. I never really thought of it that way, but I suppose it is.

Eleanor rejoins them and takes Lionel arm.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ELEANOR
Well, what's so enthralling?

ALL THREE IN UNISON
Evolution!

JONATHAN
Professor Charles Darwin...

CYNTHIA
and survival of the fittest.

ELEANOR
Ahh ... We're getting a science lecture.

LIONEL
Oh, well not really , I...

CYNTHIA
It's been quite fascinating.

JONATHAN
Quite!

ELEANOR
I'm glad. Now, how would you three like
to experiment on that chocolate cake.

Their eyes light up.

JONATHAN
Nice to meet you Sir Lionel.

CYNTHIA
We must continue some time...

ALL THREE IN UNISON
Good-bye.

Lionel looks perplexed.

ELEANOR
Not what you were expecting, perhaps?

LIONEL
Hmhmhmhm.

LATER ANGLE --

The children sit together in a far corner, each with a dainty
plate of chocolate cake.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BRADLEY

The cake is great, but these shoes are killing me.

JONATHAN

(squirming)

Me too, and this suit makes me itch.

CYNTHIA

Listen. We've got a good thing here, and we're not going to mess it up. Where's our discipline? What would Mother think?

BRADLEY

When can we talk to Mother, Cynthia?

CYNTHIA

Soon. When she's ready. For now, we must be strong. Think about what we learned tonight from Professor Darwin?

ALL THREE IN UNISON

(reverently)

Adaptability is the key to survival...

CYNTHIA

And survival is the key to everything ...

BRADLEY

Amen!

They bow their heads in silence for a beat.

ELEANOR (O.S.)

Ready, children?

BRADLEY

Showtime!

MOMENTS LATER,

The children prepare for their performance in a make-shift "stage area" next to the little orchestra. Jonathan discusses his musical arrangement with the conductor.

ELEANOR

(bangs on a glass)

Everyone? Hello! May I have your attention? The children are going to perform a special musical number for us.

The party-goers gather around the "stage" area. The butler takes his position off to the side with an easel which holds a stack of large cue cards. (we'll see why later)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JONATHAN

Thank you. We would like to perform a musical vignette from the theater.

Eleanor nods agreeably to the children to show her support.

At Jonathan's signal, the orchestra kicks in....

[SONG] "THE CAT IS DEAD"

*Oh deedle-dee, three tots are we and we're as clever as can be.
We live with Grandma Ida and our dear old Grandpa Ed.*

*And Little baby Mike, (the brat), and don't forget the Siamese cat,
And in the attic, from Detroit, lives big fat Uncle Fred.*

*Oh Grandpa wishes he was rich, and Grandma just complains, (the Bitch!)
And Uncle Fred sits drunk in bed, Mike cries all night and day.*

[ANGLE -- some shocked expressions in the audience]

*The cat thinks that he owns the place,
He bites and scratches on the face,
It'd be so nice if they all went away ... away...*

[Bradley pulls a stuffed, dead looking cat from a box. The children play with it during the second verse.]

*The cat is dead, the cat is dead, I went to pat him on the head
He didn't purr, he didn't meow, he didn't blink or sniff.*

*He seemed to have a funny smile. It made me laugh, but all the while,
The tail that used to flippy-flop got awful cold and stiff.*

*We chopped him into little bits, and seasoned him with apple-pits,
And with some dust, we made a crust, and put him in a pie.*

[ANGLE -- More shocked expressions from the audience... Eleanor's mouth is hanging open]

*Into the oven he did slip, until the crust was nice and crisp.
I'll love that little kitty till I die ... I die... I die-dee die-dee...*

[The children do a choreographed dance routine during the third verse.]

*The cat is dead, the cat is dead. And Mikey too, and Uncle Fred,
Expiring oh so suddenly, while sipping down some tea.*

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

*The tea was hot! The tea was nice! With strychnine, and a little spice.
To cover up the funny taste of our conspiracy.*

*When Grandpa saw what he had done, he went straight for his hunting gun.
But we were quick, we stole the clip. The rest is history.*

*To make sure Grandma wouldn't flee, we gave her a lobotomy.
And now she's just as happy as can be ... can be... can bee-dle....dee-dle...*

[Jonathan signals to the butler who proceeds to flip the cue cards along with the lyrics]

THE CHILDREN
(in unison)
Everybody... song along!

The children begin the second verse but nobody sings. Jonathan motions for the orchestra to vamp..

JONATHAN
Everyone! let's have some spirit!

Nobody knows what to do. Eleanor begins to join in and, reluctantly, everyone follows...murmuring along...

*The cat is dead, the cat is dead, I went to pat him on the head
He didn't purr, he didn't meow, he didn't blink or sniff.
He seemed to have a funny smile. It made me laugh, but all the while,
The tail that used to flippy-flop, got awful cold and stiff.*

[Angles on various faces as they sing along. Some appear to be in shock.. Singing robotically...A few actually seem to be enjoying themselves.]

*We chopped him into little bits, and seasoned him with apple pits,
And with some dust, we made a crust, and put him in a pie.
Into the oven he did slip, until the crust was nice and crisp.
I'll love that little kitty till I die ... I die-dee die-dee, die-dee....*

The orchestra finishes with a little flurry and the children take a deep bow, obviously pleased with themselves.

For a few beats, everyone's catatonic. Suddenly, Eleanor begins clapping enthusiastically and, as if a spell has been broken, everyone joins in.

LIONEL claps politely but we can't tell what he's thinking.

CUT TO:

INT. HALLWAY -- LATER

Eleanor and Lionel stand by the door saying good bye to their guests. The last to leave are SARAH and FRANKLIN.

SARAH

Who'd have thought! Then again dear, it was meant to be...

Overhearing this, LIONEL cringes.

Eleanor gives out an exhausted groan as the door closes.

LIONEL

Brandy?

ELEANOR

Oh, darling, I've still got to get the children to bed...

The disappointment shows on Lionel's face.

LIONEL

Can't Hilda get them to bed? She is their nanny, isn't she?

Eleanor smiles gently and shakes her head.

ELEANOR

I'd just feel better if I checked in on them myself.

LIONEL

Well then, I suppose I'll just run along.

He doesn't budge. He just stares at Eleanor with lovelorn eyes, hoping she'll ask him to stay.

ELEANOR

Yes, you'd probably better.

LIONEL

(crestfallen)

Good night then, Eleanor.

With a sigh, he moves to give her a peck on the cheek, but Eleanor surprises him by planting one full on the lips. The steamy kiss turns Lionel crimson.

ELEANOR

Why don't we have a picnic this week?
We'll go to our favorite spot.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LIONEL
(voice cracking)
Yes. I'd like that very much.

He hurries off, embarrassed. As Lionel's footsteps disappear, Eleanor listens for a few beats, then shuts the door.

CUT TO:

INT. BEDROOM -- CONTINUOUS.

The children's bedroom is beautiful and spacious. They lay, propped up on huge pillows in three cute little beds.

BRADLEY
What do we do now?

Cynthia looks perplexed for a few beats.

CYNTHIA
We adapt...

Jonathan reaches under his mattress and extracts a leather pouch. He opens it gingerly and pulls out Mother's picture.

Cynthia and Bradley hop out of beds and gather around Jonathan. They stare at the picture. (The music is eerie.)

JONATHAN
Mother.

CYNTHIA AND BRADLEY
Mother...

CLOSE ON - Mother's picture staring back at us.

JONATHAN
Try to contact her, Cynthia.

Cynthia stares at the picture. The momentary spell is broken by the sound of the door latch turning.

HILDA in the doorway.

Jonathan stashes mother's picture back in its pouch.

HILDA
Jonathan, what have you got there?

She moves towards the children with her hand out.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JONATHAN
Why, nothing Miss...

CYNTHIA
Just a family heirloom.

HILDA
You should all be asleep. Why aren't you
in bed? Come on, let's see...

The children shrink back defensively when...

ELEANOR (O.S.)
Knock...knock...hello.

Eleanor merrily enters along with her little Terrier, SPARKY.

ELEANOR (CONT'D)
What are we all up to here?

HILDA
Sorry ma'am, they should be in bed but...

ELEANOR
Hilda... Hilda, don't worry. Everything's
fine. Why don't you just leave us now...

She ushers Hilda out and closes the door.

ELEANOR (CONT'D)
She really does mean well, you know.
She's just not used to so much activity.

Eleanor sits on the foot of Jonathan's bed and Sparky jumps up
beside her. Cynthia and Bradley get back in theirs.

JONATHAN
How'd we come off?

ELEANOR
Stunningly. I couldn't be more pleased.
Is there anything I can do to make you
more comfortable?

CYNTHIA
Thank you very much. Everything's quite
perfect.

BRADLEY
But, please Miss. What's this for?

Bradley pulls a teddy bear out from under his comforter.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ELEANOR
(laughing)
But surely you've seen a teddy bear
before?

THE CHILDREN look blankly. Eleanor stops laughing.

ELEANOR
I'm sorry. Forgive me. A teddy bear is
designed to ... to comfort you. You hug
him close and tell him all your secrets.

The children seem perplexed.

BRADLEY
Your secrets? Why?

ELEANOR
Well, because he's your special friend.

BRADLEY
Ahh. I see.

She's not quite sure what to say next.

ELEANOR
Tomorrow we'll go into town and find some
toys to liven up this dreary room. Would
you like that?

The children answer with as much enthusiasm as they can
muster... which isn't mountains.

CYNTHIA
That would be splendid...

THE CHILDREN
(trying for enthusiasm)
Oh, yes. Thank you very much.

Eleanor pauses. There's something more she'd like to say, but
she doesn't know how.

ELEANOR
Well then ... good night

THE CHILDREN
Good night.

Sparky trots out with her and she quietly closes the door.

The children pop out of bed, each grabbing their blankets, and
make a makeshift bed in the corner of the room.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

At last they're comfortable, snuggled together on the floor.
One after another, they say ... "Good night"

CUT TO:

INT. TOYSHOP -- THE NEXT MORNING (BEGIN MUSICAL MONTAGE)

CLOSE-UP -- A BRIGHT RED TRAIN RUSHES TOWARDS US.

At the last moment, it swerves away. We pull back to see...

The red train winds its way through the toy store, past
delighted, squealing children, tin soldiers, rocking horses
...at last we come upon our three children standing in a field
of dolls and puppets.

Behind them stands Eleanor and the overjoyed shopkeeper. She
hands him her card as she points around the room to a zillion
things

EXT. ROAD -- LATER THAT DAY

Eleanor and the children fly by in her convertible. The rumble
seat is packed and piled high with toys and boxes.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. BUSY STREET-- DAY.

The car whizzes by again.

THE CHILDREN are at an arcade fighting to get a peek inside a
single viewer movie machine. This time, they seem to be having
a really good time. Eleanor is more than pleased.

BLACK AND WHITE. A vampire moves slowly towards a terrified
woman and bites into her neck.

THE CAR WHIZZES BY AGAIN.

The children happily eat ice cream cones in the back seat. We
see that Eleanor's buying spree has continued, for all around
them, the boxes are piled even higher.

As she drives along, she notices the marquee for an movie
theater. She hits the brakes.

ANGLE - the marquee advertises a new AMERICAN WESTERN MOVIE.

The car screeches into frame in profile. A pile of boxes fall
onto the children. Eleanor screams with delight.

CUT TO:

EXT. ELEANOR'S ESTATE -- EVENING

The jam-packed car pulls into the driveway. We see the silhouettes of servants descending upon the car. Eleanor and the children march into the house followed by the servants with their arms filled high with packages.

The last servant closes the door.

INT. CHILDREN'S BEDROOM -- NIGHT.

The room is now totally packed with ridiculous kid's stuff. They're in bed. Bradley plays with a Jack-in-the-box.

JONATHAN

You know, Miss Witherton is pretty all right for an adult.

