

**THE MIRROR-WARDROBE,
ONE FINE EVENING**

a one act play by
Louis Aragon

taken from
The Libertine

translated from the French by
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transcribed for radio by
Richard Francis

CAST (in order of appearance):

Voice #1

Narrator

Naked woman

Soldier

President

General

Siamese twins (two young girls always speaking together)

Man on tricycle with long nose

Theodore Fraenkel

Lenore

Jules

Madame Leon

(voice 1, a loud, curt, authoritarian voice announcing:)

The Mirror-Wardrobe, One Fine Evening. ...

The Prologue.

(narrator, friendlier:)

Up front on the stage, in front of the closed curtain
a twenty year old French soldier
meets a naked woman wearing a large flowered hat.
She is carrying a child's pram on her shoulders.

(woman:)

Soldier!

(soldier:)

Always the gentleman.

(woman:)

On your way here,
did you by any chance come across a tree?
My bundle makes me hot.

(soldier:)

You won't find one less than a couple of miles from here,
Madam, or is it Mademoiselle?

(woman:)

Madame.

(soldier:)

But I'll stretch out my arms and you can sit in my shadow.

(woman:)

There aren't enough Gods around.

(narrator:)

The woman sits down, and continues ...

(woman:)

Bad times we live in,
you and me soldier.
Life's no joke.

(soldier:)

I only do my duty.

(woman:)

Me and my little pram.

Do you think we'll have more wars?

(soldier:)

I'm not a bad shot.

They even think quite highly of me,
but it's a bit stupid really.

(woman:)

I don't like people who shoot.

I say sooner or later it's bound to come out.

But you look honest enough.

(soldier:)

Oh, I'm disciplined.

(woman:)

Happy?

(soldier:)

I'm not happy, I'm disciplined.

(woman:)

Well that's how it goes in this wide world.

You can't do two things at once.

I don't like doing anything at all.

(soldier:)

You mustn't let yourself go.

(woman:)

You must,
you mustn't.

Sometimes I think if I were in the States ...

But it'd be the same old thing there, too.

(soldier:)

What's got into you my little woman?
You seem out of sorts.

(woman:)

I tell you it's the times we live in:
there's no more room for us.
No elbow room, even in our dreams.
You know what I mean.

(soldier:)

Yes, I understand.
I feel like that sometimes too.
And yet it's not the government:
some call them traitors,
but all they think about is their own peace
and the soldiers' happiness.

Look, the other day
in the barrack square the president ...

(woman:)

Shush soldier,
here he comes now with his general.

(narrator:)

The woman and the soldier step aside.
Enter the President in evening dress
with the grand sash of the Legion of Honor,
and by his side the general.

The general is wearing white leather trousers,
a gold and blue jacket,
a cocked hat with red and green feathers,
numerous decorations,
a drawn sword in his sword belt,
a pearl necklace round his neck,
a whole firmament of stars on his sleeves and
he's holding an occarina in his left hand.

(president:)

Yes general, we're damned.
Here am I the President of the Republic
and a lot of good that does me.

(general:)

But Mr. President.
What about your magnificent scarlet sash?
In my country we have the same word for red and happy.

(president:)

Have we ever known how to be happy?
I don't know about that;
our age seems to bear a red brand on its face.

(general:)

Red and happy, Paris is a beautiful city.

(president:)

Poisonous plants germinate
in the innermost hearts of private citizens.

There's no more peace for anyone;
the times are out of joint.

(general:)

Red and happy your Presidential Majesty,
and what about the pretty girls?

(president:)

I've tried every kind of debauchery, general,
even virtue.

Believe me,
in a short while the human race will recognize its cancer
and we'll be present at its suicide.

(general:)

Mr. President I have never been ill
and I believe in duty,
in hygiene, in civilization,

(narrator:)

Here the general makes a grand gesture of turning on a light.

(general:)

Electric light! *(he laughs)*

(president:)

General, you're a fool. I appoint you Marshal of France.

(narrator:)

Now enter two lovely young ladies, Siamese twins,
one dressed in pink and one in turquoise,
so people can tell them apart.
They step forward as one to greet the President.