CYNTHIA

It's true. I haven't quite figured her out, but I can't complain.

BRADLEY

Cynthia. What would Mother think?

All three children contemplate for a moment.

CLOSE ON MOTHER'S PICTURE

PULL BACK reveals Cynthia staring into Mother's eyes while Bradley and Jonathan look quietly on over her shoulder. We hear *eerie music* again.

CYNTHIA

We need a new altar for Mother. In a nice safe place. Then, she can speak to us.

FADE TO BLACK:

EXT. WOODED AREA -- DAY

Lionel merrily makes his way down a wooded path. He carries a bottle of wine in one hand and a dozen roses in the other.

He pauses for a moment, whips out a comb, and carefully slicks back his hair. He's obviously got *amour* on his mind.

Satisfied, he pushes through some shrubs and calls out.

LIONEL

Darling, I'm here. It's your sweetie, sweet, dandy boy... it's --

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Pushing through the last shrub, he deflates when he sees...

ELEANOR AND THE CHILDREN SITTING ON A BLANKET EATING OUT OF A PICNIC BASKET.

LIONEL (CONT'D)
-- me.... dear..

ELEANOR
Lionel. At last. Come and join us. I hope you don't mind we started without you, darling. We were simply dying of hunger.

Lionel's romantic hopes are completely dashed.

LIONEL
Mind? No, of course not.

Eleanor notices the flowers.

ELEANOR
Oh, Lionel.

The children giggle a little which irritates Lionel terribly. He mumbles as he joins them on the blanket.

Eleanor reaches over and kisses him which causes him to blush, which causes the children to giggle more, which causes Lionel to sulk like a schoolboy.

DISSOLVE TO LATER ANGLE:

LIONEL still sulks, quietly nibbles a chicken wing.

Pan from BRADLEY to CYNTHIA, to JONATHAN...they eat ravenously with their fingers, making slurping sounds (which are accentuated)... it's not a dainty sight.

LIONEL is repulsed. He looks to Eleanor for help, but she is lost in a little book of poems.

ELEANOR looks up to find Lionel staring at her. She smiles back pleasantly.

LIONEL has a pleading look with his mouth partly open, as if silently calling for help...but in vain.

CYNTHIA
Please tell us more about mister Darwin.

LIONEL
Oh... no...I don't.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ALL THREE CHILDREN
Oh yes... please.... please.

LIONEL
(resigned)
Well...all animals in every species pass
on hereditary information to their
offspring.

As he's talking, Eleanor returns to her book and the children
to their noisy table manners. Lionel watches them in a
hypnotized manner.

LIONEL (CONT'D)
So if, for example, a certain type of pig
were to develop an immunity to hoof and
mouth disease, its offspring might
develop a resistance to the disease as
well. And with some intelligent pruning
by men of science, this process might be
greatly accelerated. Perhaps, in time
making all little piggies immune...

LIONEL'S POV DISTORTS AS HE SPEAKS...SO DOES HIS VOICE.

The children suddenly appear to be little devil-pigs, with
horns and pointy tails. They scratch at the dirt and snarl at
each other... Music begins to get crazy ...

LIONEL (CONT'D)
It's the same with humans...just like
with little piggies... only some strains
of humans have over time developed ...
have developed higher levels of.. of
intellectual capacity. And morality. ...
And virtue... and...

Lionel's voice is beginning to rise and his eyes start to blink
erratically.

ANGLE -- LIONEL'S POV OF THE CHILDREN

They've turned into primitive, wild-eyed, painted demons
dancing with spears. The music is really crazy with fast inter-
cutting between Lionel and the children.

LIONEL
(more and more passionately)
...and if scientists could weed out the
bad strains it's just possible that..
just possible that civilization might
actually advance to the point where...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ELEANOR (O.S.)
(sharply)
Lionel!

Everything is suddenly back to normal. Lionel blinks.

ELEANOR AND THE CHILDREN look totally perplexed.

ELEANOR
What on earth are you going on about?

LIONEL
(mortified)
I'm...I'm terribly sorry.

She reaches over and feels his forehead.

ELEANOR (CONT'D)
You're feverish. Here, why don't you put
your head down?

He obeys, putting his head on her lap.

ELEANOR
Children. Why don't you go and play by
the pond for a few minutes?

LIONEL
No really, I...
(beat)
Yes, that's a good idea.

The children quietly disappear and Lionel takes Eleanor's hand.

LIONEL
Do forgive me, darling.

ELEANOR
Lionel, what on earth is wrong with you?

Lionel turns away and doesn't answer.

ELEANOR (CONT'D)
It's the children, isn't it? If I didn't
know you better, I'd say you were
jealous.

Lionel sits up and Eleanor pulls her hand away.

LIONEL
For God's sakes, that's not it.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ELEANOR

Then what is... it?

LIONEL

It's just... watching them just then...
there's something... I can't put my
finger on it...a look in their eyes.

ELEANOR

What sort of look?

LIONEL

The sort of look I've only seen in wild
beasts!

Eleanor is aghast.

ELEANOR

What a horrible thing to say. You just
won't give them a chance will you?

LIONEL

There's something very wrong about them,
I can't help it...

ELEANOR

You mean you won't help it...

The camera pulls way back into some foliage where we find the
children spying on them. Their domestic squabble continues in
the background...

CYNTHIA

(softly)

I had a funny feeling about him. He could
become a problem.

JONATHAN

Too bad, really.

Eleanor suddenly gets up and calls out.

ELEANOR

Children... children... we're going.

CUT TO:

EXT. ELEANOR'S MANOR-- LATE AFTERNOON

Lionel car pulls up into frame and stops. Eleanor and Lionel
sit silently in the front. Eleanor has her arms crossed. Lionel
pulls his goggles off and looks down. The children look at each
other and shrug.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Some servants come out and open the doors. The children get out first. Lionel and Eleanor don't budge.

ELEANOR

(to the children)

You go on. I'll be along in a bit.

The children scurry off. Lionel taps uneasily on the steering wheel for several beats as Eleanor stares stoically ahead.

Finally, he reaches over and takes Eleanor's hand. She gives out a deep sigh and they look at each other.

BLACK:

BRADLEY'S VOICE

(excitedly)

Up here... up here...

We hear the SOUNDS of shoes tromping up stairs, a doorlatch turning, and a creaky door opening and which reveals...

THE CHILDREN peering at us. They carry lanterns.

CYNTHIA

Oh, yes.

INT. HUGE DUSTY ATTIC -- MOMENTS LATER

Cynthia's eyes are wide with delight.

BRADLEY (O.S.)

Back here, come and look!

They follow Bradley's voice to find him in a rear secluded part of the attic. It looks as if no one's been back here for ages.

JONATHAN

It's perfect

CYNTHIA

Yes, it is! It'll take a bit of work, but it couldn't be better!

BRADLEY

Told you...

JONATHAN

You've done well, little brother.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BRADLEY
(taking a deep bow)
Thank you... thank you...

CYNTHIA
Sanctuary!

BRADLEY AND JONATHAN
Sanctuary!

They put their hands together like the three musketeers doing a secret handshake.

HILDA (O.S.)
(distant)
Children... children where are you?

BRADLEY
It's the witch!

CUT TO:

INT. A HALLWAY -- A MOMENT LATER

Hilda is very irritated. She's looking everywhere for the children. Opening doors here and there ...

BRADLEY (O.S.)
You... hooo. Here we are.

They appear at the end of the hall.

HILDA
Good Lord. Where have you been?

CYNTHIA
We've been exploring.

She dusts them off and scoots them along.

HILDA (CONT'D)
You'll be the death of me. So help me.
I've been looking everywhere... Where were you!

CYNTHIA
For goodness sake, we're here, aren't we?
What difference does it make?

Suddenly, Hilda grabs her chest and reaches frantically in her pockets, searching for something.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

HILDA

Such impudence. How dare you speak to me
in that tone? So help me you'll be the --

She finds her pillbox, quickly takes out two little pills and
pops them in her mouth.

BRADLEY

We'll be the what?

Hilda gives him a searing look.

HILDA

... the death of me.

BRADLEY

Sorry...

Cynthia smiles to herself.

HILDA

I'll bet. Now, let's get a move on!

Off they march.

HILDA

We'll just see where that insolence gets
you in school tomorrow...hmmmmph

CUT TO:

INT. SCHOOLROOM. DAY.

SLOW PAN across a roomful of snotty kid's faces, starting with
boys on the right and over to the girls on the left. Their
expressions range from almost asleep to scathing glares.

MISS TAPPERT (O.S.)

And now I'd like a warm good morning to
our three new classmates. Cynthia,
Jonathan, and Bradley Cunningham. Class?

CLASS

Good morning.

OUR THREE stand stiffly in the front of the class with MISS
TAPPERT behind them. She's a bespeckled, humorless woman.

OUR THREE

Good morning.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

VOICE (O.S.)
Little orphan brats.

Amidst giggling, Cynthia searches the room for the culprit.

MISS TAPPERT
Now! That will be enough. That type of talk will not be tolerated. You might all find it interesting that the Cunninghams were all actors with the theater. Isn't that true?

CYNTHIA
(with strong voice)
Why, yes it is, Miss Tappert. I, along with my brothers, am born of the theatre, so to speak. And it is with the theater that we hope to die.

A soft "ohhhhh" comes from the classroom.

MISS TAPPERT
Well, Cynthia. That was very dramatic.

A prim, overdressed girl, TERESA PENNER, puts her fingers in her ears and grimaces.

TERESA
And very loud. It must have been theater for the deaf.

Some giggling can be heard. Cynthia looks her in the eye. From her voice, we can hear that it was Teresa who made the first wisecrack.

CYNTHIA
In the theater. We must learn to project our voices. If that's what you meant.

Cynthia glares at Teresa... who glares back.

MISS TAPPERT
Well, here in class, there is no need to overstate ourselves in any manner, and that includes showing off. Understood, Miss Cunningham?

Cynthia seems stung.

CYNTHIA
Yes, Miss. I understand.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MISS TAPPERT
You may sit down.

CYNTHIA
(whispering)
Remember Professor Darwin.

Our three take their seats. We hold on Cynthia. She hears a "rasberry" sound next to her.

POV -- Teresa sticks her tongue out at Cynthia.

MISS TAPPERT (O.S.)
Everyone, let's begin our lessons.
Seniors, take out your math books.
Juniors ...

CLOSE UP -- Cynthia turns back and stares straight at us.

We hear the hushed murmur of whispering children which slowly cross-fades into adult women whispering...

DISSOLVE TO:

CLOSE UP - NEWSPAPER HEADLINE

"Carnival Killer To Be Hanged Tomorrow"

INT. PARLOR -- DAY

Eleanor, Sarah, and the same three women we met earlier hold cups of tea and lean in towards each other, speaking in hushed tones...

SARAH
Thank God, it'll be over once and for all.

WOMAN 1
If ever anybody deserved to hang, it's that beast.

ELEANOR
True enough, but I'm just worried about the children. They're very delicate and I'm afraid if they find out it will bring back ...so many horrible memories.

Eleanor's voice begins to break. She dabs her eyes several times, which causes a chain reaction of sniffly eye dabbing.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ELEANOR (CONT'D)

They've really been dealing with it so well... I mean, God, they've been to hell and back, haven't they?

WOMAN 2

Oh, Eleanor, it must be so trying on you.

ELEANOR

Yes, well...

WOMAN 1

Where are they now?

ELEANOR

First day at school...I hope they're managing alright, they're so delicate. I do so want to protect them..,

She takes the newspaper and throws it in the fireplace. HOLD on the burning picture of Uncle Tim.

WOMAN 2 (O.S.)

God bless their little hearts.

DISSOLVE BEGINS:

SEVERAL WOMEN'S (O.S.)

God bless them all.

SLOWLY DISSOLVES TO:

INT. SCHOOL -- DAY

MISS TAPPERT (O.S.)

And God bless King George and the entire royal family...

CLOSE ON CYNTHIA -- Jonathan and Bradley are just out of focus behind her. Hands together, they pray with their class.

CHILDREN

And God bless King George and the entire Royal Family...

SLOW DISSOLVE:

MISS TAPPERT

Amen...

CHILDREN (O.S.)

Amen...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MAN'S VOICE (O.S.)
... in the name of the Father, the Son,
and the Holy Ghost.

FADE UP:

EXTREME CLOSE UP -- UNCLE TIM glares at us with a half-smirk.

PULL BACK reveals...

EXT. TOWN SQUARE - DAY

HANGING SCAFFOLD. Uncle Tim stands with his hands tied behind his back. To his right stands the Vicar, reading from the Bible. To his left is the hangman.

VICAR
And may you walk on green pastures...

Pulling back further into a crowd of onlookers we find LIONEL AND BERNARD (the man we met in the barber shop)

Lionel lets out a cynical snort.

LIONEL
Just look at all these coarse, foolish people. Anything for amusement. Even a bloodbath.

BERNARD
Well, what about us, old boy? We're watching too!

LIONEL
We're not watching for the blood-bath, you ass! We're reveling in justice being done!

Bernard nods in agreement. They both turn back to watch.

ANGLE ON -- SCAFFOLD.

VICAR
...and may God have mercy on your soul.

The vicar closes the book and turns to Uncle Tim.

VICAR
Do you have any last words, my son?

UNCLE TIM
Words?.....

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

PUSH IN on Uncle Tim.

UNCLE TIM (CONT'D)
Words? ... Yes, I think I just may have a
few words!

THE MUSICAL INTRODUCTION BEGINS AND THE LIGHTS DIM DOWN AROUND
TIM. WITH A CYNICAL SNEER, HE SINGS

[SONG] "DANCE ON MY GRAVE"

*Hear me now before I depart .
All you faithful, tender of heart.
Gather round now, stand up and be brave
Soon you can meet, and dance on my grave.*

*Hear me now, for I'll soon be dead
you'll sleep better tonight in your beds*

[ANGLE -- Two spectators look at each other uncomfortably]

*And your good daughters, now will be safe ,
Gather together and dance on my grave*

Who will watch with scorn in their eyes waiting for some nasty surprise

[ANGLE -- People looking down at their feet.]

*...waiting for God to strike me down first
Drink of my pain, you can all quench your thirst*

*But if you could for one minute be me
See the world through my eyes, oh the things you would see
And how you would wail when you fell in that hole
While the weight of the darkness was crushing your soul*

[ANGLE -- a man loosening his collar]

Then back in your safe little lives you would snap

[ANGLE -- a woman jumps]

Still looking at me- with me looking back

*But those haughty expressions would have vanished for sure
those superior eyes would no longer be pure
and there in the heart of your lily white souls
would appear to be marred by a large gaping hole*

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

[ANGLE -- a woman puts her hands over her heart and weeps]

*When you think of me then in time
and the cold wind touches your spine
though you may shudder, the memory remains
come drink a toast as you dance on my grave.*

*Words and gestures, who really cares
words are cheap, they're nothing but air
Useless are words, it's time now to pay
come one and come all, and dance on my grave*

THE SONG FINISHES AND UNCLE TIM, AFTER A PAUSE, SPEAKS IN A LOW, RASPY WHISPER...

UNCLE TIM

Remember this last warning my God-fearing
little friends. There are worse than me
that still walk free.... *The children!*

CLOSE ON -- Lionel's face as Uncle Tim's words take hold.

UNCLE TIM (CONT'D)

Those little demons. I may be a fiend,
but I had no choice. They are ...self
made. Watch your backs, my friends.

Tim's glare is hypnotic. The whole audience leans in. After a long pause, he barks out to the hangman...

UNCLE TIM

Come on, man... It's Showtime!

Everyone jumps back, startled.

UNCLE TIM

God bless you all, and I'll see you all
in hell!

UNCLE TIM laughs uproariously. A drum roll begins.

THE HANGMAN approaches holding out a black hood.

PANNING BACK AND UP over the crowd, we find ourselves watching the courtyard from a high tree branch outside.

CYNTHIA

I brought some apples.

BRADLEY

I'll have one. Thanks.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JONATHAN

Me too.

THE CHILDREN sit high in the tree... watching the whole affair while munching on apples. The drum rolls on.

JONATHAN

We have to be back soon.

CYNTHIA

Don't worry.

BRADLEY

This is boring...

THUNK! IT'S OVER.

-- LIONEL turns his head away in horror. He slowly opens his eyes to see...

-- THE CHILDREN scrambling down the tree.

Lionel strains his head to get a better look. He grabs Bernard, spins him around, and points.

LIONEL

Bernie, over there, that tree!

BERNARD

What?

THE TREE IS EMPTY.

BERNARD

Yes, I see a tree. What of it?

LIONEL

You didn't?... Oh, never mind. Let's go.

CUT TO:

INT. CARDROOM -- DAY

ECU.- A Jack of Diamonds gets slapped down on green felt.

ELEANOR (O.S.)

Ah... that'll show you.

Eleanor, Sarah, and Franklin play a spirited game of cards.

SARAH

Where the devil is Lionel? We can't have a proper game with only three...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Suddenly, the parlor door opens and a pale, jittery Lionel stands in the doorway, covered with sweat.

ELEANOR (CONT'D)
Lionel?

LIONEL
Sorry I'm late.

FRANKLIN
Sit down, chum. You look like you could use a brandy.

LIONEL
Yes. I could.

Lionel strides over to a sideboard and picks up a bottle of brandy, hesitates, and exchanges it for a bottle of scotch, pours himself a shot, slugs it down and pours another.

Eleanor quietly watches the whole thing with a confused expression.

Franklin and Sarah exchange raised eyebrows.

ELEANOR
Lionel. Would it be too much to ask you where you've been?

Lionel hesitates and downs his second drink.

LIONEL
I went with Bernard to witness the hanging of that fiend.

SARAH
No wonder you're so upset. I would be too. Public hangings should be outlawed.

LIONEL
It's not that, you see. It's what the old bugger said before they hanged him, and ...and who was there to watch it!

SARAH AND FRANKLIN
Who?

LIONEL
The children... The bloody children! All my suspicions were confirmed.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ELEANOR
(furious)
Oh, I knew this was coming.

Franklin and Sarah look at each other.

FRANKLIN .
I have a feeling we'd better be going.

They stand up.

ELEANOR
(snaps)
Sit down!

They both sit down.

LIONEL
They were there. I saw them, but that's
not the point. Their uncle, before they
hanged him, you see... he knew...

ELEANOR
Lionel, stop it!

LIONEL
He knew, he warned us...they're evil.

ELEANOR
Stop it right now! Their uncle was a
raving lunatic. You know that.

LIONEL
Of course, I realize that, but I'm
telling you, if you were there...

ELEANOR
Lionel, you've gone bloody mad. You say
they were there?

LIONEL
Yes.

Eleanor gets up and calls for a butler who pops right in.

ELEANOR
Sidney, please find the children and
bring them in here immediately.

BUTLER
Yes, ma'am.

He hurries out. Franklin starts to get up again.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

FRANKLIN

Eleanor, I really think this is
between...

ELEANOR

SIT DOWN!

Franklin practically falls in his chair. Lionel gets up and
fumes in a corner of the room.

LIONEL

You don't understand...

ELEANOR

Don't say another word!

All four wait in complete, hellish silence.

Finally footsteps arrive and the children enter. The butler
closes the door after them.

ELEANOR

Children. I have a very important
question to ask you and I want you to
answer it completely honestly.

ALL THREE IN UNISON

Yes, Miss Witherton

ELEANOR

Where were you this afternoon?

CYNTHIA

You mean after church?

ELEANOR

Yes, after church.

CYNTHIA

We were playing, Miss.

ELEANOR

Playing where? Jonathan?

JONATHAN

Out by the stables, Miss.

ELEANOR

For how long? Bradley?

BRADLEY

Until Sidney got us a second ago, Miss.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Finally Lionel spins around. He's beet red.

LIONEL

Liars. I saw you there with my own eyes.

CYNTHIA

Where, sir?

LIONEL

You know damn well, where. You were scoffing at your dear uncle while he swung from the end of a rope...

ELEANOR

Lionel, that's enough!

ALL THREE CHILDREN LOOK LIKE THEY'RE IN COMPLETE SHOCK.

Suddenly, Cynthia screams and begins sobbing uncontrollably. Jonathan puts his arm around her and holds her up. Bradley plunks down on his butt and joins Cynthia.

CYNTHIA

Uncle...no! Don't let him get me. Please.

ELEANOR

(to Lionel)

You idiot. Now look what you've done.

She rushes over to the children and ushers them out, pausing at the door just long enough to say...

ELEANOR

Lionel, leave this house. I never want to see you again!

LIONEL

But...

Eleanor storms out. Lionel looks shell-shocked.

Sarah and Franklin finally get up. Sarah begins weeping and Franklin puts his arm protectively around her.

Franklin flashes a disgusted glance at Lionel...

FRANKLIN

Really, old boy. I didn't think you had it in you.

They hurry out leaving Lionel alone...arms out, mouth open... Finally, he drops his arms in a gesture of total defeat.

CUT TO:

INT. CHILDREN'S BEDROOM DOOR -- LATER

Eleanor knocks softly. Hilda comes out and quietly closes the door. They whisper.

ELEANOR
How are they?

HILDA
They're quiet now.

ELEANOR
Thank you, Hilda.

Hilda exits. Eleanor opens the door and pokes her head in.

INT. CHILDREN'S BEDROOM -

The children are snuggled in their beds with Sparky lying next to Bradley. Eleanor gently sits on the foot of Cynthia's bed.

ELEANOR
How are you feeling?

CYNTHIA
Much better, thank you.

ELEANOR
I'm so sorry this had to happen.

JONATHAN
We're sorry.

CYNTHIA
Sorry to have caused you so much trouble.

BRADLEY
If you'd like us to leave, we'd understand.

ELEANOR
Don't be absurd. Lets not even talk about it any more. I'm going to cancel my trip to London first thing tomorrow.

CYNTHIA
Please don't. Not on our account.

JONATHAN
We'll be fine.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CYNTHIA
Please don't worry.

ELEANOR
You can manage with Hilda for a few days?

BRADLEY
I'll keep my eye on them if you're worried.

ELEANOR
(smiles)
Well, maybe you're right.

ALL THREE IN UNISON
Good night.

ELEANOR
(pauses)
Good night.

We hear a few notes of the "Little Demon Theme"

FADE TO BLACK:

INT. SCHOOL -- DAY

Miss Tappert addresses the class.

MISS TAPPERT
All right. I'm sure we all had a lovely weekend. Let's begin by describing briefly the most interesting thing that happened to us. Bradley, you may begin.

Bradley rolls his eyes back and sighs--

BRADLEY
Well ... We played around our new house... which is really, really big.

We hear some O.S. giggling which seems to irritate Bradley. He bites his lip and continues.

BRADLEY (CONT'D)
Miss Witherton's stupid boyfriend went insane I think...

Miss TAPPERT gives a quizzical look.

BRADLEY (CONT'D)
...Uhh, we rode horses and ...we... oh yeah, we saw our uncle get hanged.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MISS TAPPERT
Excuse me?

Everyone looks

JONATHAN
(Softly)
Bradley...

BRADLEY
(suddenly alert)
Sorry. I said my tummy got banged... and
I threw up.

Everyone laughs. Bradley's relieved. He turns to Cynthia who
nods approvingly. Miss Tappert bangs her stick on the desk.

MISS TAPPERT
Class! Settle down.
(to Cynthia)
Miss Cunningham. Is there anything you'd
like to share with us?

CYNTHIA
(softly)
I don't think so.

TERESA
Thank God.