(president:)

Young ladies, what can I do for you?

(the twins, together:)

Your autograph in my album Mr. President.

(narrator, to the sound effects of pen on paper:)

The President then makes a royal effort at signing their albums.

(president:)

Anything else?

(the twins, together:)

Permission to marry separately.

(president:)

Granted, granted.

But don't both speak at once. *(laughs at own joke)*

(narrator, to the sounds of clapping and twins giggling:)

The twins clap their hands and dance for joy.

(president:)

What poor, hideous pleasures men have.
Here are two young girls happy for a brief moment.
St. Vitus' dance General?

(general:)

The pink one,
oh, the pink one,
you'll excuse me Mr. President.

(narrator:)

The general walks over to the sisters
and pays court to the siamese twin in pink.

(president:)

There goes my new Marshal on the war path.
Let's not disturb him.

(narrator:)

The President is about to walk out
when he catches sight of the soldier kissing the naked woman.

(president:)

Good heavens! Them too?
A painful spectacle.

(narrator, to the sound of squeaking wheels:)

A man on a tricycle goes by dressed in sports clothes.
He is fifty years old, gray haired with a cap.

He has such a very long nose
that it comes down to his chest
and he has to lift it up to speak.

(president:)

Well, sir, what do you think of these people?

(man, very nasal:)

I'm not interested in people.
I don't ask anyone for anything.
I mind my own business.
In life there's a time and a place for everything.

(narrator, again to the sound of wheels:)

The man peddles his tricycle across the stage and exits.

(president:)

There are married people and single people.
There are also lovers.

(narrator, to mechanical creaking:)

The curtain parts to let Theodore Fraenkel come through,
arm in arm with a woman dressed in the latest fashion
but wearing a hennin on her head
and holding an iron flag painted red in her left hand.

(president:)

Who are these people?

(narrator:)

Theodore Fraenkel bows before the President.

(fraenkel:)

Mr. President it is I, Theodore Fraenkel ...
and she ...

(narrator:)

Here Theodore Fraenkel indicates his companion.

(fraenkel:)

She is a fairy of course.

(president:)

A fairy?
So there are fairies in the twentieth century.
You don't know half
that's going on in your own time do you?
And why is she a fairy?"

(fraenkel:)

We came to tell you that the play is about to begin
and that you're boring everyone silly with your lamentations.

Come on, out!

(president:)

What! What's this?
You're speaking to the President of the Republic.
Marshal!!! Arrest this impudent fellow.

(narrator:)

The general does not leave the side
of the pink siamese twin,
but instead shouts to the soldier ...

(general:)

Soldier! Hey over there!
Trooper, seize that couple!

(narrator:)

But the soldier,
too busy with the naked lady,
does not move.

(president:)

Well now look here!

(narrator, to the sounds of creaking wood:)

Two stage hands enter bringing in a mirror-wardrobe
and they begin to push their way past everyone.

(fraenkel:)

You see,
you're in the way of the workers;
disappear all you people;
life must go on.

(narrator:)

And everyone exits, jostled by the stage hands
who are carrying the wardrobe onto the stage.

(voice 1:)

THE CURTAIN RISES ... Act One

(narrator:)

The curtain rises to expose a tastelessly furnished room.

On the right a window looking on to a street,
a door set back.

On the left a hanging closet
hidden by a chintz curtain.

At the back a door, and an alcove.

At the back of the stage a mirror-wardrobe facing the audience.

On the walls a few color prints and a glossy cardboard calendar
open at an illustration of Spring.

Lenore stands against the wardrobe as if crucified,
her eyes glassy.

Enter Jules from the right.

(jules:)

Do the stars shine brighter when he goes away,
or when he comes back? Blue bottle.

(narrator:)

Jules throws his hat onto a chair
and takes a hammer from his pocket.

(jules:)

I brought a hammer.

(lenore:)

To kill?

(jules:)

To bang in nails,
and also to rip them out, of course.

(lenore, crying out:)

Finger nails.

(jules, surprised:)

Have you been crying while I've been away?

(lenore:)

Nasty looking people.

(jules:)

Afraid?