Cynthia glares at Teresa, who lifts her nose and turns away.

MISS TAPPERT
Ladies, please. Time, everyone, to begin
our lessons. We'll begin with math and...

CUT TO:

EXT. SCHOOL YARD. AFTERNOON.

There's much yammering while everyone eats lunch. Our three sit
together of course. The other kids are still trying to size
them up. A bullyish boy named ARTHUR SNODGRASS swaggers up to
Jonathan and stands directly in front of him.

ARTHUR
Hey Jonny-Boy.
(no response)
I'm talking to you, Jonny John-boy.

Jonathan finally realizes that he's being referred to.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JONATHAN

If, by chance, you're referring to me, my name is Jonathan.

Nonplussed, he returns to his sandwich. Other kids, sensing a possible altercation in the making, gather around.

ARTHUR

Ohhhh, it's Jonathan. Excuse me. Young Master Jonathan.

This elicits some laughter from the spectators.

ARTHUR (CONT'D)

I heard a certain relative of yours is a real swingin' kind of guy. If you know what I mean.

JONATHAN

I'm afraid I haven't a clue.

ARTHUR

Swingin'. You know, as in... swinging back and forth.

Arthur mimes swinging on the end of a rope. This gets a deep "ohhhhh" from the other kids. Our three children still have absolutely no reaction.

JONATHAN

Are you referring to the fact that my uncle was hanged yesterday?

ARTHUR

Yeah.... Well?

JONATHAN

(perplexed)

Well?

ARTHUR

Well! They hanged him, didn't they? They went and hanged him good, didn't they?

Arthur laughs raucously and slaps his leg. Our three children look at each other and calmly shrug.

CHILDREN

(in unison)

So?

They return to their sandwiches. Arthur is flustered.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ARTHUR

So.... so they so...

He scratches his head. They've completely thrown him and he can't remember what he was trying to do.

Jonathan turns to Cynthia..

JONATHAN

What's he going on about?

CYNTHIA

Pay no mind. He's a strange one.

Teresa has been listening from the sidelines.

TERESA

Obviously peasant-class, they don't even care. No breeding whatsoever.

Cynthia bolts up and shoots Teresa with her look-that-can-kill. Suddenly, she changes her mind, smiles politely and sits down again.

Without taking her eyes off Teresa, Cynthia speaks softly.

CYNTHIA

She's very rude.

JONATHAN

A lesson?

CYNTHIA

In good time, brother. In good time.

BRADLEY

(referring to Arthur)

And him?

ARTHUR -- bullies a small boy.

CYNTHIA

Now that makes me angry. Never pick on someone smaller than yourself. It's not fair, and it shows very bad manners.

Arthur grabs the smaller kid's sandwich and begins to devour it. The smaller kid stifles a cry.

CYNTHIA dabs her lips with a napkin and gets up.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CYNTHIA
I'll take care of this right now.

JONATHAN
Need some help?

CYNTHIA
No, thank you.

She walks over to Arthur and sits down next to him. Arthur, his mouth still filled with stolen sandwich, blurts out...

ARTHUR
What do you want? Come to fight for your
sissy brother?

He laughs, spraying out crumbs. Cynthia's face looks deadly earnest. She brushes the crumbs off her dress.

CYNTHIA
Arthur?

ARTHUR
What?

CYNTHIA
Have you ever heard the sound of an ax
splitting apart a human skull?

She smiles sweetly.

ARTHUR
Uhhhh.... no.

CYNTHIA
Would you like to?

He pinches his eyebrows together in confusion.

ARTHUR
No!

CYNTHIA
Well, you will. You won't hear it for long, but you will hear it for a brief instant. It will come from behind, you see, when you least expect it... and the crack you hear will be that of your own skull splitting in two... releasing a veritable geyser of blood into the air as your brains spill out like so much pudding. Oh... what a glorious sight it will make, for I will be there to witness it, for it will be I who swung that

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CYNTHIA (cont'd)
beautiful ax... and in your last second
or two, as your life leaves your body...
it will be MY face you see smiling down
at you... and then... you... will...
be... dead!

Cynthia smiles sweetly and blinks twice.

Arthur's mouth hangs open and crumbs fall out, along with a
little dribble.

CYNTHIA
I'd advise you to close your mouth or
people will think poorly of you.

He snaps his mouth shut.

CYNTHIA (CONT'D)
You would do well to pick on people your
own size. Do you understand me?

Arthur nods.

CYNTHIA (CONT'D)
Thank you, Arthur. I'm glad we had this
little talk. Good- bye.

Cynthia returns to her brothers.

BRADLEY
How'd it go, sis?

CYNTHIA
Hmmm?
(resumes eating)
Oh, no problem.

JONATHAN
Cynthia? Don't you think it's time we
start thinking about the future?

CYNTHIA
(several beats)
Yes. I do. We'll ask Mother tonight.

POV -- Teresa and her friends playing in slow motion.

CYNTHIA (O.S.)
She'll know what to do...

Hold on the girls.... slow fade out...

CUT TO:

MONTAGE:

MUSIC BEGINS -- we see LITTLE HANDS cleaning... sweeping... moving things around ... hammering... sawing... and sitting like angels around the dinner table.

CUT TO:

INT. BEDROOM -- NIGHT

The children appear to be fast asleep. It sounds like a storm may be brewing with distant thunder and wind.

CYNTHIA
(whispering)

Ready?

JONATHAN

Ready.

BRADLEY

Ready.

CUT TO:

INT. ATTIC -- NIGHT.

(Tip-toe Demon Music plays throughout...)

The door opens with a creak and the children enter wearing white night clothes. Jonathan carries a lantern. They quietly close the door behind them.

With steps in unison, they tiptoe towards us and Jonathan's lantern flares out the frame ...

INT. SANCTUARY ROOM -- MOMENTS LATER

Mother's new altar is gently placed in front of us on a little table as solemn music begins.

It looks like a charming, rag-tag version of the original altar complete with child-like handpainted trim and decoration. The inside is deep red velvet.

PULL BACK reveals the Sanctuary room is scrubbed and spotless.

All three gaze admiringly at the new altar.

BRADLEY
It's even better than the old one.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JONATHAN
We've done well.

CYNTHIA
It's perfect.

The storm moves closer... the wind whistles outside.

Cynthia places three candles around the altar and lights them.
All three kneel down, Cynthia in the middle.

-- The intro of the next song begins over their ritual....

Jonathan takes out the leather pouch which he kisses and hands to Bradley, who gently removes Mother's picture, kisses it, and hands it to Cynthia who, in turn delicately places it in the center of the altar, which they proceed to decorate with bits of colored paper and shiny foil.

Cynthia closes her eyes, puts her hands together, and sings...

[SONG] "MOTHER DEAR"

*Oh Mother Dear, now can you hear us?
We hate to interrupt your rest.
We need your guidance, and your wisdom .
You always seem to know what's best*

*Our sacred trust, remains intact
We will not waiver from our pact.
and if you call, we will be here
your faithful servants, Mother Dear.*

*We know you're busy up in Heaven
So many things - that must be done.
So many chores and obligations
So many souls - that must be won*

*We've tried so hard, to carry on
To make you proud, and to be strong.
But now it's time, to turn to you,
Oh Mother Dear, what shall we do?
Oh Mother Dear, Oh Mother Dear.*

As the music softly finishes, Cynthia begins to nod her head.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Ka-Boom! Lightning flashes. As the storm moves in, Cynthia appears to go into a trance.

CYNTHIA

Yes, Mother. Uh-huh. Yes, Mother. I understand ... of course Mother.

Another great crash of lightning and thunder...

Cynthia gets up, moves over to a small attic window and throws it open. The boys can't wait to receive Mother's message.

BOYS

Well?

CYNTHIA

Give me a second...

The storm subsides. Cynthia stands silhouetted against the glowing clouds.

CYNTHIA (CONT'D)

Mother says that our greatest challenge is ahead of us.

She turns to us. The candles illuminate her face with an eerie intensity.

CYNTHIA (CONT'D)

As we feared, all her hand-maidens ran away when the old altar was destroyed. She's not angry though. She says we did the right thing under the circumstances.

The boys are clearly relieved.

CYNTHIA (CONT'D)

She says we're to continue our work and gather more.

BRADLEY

How'll we find another Uncle Tim?

CYNTHIA

We won't.

The boys look confused.

CYNTHIA (CONT'D)

She says that we are completely capable now, that our objectives are clear and if anybody tries to hamper our mission, we'll know what to do. Mother says there's absolutely no reason why we can't take control of our own destiny.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

They look at each other.

CYNTHIA (CONT'D)
It's just .. that .. simple.

They nod affirmatively and put their hands together.

"LITTLE DEMONS" THEME BEGINS...

POV-- from inside the box we see the three children reach towards us and close the red satin-lined altar doors... engulfing the screen in what appears to be a curtained backdrop.

The three narrators walk out from behind the curtains, line up and begin to sing...

*Well, well, well, what have we here
our children finally received the news
word is in from Mother Dearest
now they all have a job to do.*

*But with hands so small and frail
can they hope to achieve their goals
are they ready, are they able
we shall see as our tale unfolds
.... little demons ...*

The curtains open reveal ...

INT. SCHOOL - DAY

Except for the sound of scribbling pencils, the room is absolutely quiet as the children take a test.

MISS TAPPERT is engrossed in a romance novel.

CYNTHIA studiously works away. A crumpled piece of paper lands on her desk. She opens it.

CLOSE UP -- A stick drawing of a man hanging from a noose with three kids crying below him.

CYNTHIA looks up, fuming mad. She looks to her right.

ARTHUR SNODGRASS is staring at us with a terrified expression. He silently motions with his hands and mouth "not me... not me", and points the other way. Cynthia looks.

TERESA PENNER and her friend giggle together.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Cynthia smiles politely and acknowledges them with a tilt of her head... pulls out a little black book and carefully writes something down. (WE HEAR CYNTHIA'S "BLACK BOOK" THEME, a delightfully sinister little ditty which will recur) Satisfied, she closes the book and returns to her work.

Jonathan and Cynthia exchange subtle nods.

(Little Demon musical montage begins. It starts lightly and builds as it goes...)

CUT TO:

EXT. DRIVEWAY -- DAY

Eleanor is driving off. She leans out the window and waves. The children wave back. Pulling back we see that behind the children stands Hilda with a stern, resolved expression.

HILDA looks down at the children.

POV - They look up and smile halfheartedly.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. DRAWING ROOM-- EVENING

CLOSE-UP -- A sketch is in progress on notebook paper. Little hands are at work. Rulers, erasers and pencils are scattered about. We see what looks like an extremely intricate design for a very lethal series of events, which conclude with a guillotine chopping off the head of a crudely-drawn man.

PULL BACK -- The children are busily at work, concentrating with a feverish intensity. The music builds to a climax....

THE DOOR SUDDENLY SWINGS OPEN, ENDING THE MUSIC...

-- HILDA STANDS IN THE DOORWAY LOOKING VERY MUCH IN CHARGE.

The children grimace.

HILDA

Why aren't you doing your homework?

She quickly scoops up the children's drawings and plans ...

THEY ARE OUTRAGED!

JONATHAN

I beg your pardon, but that's ours.
Please give it back.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Hilda's looking at the paper. She's clearly displeased.

HILDA
This isn't homework.

JONATHAN
Madam. We've finished our homework.

CYNTHIA
There's really no reason to be rude.
Please give us back our drawings.

HILDA
I will do no such thing. And I don't take
orders from children. I will keep these
until Miss Witherton returns. I'd like
her to see how you spend your spare time.

CYNTHIA
(growing incensed)
We are allowed to do what we wish in our
spare time. Those drawings belong to us.
I ask you again. Please return them.

HILDA
No!

Cynthia's eyes are beginning to smolder. Jonathan and Bradley
look at each other. They know something's about to happen.

CYNTHIA
Give them back now! And ... apologize.

Hilda's eyes grow wide.

HILDA
Apologize? Apologize? How dare you speak
to me like that!

She promptly tears up the papers and throw them in the air.

HILDA (CONT'D)
There are your drawings. And I ought to
paddle your good for your impudence..

CYNTHIA
(standing up)
I wouldn't recommend that.

They square off --- Eye to eye.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

HILDA
Oh, wouldn't you?

JONATHAN
When Miss Witherton gets home...

HILDA
Miss Witherton left me in charge. And I'm
afraid you have crossed the line, Miss.
Bradley, bring me that stick.

She points to a teaching-stick in the corner.

BRADLEY DOESN'T MOVE. This makes Hilda furious.

HILDA
Jonathan... bring it to me.

JONATHAN remains perfectly still.

HILDA (CONT'D)
All right. Have it your way. Instead of
just Cynthia, I will punish you all.

She storms over to the stick, picks it up, and returns.

HILDA
Cynthia, bend over the chair.

Cynthia stares her down.

CYNTHIA
(calmly)
Are you sure you want to go through with
this? You'd be well advised to take a
moment and reconsider.

Hilda quickly pops two of her heart pills.

HILDA
(screaming)
Bend ... over

Cynthia slowly bends over the chair.

HILDA
Let this be a lesson.

As Hilda picks up the stick and positions herself to begin, we
move in close on Cynthia's face.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

HILDA (O.S.)
A lesson to you all.

Whack... whack.... whack ... Cynthia's face registers
absolutely nothing... barely even a flinch.

FADE TO BLACK:

INT. BEDROOM. -- NIGHT.

The children are in bed. Bradley is whimpering softly.

CYNTHIA
You all right, Bradley?

BRADLEY
Yeah, I guess so.

CYNTHIA
Jonathan?

JONATHAN
I'm fine. Couldn't be better.

CYNTHIA
I believe this evenings occurrence will
have displeased Mother very, very much.

BOYS
Uhhh huh.

They all say good night. We hear a nightingale calling out in
the distance as we hold for several beats...

KNOCK... KNOCK... KNOCK...

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. MORNING

The children's door swings open to reveal Hilda the conqueror.
She begins to speak but pauses when she sees...

-- THE CHILDREN. ALREADY UP AND DRESSED, SITTING ON THEIR
NEATLY-MADE BEDS.

HILDA
Well, we're up early.

ALL THREE IN UNISON
Yes, ma'am.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

HILDA
(feeling her oats)
I can see our little talk was quite
effective last night.

ALL THREE IN UNISON
Yes, ma'am.

HILDA
I'd like you ready for breakfast in ten
minutes.

ALL THREE IN UNISON
Yes ma'am.

Hilda's perplexed. It's too strange, too perfect. She leaves.

We follow Hilda as she closes the door, looks back for a beat,
and proceeds to her room.

Hilda humms to herself as she arranges her things, when
suddenly, there's a loud *thunk!*

She cocks her head and listens.... nothing.

HILDA
Children!

She listens again... nothing.

HILDA (CONT'D)
(loudly)
What are you up to? Children?

She hurries back to the children's door and opens it...

HILDA (CONT'D)
Cynthia, what in the.....

Hilda freezes in her tracks.

ALL THREE CHILDREN ARE HANGING BY THE NECK FROM NOOSES WHICH
ARE SLUNG OVER A RAFTER.

They swing slowly back and forth...

Backing out into the hallway, Hilda gasps for air and reaches
for her chest.

She hits the opposite wall of the hallway and gropes her way
back to her room, where she finds her pill box.

Falling into a chair, she opens the pillbox to find....

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

-- NOTHING. THE BOX IS EMPTY...

-- She reaches for her throat and throws her head back.

-- CLOSE-UP... We pan down to her empty pillbox, still clutched in her other hand, and hold there. Slowly, her hand relaxes... she wheezes one more time.... it's over.

(Begin Little Demon tiptoe theme)

CYNTHIA (O.S.)
(whispering)
Quickly.

JONATHAN (O.S.)
Yes... I know.

Still holding on the empty pillbox, we SEE a HAND come into frame and carefully pour the missing pills back into it.

BRADLEY (O.S.)
Come on, we'll be late for school.

JONATHAN (O.S.)
All done.

CYNTHIA (O.S.)
(after several beats)
There's really no excuse for rudeness now, is there?

JONATHAN (O.S.)
Ta ta...

(music ends with a cheery crescendo)

CUT TO:

INT. LIONEL'S LIBRARY -- DAY

CLOSE-UP -- ELEANOR'S SMILING PHOTOGRAPH

Pulling back we see a half-empty bottle of brandy.

Continuing back, we see Lionel, completely disheveled, reclining in a huge chair. He stares longingly at Eleanor's photo, and looks as if he's been living in his red-striped pajamas and silk robe for days. He clutches an empty glass.

LIONEL
(to the picture)
So they got poor old Hilda, did they? And if I tried to explain it to you, you'd think me bloody mad. Me! Bloody mad.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LIONEL (cont'd)
(he laughs)
Well I've been bloody stupid, that's what
I've been....

He picks up Eleanor's picture.

LIONEL (CONT'D)
... now look at me. A useless, blob of
protoplasm. Oh, darling, you could be
next...it's only a matter of time... and
you've no one to protect you....but me.

His face flickers with resolve... he calls out.

LIONEL (CONT'D)
John!

We hear footsteps approaching

BUTLER
Yes, sir?

LIONEL
Please bring me some stationary. I'll be
wanting to deliver a letter to Miss
Witherton this afternoon.

BUTLER
Right away, sir.

To Eleanor's photo--

LIONEL
Inveniam viam aut faciam.

BUTLER
Excuse me, sir?

LIONEL
Latin, John.... "I shall find a way, or I
shall make one."

BUTLER
Uh... Yes, sir.

CUT TO:

EXT. THE PARK -- DAY

[A musical montage begins with a "Come-Along Song Reprise"]

The children and Eleanor sit on a bench in the park on a sunny
afternoon. Eleanor chats with some ladies. Bradley pulls on
Cynthia's sleeve and points...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

A BLOND GIRL on the bench across from them is taunting a SMALL DOG. Cynthia nods to Bradley. We see ...

The girl pull a piece of meat from a sandwich and hold it in front of the dog...

POV - The dog sits up and begs directly to us.

The girl snatches the meat away and eats it then laughs... Again and again, she taunts the dog.

POV - The dog finally gives up and walks away.

The girl calls it back enthusiastically.

Cynthia sneers and raises her eyebrows to Bradley.

Sure enough, the dog returns and she tricks it again. The little girl giggles uncontrollably.

Cynthia pulls out her black book and writes...

TIME DISSOLVE --

The BLOND GIRL strolls along a garden path... but now Jonathan is strolling with her, making friends...

TIME DISSOLVE --

The girl and our three children stand on a high cliff over the sea, watching boats...

ANOTHER ANGLE -- With the wind blowing their hair, they face us. Cynthia opens a purse and gently pulls out a scissors.

CLOSE ANGLE -- The girls golden hair blowing in the wind. The scissors enters frame...

... SNIP ...SILENCE... BLACKOUT ... TIMPANI BOOM...

[Note: Every time we hear the timpani, it will be our signal that a death has just occurred]

CUT TO:

INT. STORE WINDOW -- DAY

We see a beautiful dress with costume jewelry covering it.

A young AUBURN HAIREd WOMAN peers through the glass at us, hypnotised by what she sees. To her right, Bradley enters frame and pretends to gaze along side her. He's dressed to the hilt like Little Lord Fauntleroy, and carries a teddy bear which is covered with Miss Witherton's jewelry.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

THE WOMAN glances at him and does an extreme double-take.

Immediately, she sprouts an enormous smile and strikes up a conversation. Although we hear nothing from behind the glass, we can clearly see her interest.

TIME DISSOLVE --

The auburn-haired young woman sits with Bradley by the bank of a stream. He has a little picnic area set up with several teddy bears around a basket and he points into the stream...

In a deep pool, we see something shiny underwater... It looks like a LARGE DIAMOND BROOCH. The young woman's eyes grow wide.

UNDERWATER SHOT. -- We see the young woman reaching her hand towards us, grasping for the brooch. Behind her, Cynthia and Jonathan come into frame. Cynthia holds a scissors. They look at each other and Cynthia leans towards us.

...SNIP ... BLACKOUT ... TIMPANI BOOM

CUT TO:

EXT. FIELD -- DAY

A RED-HEADED GIRL is blindfolded and laughing hysterically. Twirling her around are the children... pulling back reveals that they are playing next to a RAILROAD TRACK.

Behind them, we SEE that a TRAIN IS APPROACHING.

The children look at the train, then at each other, then at the girl who twirls wildly....

CLOSE UP -- Cynthia pulls out her scissors... SNIP... BLACKOUT.

-- SOUND OF ONRUSHING TRAIN ... SILENCE ... TIMPANI BOOM.

[End Musical Sequence]

CUT TO:

INT. SANCTUARY -- NIGHT

CLOSE-UP -- A lock of red hair is securely fastened to Mother's altar. (blond and auburn locks hang next to it)

PULL BACK -- The children smile. Cynthia lowers her head and closes her eyes. Eerie music plays again

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CYNTHIA

Yes... Thank you, Mother. I'll tell them.
(opens her eyes)
Mother's pleased. They're both coming
along fine. She says, carry on.

BRADLEY AND JONATHAN

Hurray...

All three do their little jitterbug dance in celebration.

CUT TO:

INT. DRAWING ROOM -- NIGHT/CONTINUOUS TIME

Eleanor sits on a cozy couch reading mail. She hears muffled clumping from somewhere up above and looks quizzically towards the ceiling, then returns to her letters.

CLOSE UP -- The next letter is from Lionel

Eleanor looks tense as she opens it and reads.

LIONEL (V.O.)

Dearest Eleanor. I realize that to ask for forgiveness at this point would be useless. I've made a complete mess of everything, but I still love you. I've realized, from talking to a doctor during my convalescence, that my aggression towards the children, bless their hearts, comes from my own transference of guilt, which stems from a childhood that I never had. I find, contrary to what I had stubbornly believed, that Professor Freud has much to offer me in way of help and guidance.

ELEANOR

Good Lord amazing!

LIONEL (V.O.)

I'm not asking you to take me back. Just to let me be a friend to you and the children if it's not too late..

Eleanor wipes a tear from her eye.

LIONEL (V.O.)

Eternally your... Lionel.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. DINING ROOM. NIGHT

Generous helpings of food are being scooped onto plates.

JONATHAN

Yes, please... thank you.

BRADLEY

Yes, please... thank you.

CYNTHIA

Yes, please....thank you.

Pulling back, we see that the children are all accepting second helpings of everything. Eleanor laughs...

ELEANOR

My God, where do you put it all?

(pause)

There's something I'd like to discuss.

She shifts uncomfortably and tosses her napkin on the table.

ELEANOR (CONT'D)

Sir Lionel is going to visit tonight. If you're at all uncomfortable about it, I'll arrange to see him in another part of the house and I promise you won't even see him.

The children exchange glances and shrug. We can see on Cynthia's face that her mind is working.

BRADLEY AND JONATHAN

No problem.

CYNTHIA

No problem here either.

ELEANOR

Excellent. Believe it or not, he really wants to see all of you too.

ALL THREE IN UNISON

How nice!

The butler enters.

BUTLER

Excuse me, ma'am. Sir Lionel is here.
Shall I have him wait in the parlor....

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LIONEL
Hello

Lionel enters from behind the butler. He's smiling handsomely and his arms are full of flowers and gift boxes.

LIONEL
Sorry. Don't want to interrupt dinner.
I'll just leave these ...

ELEANOR
No. For goodness sake, come in and join
us for dessert. What in the world have
you got there?

LIONEL
For you, dear...