(lenore:)

Afraid, yes, that's it.

Afraid of the wind, of space,
of birds which come between my sun and me,
my sun over there on the road
who was buying hammers.

(jules:)

Little bug.

But who nailed you to the wardrobe,
my owl, twit twoooo?

(narrator:)

Jules takes a step towards towards Lenore.

(lenore:)

Don't come any nearer.

(jules:)

Oh, it's the hammer.

(narrator, to the sound of a thunk:)

Jules tossed the hammer into his hat.

(jules:)

There, my hands are empty.

(lenore:)

Touch wood!

(jules:)

Oh, being alone isn't good for you.
Will Madame allow me to touch the hem of her dress?

(narrator:)

Jules reaches to touch the hem of Lenore's dress,
but Lenore draws her dress away.

(jules:)

Oh, cranky.

(lenore:)

Your breath.

(jules:)

Play acting are we?
Well, I'm going to take you in my arms
like the young, handsome Sabine,
Romaine in the picture which the notary's wife has.

(narrator:)

And as Jules steps forward
to take Lenore in his arms ...

(lenore:)

Don't open the wardrobe!
Don't open the wardrobe!

(narrator:)

Jules stops. He is surprised.

(jules:)

Ah, that's different.

(narrator, to appropriate sound effects:)

Jules turns around and walks to the front of the stage,
takes off his jacket,
hangs it up in the closet,
takes out a smoking jacket.

Jules puts on the smoking jacket,
goes to the table,
takes some cigarettes from the drawer,
takes one out of the box,
taps it on the table,
then stands still thinking,
puts the cigarette back on the table
and drops the contents of a box of matches
which he as just opened,
on the floor.

(jules:)

And why shouldn't I open the wardrobe?

(pause)

My fingers are supple enough

to turn a key in a lock.

You're always saying I have the fingers of a strangler.

(lenore:)

If you open it the sun and the stars will go out,
rain will enter my bones and your coal-black eyes:

and, in the night

no one will come any more

to fix the flapping shutters to the walls,

shutters which go click, clack in the wind.

(jules:)

So that's it?

I must always fall in with the whims

of the little sage plant which grows in my house?

Walk on your hands,

sit in the fireplace,

don't open the wardrobe and so on.

Only too pleased my dear friend,

only too pleased to be the dog

sleeping beside my Lenore

at the Gates of Paradise.

I won't open the wardrobe.

(narrator:)

Jules takes his cigarette off the table,
looks down,
puts his cigarette back,
bends down and begins to pick up the matches:
a silence ...

(here a silence)

(lenore:)

If it's odd, I have a lover.
Count and see.

(narrator:)

Jules throws down the matches that he had picked up.
He squats down and begins to make two piles of matches,
one pile on his left
and one pile on his right.

(jules, slowly counting:)

One, two; one, two; one, two; one, two ...

(lenore:)

The hammer if I have a lover.

(jules:)

Not ferocious enough. One, two ...

(lenore:)

And yet once you loved me like the morning air.

(jules:)

One, two, like the fragrance of strawberries, one, two ...

(lenore:)

Like fire and blood.

(jules:)

Odd ... the game's misfired,
my mountain verbena.
The carnivore trusts you.

(lenore:)

Stupid trust.

(narrator, to appropriate sound effects:)

Jules lights a cigarette.

(jules:)

When I come home
the white walls caress and soothe the man
who has found nothing all day long
but heaps of pebbles, ditches,
sign posts with arrows saying:
pass along there please.

And also the look
which flows from your eyes is gentle,
honey which I've been seeking for ten years
in vain in town and village hives;
and look at my bee now.

(lenore:)

Man? Man with wolf fangs.

(jules:)

What are you saying?
What do you mean?

(lenore:)

I couldn't lie.

(jules:)

With such fine eyes?

(lenore:)

You see, you don't believe me any more.

(jules:)

Oh but, the hammer ...

(narrator:)

Jules grabs the hammer.

(lenore, crying out:)

Don't hurt me.

(narrator:)

Jules puts the hammer down.

(jules:)

So you thought I was out
running after some salamander,
not as beautiful as you,
never as beautiful as you.