He hands the flowers to Eleanor.

ELEANOR
Oh, you shouldn't have.

LIONEL
And you, and you...

He hands presents to the children who thank him politely.

TIME-LAPSE DISSOLVE:

Lionel is finishing an attempt at a joke after dessert.

LIONEL
... and so she said... 'how could I? The
cows have all gone home.'

Everyone laughs... or pretends to.

ELEANOR
Lionel, really.

LIONEL
(earnestly)
I would like very much to apologize, in
particular to you, Cynthia.

CYNTHIA
Your apology is accepted.

Eleanor's pleased to see Lionel and Cynthia being so cordial.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LIONEL

Perhaps, Eleanor, this might be an opportune moment for Cynthia and me to have a little heart to heart talk. That is, if she'd like to.

CYNTHIA

I think that would be wonderful.
(to Eleanor)
Would it be all right?

Eleanor almost can't believe her ears.

ELEANOR

Why... absolutely. Why don't you use the library? It's quiet there.

CUT TO:

INT. HALLWAY-- NIGHT/MOMENTS LATER.

Lionel politely opens the door to the library. Cynthia thanks him as she enters. Lionel gently closes the door...

They immediately square off and slowly begin to circle each other like a pair of alley-cats in an apache dance. Music plays throughout.

LIONEL

I'll get right to the point.

CYNTHIA

I really wish you would, *uncle dear*.

Lionel cringes at the word "uncle"

LIONEL

Don't call me that.

CYNTHIA

Why? We're practically related.

LIONEL

Your uncle is dead, thank God. I was there when he died, as were you.

CYNTHIA

(flaring)
Prove it!

They pause, then slowly resume their circular dance.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LIONEL

I don't suppose you had anything to do with Hilda's death?

CYNTHIA

(laughing)

Why, Uncle. You really do have the most vivid imagination. You really do....

LIONEL

Not to mention a few other unsolved mysteries which have been popping up recently... don't know about those either, do you?

CYNTHIA

Oh, uncle dear. You're becoming tiresome.

Lionel loses his composure.

LIONEL

I'm not your bloody uncle! Your uncle was a... a mad man...

CYNTHIA

Funny... you remind me more and more of my dear departed uncle every day.

LIONEL

Ohhh, yes, touche. Let me tell you something. Eleanor may be blind to...

CYNTHIA

Leave Eleanor out of this...This is between you and me.

LIONEL

Someday Eleanor will be my wife.

CYNTHIA

(gleefully)

Oh good. Then I can call you Daddy!

LIONEL

Damn you!

Lionel slams his fist down on a table. They pause again and face each other dead on..

LIONEL (CONT'D)

You won't be around long enough to call me anything!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CYNTHIA
We'll see who's around longer.

INTERCUT BETWEEN LIONEL AND CYNTHIA -- as they move in closer to each other.

LIONEL
I know what you are.

CYNTHIA
And what's that?

LIONEL
A monster. Like your Uncle. His blood flows in your veins. He knew, didn't he? He knew what you were...

CYNTHIA
Oh really?

LIONEL
Really!

CYNTHIA
Well, let's for a moment. Consider this. If you're wrong, then you've just made some hideous accusations against an innocent child. If however, just for the sake of argument, you are correct, then don't you think you'd better be careful?

LIONEL
Are you threatening me?

CYNTHIA
Why, Uncle, how crude.

As they move closer together, their voices get softer while growing in intensity.

LIONEL
I won't let you get away with this.

CYNTHIA
We'll just see.

LIONEL
I'll be watching every move you make.

CYNTHIA
And I, you...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LIONEL

My God, you must be born of the devil.

Cynthia's eyes look as if they've ignited on fire.

CYNTHIA

Don't... you...ever...

THE DOOR OPENS SUDDENLY. THEY BOTH TURN....

ELEANOR smiles proudly.

ELEANOR

Helloooo..

CYNTHIA AND LIONEL-- Standing toe to toe. Both of them snap out of it and smile. Cynthia takes Lionel's hand.

ELEANOR

Sorry, I don't want to interrupt but I was wondering if I could get you both some warm cocoa.

LIONEL

I... uh... we were just finished and about to come down.

ELEANOR

Oh, good. We'll have it in the kitchen.

They all exit together. Eleanor bubbling...

ELEANOR (O.S.)

I just can't tell you how happy I am to see you both getting along so well. Did you have a pleasant talk?

CYNTHIA AND LIONEL (O.S.)

Yes...lovely!

(2 bars of Demon Theme)....

CUT TO:

INT. BEDROOM -- NIGHT

Three faces huddle around a single candle...

CYNTHIA

We've got a problem.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JONATHAN
We'll just have to deal with it.

BRADLEY
With him, you mean.

CYNTHIA AND JONATHAN
With him!

She blows out the candle.....BLACK.

CUT TO:

EXT. SCHOOLYARD -- DAY

The three sit together eating their lunch. Teresa Penner and her cronies saunter by.

As she passes Cynthia, Teresa mutters under her breath...

TERESA
Peasants....

JONATHAN
Wouldn't a trip to Mother's do wonders
for her personality?

CYNTHIA
In time. First things first.

JONATHAN
When do we make our move?

CYNTHIA
Tonight.

BRADLEY AND JONATHAN
Tonight!

They hold up their cups of milk and clink them together.

BRADLEY
Cheers...

CUT TO:

INT. DINING ROOM -- THAT EVENING

Two glasses klink together

LIONEL
Cheers, Darling.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Dinner is over. Lionel and Eleanor are toasting with wine. The children sit at the far end of the table.

ELEANOR
Cheers.

CYNTHIA
I'll get the pudding.

BRADLEY
Hurray!

ELEANOR
That would be splendid. Thank you.

MOMENTS LATER

CLOSE UP -- A bowl of bread pudding is placed on the table.
PANNING UP, we see Lionel chatting away with Eleanor.

Cynthia has finished serving and sits with her siblings. The three seem particularly interested in Lionel.

CLOSE UP -- Lionel brings a spoonful of pudding to his mouth and pauses to finish his story.

ANOTHER ANGLE -- LIONEL'S P.O.V.-- SLO-MO

The spoon is right in our faces -- Pulling in focus, he sees

THE CHILDREN, STARING AT HIM, FIXATED, WITH THEIR MOUTHS
HANGING PARTLY OPEN...

Just as he's about to indulge, he pauses and eyes the children.

The children close their mouths in unison.

Lionel looks down at his spoon, and back at the children again... something registers on his face...

Several beats go by. As if changing his mind, he lowers the spoon and accidentally knocks the bowl of pudding onto the floor.

Everything returns to real-time. The children look startled at each other.

LIONEL
Oh, dear. Now I've done it.

Sparky the Terrier, who hovers nearby, wastes no time attacking the tasty spilled pudding.

Bradley looks at Cynthia with a sick look. Cynthia doesn't look well herself. Jonathan shrugs his shoulders helplessly.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ELEANOR
(laughing)
Your loss, Sparky's gain.

Eleanor calls out to the maid who brings out another pudding for Lionel and cleans up the spilled one.

LIONEL -- eats the new pudding. He stares directly at the children, who stare back gravely.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. KITCHEN -- MORNING

CLOSE UP -- Leather shoes walking on tile floor. We hear whistling but we follow the shoes low on the floor...

BUTLER (O.S.)
Here we go boy, breakfast...
(more whistling)
Sparky....Sparky?

The shoes stop at a cute little doggie basket in which lies a very still little terrier. A hand reaches into frame and touches the dog.

BUTLER
Uh Ohh...

CUT TO:

THE GARDEN-- LATER

CLOSE UP -- A shovel is pushing the last bit of fresh earth over a little grave.

ELEANOR (O.S.)
Poor little Sparky...

Eleanor and the children stand solemnly together. Eleanor wipes a tear from her cheek...

ELEANOR
May he rest in peace...

The children exchange sad, guilty glances to each other.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. BEDROOM -- NIGHT

The children are in bed, Eleanor sits on Cynthia's with a copy of Alice in Wonderland in her hand... an intimate conversation is in progress...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CYNTHIA

At first I didn't think it would be a problem, but now, whenever I see Sir Lionel, I find more and more, that the memories of our...our uncle...you see...

ELEANOR

Well of course, Cynthia. I completely understand.

CYNTHIA

Thank you, ma'am. I knew you ...

ELEANOR

(interrupting)

But. Although I won't try to defend his terrible behavior, everyone deserves a chance to change. I think he's trying very, very hard. Don't you think we should try a little too?

Cynthia can see that this new tack is hopeless.

CYNTHIA

Yes, of course.

ELEANOR

Good. Then we'll all make a big effort. We've all got to try harder.

ALL THREE IN UNISON

(disappointed)

Yes, ma'am.

Eleanor reads from "Alice" and almost right away sees that the children are asleep. She closes the book, walks to the door, but instead of leaving, she pauses and sings...

[SONG] " LITTLE ANGELS "

*Look at them those little Angels.
Heaven watches over them
Delicate, so small and frail
How I want to comfort them.*

*It was but a chance of fate
That I was blessed to find them there
So in need of tender loving
Gentle things, they ask for nothing... Little Angels*

*There they are those little darlings...
Hear their laughter soft and sweet*

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

*All their past will fade away
and slowly melt into their dreams*

*Look at them, those little Angels
how it warms my heart to watch
Knowing that I've saved them from a
fate that's much to grim to think of... heaven's watching.*

*coming from that hellish world, how could they have stayed so pure.
So untouched my evil's hand, it's so hard to understand...*

*Look at them, see how they sleep.
so innocent and free of care.
Everything I've always longed for
All the answers to my prayers.*

*Always searching patiently
To find a meaning in my life
How lucky then I was to find them
God give me the strength to find them.
For it's You who've placed them here...
For me to love, for me to care ...
For me to love those Little Angels.*

Cynthia's voice O.S. into dissolve ---"She's right, we've got to try harder"... (2 bars Demon Theme)....

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. LIONEL'S DRIVEWAY -- DAY/LATER

Lionel is leaving his front door. He's in a hurry. The butler comes running out after him.

BUTLER
Sir, don't forget your briefcase.

LIONEL
Good Lord, no.

He hops in his car and takes off. In an overhead shot, we see him pull out of his driveway into the road....

CUT TO:

EXT. ROAD -- DAY/MOMENTS LATER

Lionel is driving down the beginning of a long incline. As he begins to speed up, he applies his brakes... Nothing. He pumps them hard... Nothing! He begins to panic.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

In an almost surreal moment, we track along side Lionel's car when suddenly... we SEE THE CHILDREN, smiling on the side of the road... almost in a blur ... they happily wave...

...(one bar Demon Theme plays) ...

Lionel sees them for a split second. He screams

REAR ANGLE -- Lionel heads away from us down the hill.

We hear a sweet, delicate little musical phrase with a harpsichord which climbs a scale and ends with a trill as...

LIONEL HITS A TREE WITH A LOUD CRASH.

Pulling back just a few feet we see the children, backs to us, holding hands in the middle of the street. They sing...

Help me, help me, la, la, la, la, la.

Then they giggle to each other and run off

We begin a new musical montage

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. SCHOOLYARD -- AFTERNOON

Teresa Penner is talking to GREGORY, a snotty looking blond boy. We can't hear her, but she appears to fawn over him.

Pulling back, we see Our three. They stand off to the side... watching... taking notes. Teresa glances over, sees them, and sneers. They smile back sweetly.

CUT TO:

INT. TREAT SHOP -- AFTERNOON/LATER

Teresa has a soda with her gang. She turns around to see ...

THE CHILDREN -- SITTING AT A BACK TABLE, ALSO SIPPING SODAS.

They smile at her. She gets up from the table furiously and storms over to their table.

TERESA

What do you think you're up to?

CYNTHIA

Having a soda like you. What else?

CUT TO:

EXT. TREAT SHOP -- MOMENTS LATER

Teresa exits alone. After several beats, so do the children.

CHILDREN'S POV-- Teresa walks down the sidewalk and turns a corner. We approach the same corner when

LIONEL APPEARS-- INJURED BUT ALIVE.... SMILING.

On his left arm is a sling and under his hat we can see a large bandage. He has a somewhat crazy expression.

LIONEL

Hello.

The children stop cold. They're speechless.

LIONEL

Didn't expect to see me. Did you?

CYNTHIA

Why... Sir Lionel, what a pleasant surprise. Have you had an accident?

LIONEL

Oh, yes. Indeed I have. But as you can see, I'm just fine. Hope I didn't interrupt anything.

CYNTHIA

Why, no. We were ...just going home.

LIONEL

Well, then. I'll be seeing you.

Cynthia fumes.

LIONEL (CONT'D)

Oh, and one more thing. That girl you were following, stay away from her. She happens to be my niece and I'll be watching her very closely.

He winks and disappears around the corner.

HOLD ON CYNTHIA FUMING -- [*Demon theme plays*]

CUT TO:

INT. ELEANOR'S PARLOR -- AFTERNOON

Eleanor's laughing uproariously. She's on the phone.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ELEANOR

Oh, really. I wish you hadn't told me that. No, you don't say.

Through the window, beyond her, we see the children carrying lumber, tools, rope, and a hatchet.

ELEANOR

No, everything's been much better. Lionel and the children seem to be getting along like thieves....

CUT TO:

INT. LIBRARY -- NIGHT

CLOSE-UP -- More elaborate drawings of various death-traps cross our view

We hear Eleanor call through the door from the hallway...

ELEANOR (O.S.)

Knock... knock... how's our homework coming? Need any help?

Another diagram crosses our view....

CYNTHIA (O.S.)

No ma'am. We're doing fine.

Another, even deadlier diagram crosses our view.

BRADLEY AND JONATHAN

Just fine!

CUT TO:

EXT. LIONEL'S HOUSE. EVENING

Lionel drives up in a new automobile. Stops in front of the entrance and climbs out with his briefcase.

CUT TO:

INT. LIONEL'S ENTRY WAY-- EVENING.

Lionel enters. He looks very tired and haggard.

LIONEL

John! John, where are you?

(no answer)

Damn. Where is everyone?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

He walks back to the kitchen and notices the back door is open. He peers out.

LIONEL
John? Sabrina?

A moment later he hears a jalopy pulling around to the rear of the house. After a moment. JOHN, the butler, and SABRINA, the maid, enter, carrying bags.

JOHN
I'm terribly sorry we're late, Sir.

LIONEL
(grumpy)
This door was wide open when I got home.

JOHN
I assure you, sir, that I did not leave it open.... Sabrina!

SABRINA
Oh! Don't you dare look at me. I didn't have anything to do with it

They begin arguing and Lionel can't handle it.

LIONEL
Never bloody mind. I'll be in my study.

JOHN
Yes, sir. I'll bring you your port.

Lionel storms out. John and Sabrina continue arguing.

CUT TO:

INT. LIONEL'S STUDY -- EVENING.

Lionel's study is a high ceilinged, spacious room with hundreds of books. Hunting pictures hang on the walls. OUR POV IS BEHIND HIS PLUSH READING CHAIR.

LIONEL ENTERS. He has changed into his silk robe and slippers and we commence to spy on his private evening ritual. He gives a long stretch, arches his back with a loud groan, picks up his evening paper and plops into his chair.

He then lifts both arms above his head and shakes them furiously while emitting an operatic musical scale up and down, ending on an out-of-tune baritone note. The finale to his performance is a loud belch followed by a robust fart.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

NOW... HE'S FINALLY READY TO RELAX.

He opens the paper, puts his feet up on the ottoman, and reaches for his port glass.... which isn't there.

LIONEL

Damn it. Where's my port?

He reaches up and to his right, for the plush, red pull-cord to summons John. While he's doing this, the background comes into focus revealing....

A LARGE HATCHET.... CATCHING A GLINT OF LIGHT.

It hangs high up, directly across from him, on a long rope.

Lionel gives the pull-cord a firm tug, which is followed by a metallic snap...THE HATCHET IS RELEASED and begins its long smooth arc directly towards us.... and Lionel's head.

At the very last possible second he sees it coming, shrieks, and DUCKS. It MISSES him by a fraction of an inch.

The hatchet swings with a loud, AUDIBLE SWISH, right into camera... BLACK.

ANOTHER ANGLE:

LIONEL

Christ.

He jumps out of the chair as the hatchet, completing its arc, swings back over where his head was a moment before with another swish... Watching with stupefied amazement, his voice is dry and broken and barely audible.

LIONEL

Christ!...Christ!... Christ!

On about the third pass of the now-diminishing arc, Lionel grabs the handle of the hatchet, stopping it.

He scratches his head and shuffles around it with a jerky motion... going right for a silver brandy snifter on a shelf.

LIONEL (CONT'D)

Christ.... Jesus Christ.

He takes a long swig from the snifter when suddenly he stops.

CLOSE UP -- THE SNIFTER!

He screams and throws the snifter on the floor, spitting out what little he has left in his mouth....

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LIONEL

Oh, my God... They got me!

He runs, tripping as he goes into an adjoining bathroom and disappears from sight. We hear the sound of retching for a few uncomfortable moments....

INT. BATHROOM -- CONTINUOUS.

Lionel is on the floor with his back against the tile wall, panting, gasping, and wiping his mouth. Pulling into focus on top of the toilet is a little formal greeting card.

Lionel groans and reaches for the card....

CLOSE-UP -- A NEATLY TYPED MESSAGE. Lionel reads aloud.

"Greetings. If you're reading this note, then congratulations, you are still alive, though probably somewhat shaken. I think I've made my point, however. It is advised that you disappear for a while. Perhaps, for a good while.... Love and kisses...."

He grits his teeth and hisses...

LIONEL

Damn them...

CLOSE UP - THE NOTE... *"P.S. There was nothing in the brandy."*

Lionel gives out a long low moan which turns into a sort of howl. He crumples the note in his fist.

LIONEL

Bloody, bloody hell. All right! Two can play this game.

He smashes his fist onto the toilet seat.

LIONEL (CONT'D)

Two .. can .. play .. this .. game!

Five beat musical crescendo....

CUT TO:

EXT. LIONEL'S HOUSE -- LATER.

Slamming the door, Lionel rages out onto the grounds. Walking aimlessly, he mutters to himself. We hear distant thunder as a storm brews... which seems to match his temper perfectly.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LIONEL

They're not even human...No. Their uncle knew. Oh, yes, he bloody well knew. Not human. They're just horrible little mice!

The thought seems to strike him as absolutely hilarious and he giggles all the more...

LIONEL (CONT'D)

Horrible, evil little mice.

(he begins to sing)

Horrible little mice... horrible little mice...catch them by their little tails..

Against the stormy sky we see an ANCIENT GAZEBO on the far end of Lionel's property...Lionel walks up to it and stares... it seems to ignite something in his mind.

LIONEL

(rapidly)

What do we do when we have mice? ... what do we do? We set little mice traps...

He leans on one of the heavy supporting pillars and pushes. The whole gazebo wobbles.

LIONEL (CONT'D)

(singing again)

Horrible little mice... Horrible little mice.

SLOW PULL-BACK -- as rain begins to fall, he kneels down and begins twisting the pillar, loosening it, and pushing again.

Pulling back further reveals... THE CHILDREN, on a little hill outside of Lionel's property, spying with binoculars.

CYNTHIA

Curious...most curious.

JONATHAN

Indeed!

CYNTHIA

He's alive at any rate.

BRADLEY

Do you think he's angry?

All three burst into high pitched giggles...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CYNTHIA

All right, troops. It's been a good day's work. Let's go home.

JONATHAN AND BRADLEY

Home.

FADE TO BLACK:

ECHOING AGAINST BLACK "HOME!"

INT. KITCHEN -- NIGHT.

ELEANOR

... is where the heart is. That's what my mother always said.

Eleanor is having cocoa with the children who are in their pajamas. It's all very cozy.

ELEANOR

And how was your day?

BRADLEY

Wonderful.

JONATHAN

We went on a long hike.

CYNTHIA

By your suggestion, we've begun several hobby projects.

JONATHAN

We'd like to learn how to build theatrical sets.

ELEANOR

What a splendid idea. Now I've got a very important question for you.

They all look at her.

ELEANOR (CONT'D)

How'd you like to spend summer in London?

They shrug and look at each other.

ELEANOR

Many more opportunities to study set building...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CYNTHIA

How nice.

ELEANOR

Excellent. I've got a lead on an absolutely marvelous flat. I'd like to go this weekend and start making the arrangements.

CYNTHIA

Shall we come with you?

ELEANOR

Well, you could, but there is something which might prove to be much more interesting for you.

(she pauses)

Lionel has offered to keep you overnight Saturday, and since you're all getting along so well these days, I thought it might be a wonderful experience for all of you...especially for Lionel. Now tell me truthfully what you think.

They exchange glances. We can see Cynthia's mind working. She smiles to herself.

CYNTHIA

It sounds perfectly lovely.

ELEANOR

Excellent. It's settled. I'm giving the whole staff the night off and Dolly can drop you on her way home. Just in time for supper.

CYNTHIA

How perfect!

ELEANOR

Personally, I think Lionel is really beginning to change for the better, don't you?

She smiles... they smile back.

All three children exchange glances and begin to giggle, so does Eleanor, but she's not sure why.

(Demon Theme plays....)

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. SCHOOL -- DAY

CLOSE-UP ON TERESA PENNER.-- She giggles, then gasps and blushes. We see that she's deeply engrossed in a letter. She peers over her shoulder.

Gregory, the blond boy, is deep at work, as is everyone else. She returns to the letter.

CLOSE UP -- THE LETTER reads... *"Dearest Teresa. I think about you all the time, though I've never told you. Please allow me to vent my heart. Is it possible, my love, that you could sneak away at 10:00 Saturday night and meet me under your uncle Lionel's gazebo, that I might find you gazing at the stars, and take you by surprise? Love, Gregory... P.S. Tell no one."*

Teresa clasps the letter to her heart and practically chokes. Mrs. Tappert looks up from a romance novel and Teresa quickly composes herself. The teacher returns to her book and Teresa turns to spy on Gregory

GREGORY is absorbed in work.

TERESA
Psssssst....

Gregory looks up. He's confused.

Teresa, batting her eyelashes absurdly and mouths the word..."YES"

Gregory looks frightened. He tries to half-smile at Teresa, then quickly returns to his work.

Cynthia, who has observed the whole thing, smiles.

CUT TO:

EXT. ELEANOR'S HOUSE-- SATURDAY DAY.

Several servants are in the process of leaving. Eleanor waves from her car as she pulls off.

The children and Dolly wave until the car is gone.

DOLLY
I'll be doing some laundry. Call me if
you need me. Stay out of trouble now...

THE CHILDREN don't even have to answer, they look so sweet.

(The "Come-Along Song" begins as a reprise)

CUT TO:

MONTAGE-- VARIOUS INTERCUTS

-- busy hands at work... sawing... positioning ...
painting...wire, rope...etc.

-- intercut with... Lionel's hands gingerly pushing on a heavy
beam of from the gazebo...it gives... tying a rope around it's
base and concealing it...

(the reprise ends with ominous "Demon" theme crescendo)....

CUT TO:

EXT. LIONEL'S FRONT DOOR. EVENING

Ding dong.... (timpani roll)....

The door swings open. It's Lionel smiling politely.

LIONEL
Welcome....

The smiling children with Dolly behind them.

ALL THREE IN UNISON
Thank you very much.

CUT TO:

INT. DINING ROOM -- LATER.

LIONEL sits at one end of a long table -- THE CHILDREN sit
together at the other. Their dinners are laid out in front of
them, but they all just stare at each other.

The servants, John and Sabrina stand together at attention.

JOHN
Are you sure you won't be needing us any
more tonight, sir?

LIONEL
We'll be just fine. You can clean up in
the morning. Good night.

JOHN AND SABRINA
Thank you, Sir. Good night.

They exit and Lionel begins to eat.

LIONEL
I'm sure you're wondering what I'm up to?
I've been doing a lot of thinking lately,
and I'd like to put an end our
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LIONEL (cont'd)
hostilities once and for all. A peace
ceremony if you will.

Lionel looks up to see that the children haven't touched their food. He gives a mischievous smile, picks up his plate and carries it around to the other end of the table...

LIONEL
I can see you don't trust me. It's all
right, I understand...

He picks up Cynthia's plate.

LIONEL (CONT'D)
I'd like to bury the hatchet.

On the word "hatchet", he plunks down his plate in front of Cynthia. They share a brief eye contact. Lionel then returns to his seat and resumes eating off her plate. The children begin eating too.

CYNTHIA
What do you propose?

LIONEL
I'll agree to cancel my engagement to
Eleanor, take an extended vacation, for
which I'm long overdue, and we'll never
see each other again.

CYNTHIA
And in return?

LIONEL
I want an oath, sealed with a drop of
blood, that you will leave me and my
niece alone. Forever.

CYNTHIA
Sounds fair to me. What do you think,
Jonathan?

JONATHAN
A drop of blood? How interesting.

LIONEL
It's an ancient ritual of the American
Indians, whom I've studied extensively.
When warring tribes wished to put an end
to their differences, they would make an
peace treaty, meet under the full moon,
smoke a peace pipe, and exchange drops of
blood to seal their oath. This is, more
or less, what I'm proposing we do.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CYNTHIA

I think it's a wonderful idea... an ancient ritual... how charming.

JONATHAN

Here, here...

BRADLEY

A toast..

Bradley holds up his glass and the others join him.

LIONEL

To peace...

They all hold up their glasses

THE THREE CHILDREN

To peace...

DISSOLVE TO LATER ANGLE --

Lionel dabs his lips with his napkin.

LIONEL

Now, I do propose a small variation in the Indian ceremony. That is, replacing the peace-pipe with ice cream sundaes.

BRADLEY

Oh, boy.

JONATHAN

Bravo!

LIONEL

Good. They're already prepared. I'd also like to suggest the old gazebo for our ceremony site.

CYNTHIA

Sounds perfect.

PUSH IN ON CYNTHIA'S FACE...

CYNTHIA (CONT'D)

The old gazebo.

LIONEL

Go on ahead, I'll join you in a minute with the goodies.

They all get up. Lionel exits to the kitchen. The children look at each other and smile.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CYNTHIA

Do you need any help?

LIONEL

No...no. I'll meet you there in a minute.

CUT TO:

EXT. THE GAZEBO -- MOONLIGHT

Teresa Penner, is in her best party dress. She twirls slowly, with her head tilted back and eyes closed, humming a waltz.

PAN DOWN -- the post, which is almost completely severed, where we find a rope tied to the bottom. We follow it into some shrubs. A pair of little hands gently grasps the rope.

CUT TO:

INT. KITCHEN -- LIONEL

He carries a tray of ice cream Sundaes. He giggles and half sings to himself with anticipation.

LIONEL

Catch the mice, set the trap and catch the mice...

He exits through the servants' door and makes his way around the side of the house.

LIONEL (CONT'D)

(whispering)

Ice cream sundaes, who'll ever know.
Perfect... hee, hee, hee...horrible
accident... tragic... all the little
mice... *shhhh, gently, gently...*

He comes around a bend. We start to see the gazebo in the distance, but something's wrong...

We HEAR Teresa humming her waltz....Lionel's face registers confusion. Lionel picks up his step....

LIONEL

My mice, my little evil mice, my mice

He runs up the the gazebo to see

-- TERESA ... facing us, eyes closed, doing a slow pirouette.

-- LIONEL...His mouth drops open, he tries to speak, but he can't make a sound.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

-- TERESA...Throws her arms out wide...

-- LIONEL ..(Slo-Mo)... begins a long..."noooooo"

(We hear the sound of a wood beam coming lose...)

TERESA
(opens her eyes)
I'm here....

WOOMPH! In a thunderous crash, the entire structure caves in... leaving only a pile of debris and a cloud of dust.

LIONEL IS IN COMPLETE SHOCK. Finally, he drops the tray which crashes loudly, and speaks in a cracked, tiny voice...

LIONEL
My mice... my little mice.

Slowly, his face fills with contorted rage. He thrusts his fists into the sky....

We PULL UP TO A HIGH OVERHEAD SHOT...his voice fills the air.

LIONEL
My mice!.....

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. THE ROAD -- MOMENTS LATER

The children briskly walk down the roadside accompanied by their tiptoe music.

CUT TO:

INT. LIONEL'S HUNTING ROOM -- CONTINUOUS.

CLOSE-UP OF A HUGE SHOTGUN being taken from a gun cabinet and shotgun shells being scooped up... (the music is a big nasty version of three blind mice)

LIONEL
My horrible, horrible little mice...
Catch them by their little tails!

CUT TO:

EXT. ELEANOR'S ESTATE - LATER

(The two musical motifs keep alternating, sneaky little demon theme and humongous three blind mice theme...)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

The children scurry as Eleanor's estate comes into view...

CUT TO:

EXT. LIONEL'S DRIVEWAY-- CONTINUOUS

Lionel's car is starting to move, but it stops almost immediately. He gets out to see.

CLOSE UP -- ALL THE TIRES ARE FLAT.

LIONEL

Ohhh, look what the little mice did, they nibbled on Daddy's tires.

He grabs his shotgun and charges down the road.

LIONEL (CONT'D)

(loudly)

Got to catch those MICE!

CUT TO:

INT. ELEANOR'S HOUSE -- LATER

We're locked on the front door.

CYNTHIA (O.S.)

(whispering)

Everybody ready?

BRADLEY AND JONATHAN (O.S.)

Ready.

CYNTHIA (O.S.)

Be careful...

We hold for several beats on the door in blissful quiet

BANG!...THE DOOR IS KICKED IN REVEALING LIONEL...

LIONEL

Where are they? Where are they hiding?

He steps slowly inside... shotgun in front of him.

LIONEL

(singsongy)

Where have my little mice gone? Come out, come out where ever you are. I've got some cheese.

He tries a light switch..nothing. He creeps ahead into the parlor and pulls a lantern into view.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LIONEL

Ahh, but the mouse-catcher came prepared.

He lights the lantern, holds it up. We see...THE CHILDREN.

BLAM! He fires, only to see the image of the children shatter INTO A MILLION PIECES... it was a large MIRROR. He swings around to where they should be standing but ... they're gone.

LIONEL

Damn you... damn you little mice! Come out... come out!

He creeps forward.

His leg catches a THIN LITTLE TRIP WIRE. We HEAR a SNAP, and a click from somewhere else. He swings around and fires again...BLAM!

Sparks fly as his shotgun blast explodes against an ONCOMING SLEDGE-HAMMER swinging at him. He DUCKS. It misses him and he twirls around...

LIONEL

Ha! You can't use the same bloody trick twice, now, can you?!

We HEAR scurrying in the next room. Lionel follows. MORE SOUNDS of a cabinet door clicking shut. Lionel holds out the lantern.

POV -- a formal tea room with a huge cabinet of cutlery, fancy plates, etc. It has two storage doors on the bottom, just big enough for children.

LIONEL

Ohhh. The mice are hiding. Shhhh. Don't disturb them...

He puts the lamp on a table and sneaks up slowly.

LIONEL

(he sings)

They cut off their tails with a carving knife, have you ever... heard... such...a...

He throws open the doors and FIRES THREE TIMES.

LIONEL

SOUND...IN ... YOUR ...

Each blast pushes him back. On the word "LIFE", a huge CHANDELIER CRASHES DOWN, missing him by inches.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Immediately after, we catch a glimpse of the CHILDREN'S FEET scrambling up the attic stairs...

Lionel aims, but its too late-- the attic door closes.

LIONEL
Damn. Damn. Damn.

Lionel grabs the lantern and starts up the stairs after them.

LIONEL
Oh...look. The little mice are trapped.

He SHOUTS with each leap up the stairs.

LIONEL
Look...look...look...the... mice...are...

CRUNCH!... The top stair was rigged and COLLAPSES. Down Lionel goes tumbling down with an awful clatter....

THE LANTERN CRASHES and while Lionel comes to his senses. FIRE spreads to some curtains around him.

-- THE FIRE BLAZES.

-- Lionel sees what's happening and couldn't care less. He begins to clamber back up the stairs.

LIONEL
Have you ever seen such a sight in your
life my ...

He KICKS the door violently...

LIONEL
THREE....BLIND....

POV -- From the inside of the attic...

LIONEL (CONT'D)
MICE!!!

The door crashes open. Lionel enters and SLAMS it shut with his body... He SEES ...

THE CHILDREN, backed up against the far wall of the attic,
STARING at Lionel.

He aims...click... (Its empty)

SMOKE starts to pour through the cracks of the door. We can
HEAR the fire raging...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

-- Lionel begins laughing and ranting... he sits down, propping himself securely against the door.

LIONEL

Good...Good... The mice were trapped with the rat trapped with him.

(he laughs)

We'll all go together. You'll go to hell with your mother and uncle, and me... three blind mice...three blind...

CUT TO:

EXT. ELEANOR'S HOUSE -- LATER

The attic windows EXPLODE from the heat of the fire. A firetruck is just beginning to hose down the house. PEOPLE run from here and there...pointing and shouting.

SLOW DISSOLVE:

INT. ELEANOR'S HOUSE -- MORNING

The fire is out but wood still smolders everywhere. FIREMEN sift through the ruins...

PANNING AROUND, we see a ladder being put up to the attic because the stairs are gone...

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. THE ATTIC -- LATER

In a slow single tracking shot, we travel past firemen poking at debris, past two men picking up bits of things and putting them into bags... into the rear sanctuary area... to a large closet-cabinet ...inside the closet and down to view ... a PERFECTLY ROUND HOLE SAWN INTO THE FLOOR...

Through the hole where we find a PRIMITIVE NAILED-TOGETHER LADDER going down... down ...down ... where we find ourselves in a WAGON GARAGE with straw, unburned, on the ground... to tracks of large WAGON WHEELS leading through two big open doors....

FADE TO BLACK:

LITTLE DEMON THEME BEGINS

EXT. THE OPEN ROAD-- LATER.

We roll along beside a big old wagon. Passing it, we see crudely painted artwork...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

-- A giant skeleton holding a man in each hand. On top of which reads... Theatre Macabre ...

-- Finally we reach the front where we see.

THE CHILDREN happily ride along on their new wagon. Two horses pull in front. They sing with the music...

BLACK STORMY CLOUDS BREW BEHIND THEM.

CUT TO:

EXT. ROADSIDE -- LATER

Three scrappy looking men with their backs to us are hitching a ride. The children and their wagon zoom by them.

The men turn and face us. They are, of course, our NARRATORS.

The light changes around them and the background slowly turns to a red theater curtain. We push in on their faces while they sing until they are in ...

EXTREME CLOSE-UP...heads against black

*There you have it, that's our story
Evil triumphs in the end.
Did you think it might be different?
You see it's just like life, my friend.*

*Virtue rarely gets rewarded
It's a fact I'm afraid that's true.
And the guilty tend to slip
unpunished into the general view.*

*Well that's life, but don't you know
eventually it all comes around
All is equal when at last
We end up six feet underground.*

*Good or evil, fat or skinny
Bottom of the barrel or the upper crust
Pure of heart or Little Demons
All the same when they turn to dust...*

FADE TO BLACK..... END CREDITS.... FINI!