Look, mad as I am,
I'm not that mad.

(lenore:)

Ah, cunning.

(jules:)

Today I saw the first chestnut seller.
It's already a year.

(lenore:)

A year.

(jules:)

Lenore, why do you stay crucified like that?
Don't you want to caress my face
with your daisy hands?

(lenore:)

Not a speck of dust in your eye?
Poor fool, that's hope for you.

Never mind what you say
you will want to open the wardrobe.

(jules:)

Stop playing, Lenore,
the nettles are stinging the palms of my hands.
Come here and stop talking about the wardrobe.

(narrator:)

But Lenore remains motionless.

(lenore, in listless voice:)

Not to talk any more,
not to see, not to think,
the promised land.

(jules:)

I've had enough, enough do you hear me?
You need the patience of an angel ... an angel?

(narrator, to the sound of heavy footsteps:)

Jules angrily begins to pace up and down the stage.
Lenore nervously begins to bite her nails.

(lenore:)

Oh, Oh,
Now he's angry.
He's going to start beating you,
raining blows on you.

(narrator:)

Jules is now furious.

(jules:)

My God! You'd think ...
really!
if anyone could hear you now ...

(narrator:)

Lenore glances furtively at the wardrobe.

(lenore:)

Someone who could hear me
from the depths of his black night.

(jules:)

The shortest jokes are the funniest.

(lenore:)

Don't pull my hair,
don't strangle me,
don't crush my wrists.

(jules:)

Come on Lenie,
why don't you get dinner now.

(lenore:)

Just like the lunatic to think of food.

(jules:)

I told you to stop this.

(lenore:)

Sooner or later,
whether the wind is howling or dying down,
he'll want to open the wardrobe.

(jules:)

It's not funny any more and I'm not listening to you.

(lenore:)

I can see you want to open it.
I can see the sun of wanting rising in your eyes,
black, red, terror, (*howls*)

(narrator:)

Jules grabs a hold of Lenore's right wrist.

(jules:)

If this is the only way to stop you.
There's nothing for it.

(lenore:)

Your whole life in front of that closed door
without knowing why.

There'll always come a time
when you'll want to open it.

(jules:)

Is that all that you can say?
And the same to you then.

(lenore:)

No, that I won't do.
Myself, the abyss and that horror.

(narrator:)

Lenore hides her eyes with her left hand.
Jules, still holding Lenore's right wrist,
draws her closer to him.

(jules:)

Come on, get dinner.
I can't bear these dramas that we play sometimes.
They take on a face too like the face of real life.
Indeed it's a beautiful face.
My little savage!

(narrator:)

Jules kisses Lenore's forehead.
Lenore draws back a little.

(lenore:)

You who know the time the planets meet, Jules ...

(jules:)

What?

(lenore:)

A married woman has a man.

(jules:)

That follows.

(lenore:)

No, no: suddenly nothing can stop her,
another man covers her with caresses and
she's a signal lost on the track.

For a whole day mountain forests could burn,
she no longer knows water from fire.

Is it good, is it bad?
A married woman has a man.

(jules:)

Good, bad ... what does it mean?
Anyway they'd better hide:
the husband will kill them for sure.
Good, bad.

(narrator:)

Jules makes an evasive gesture with his hand.

(lenore:)

For sure.
Unhappiness comes in a moment and
it's as obvious as the nose in the middle of your face.

She thought she'd be able to lie,
and yet she straightaway threw herself
in front of the wardrobe.

(jules, laughing:)

I've guessed the charade.
(then in gruff voice)
Madame, you are unfaithful to me!

(narrator:)

Jules begins to move towards the wardrobe,
but Lenore stops him.

(lenore:)

One may day when the wind blew from the south,
a planter from Caiffa had gone off down the road
and we were alone in the meadow
under the willows.

(jules:)

What game are you hunting in my memory?
Partridges in the corn.

(narrator:)

Lenore, distraught, wrings her hands.

(lenore:)

What's the use?
This is the wardrobe where willows
and partridges die.

(jules:)

Still? But your eyes are red.
Calm yourself.

(lenore:)

Calm, calm like the willows.
In the meadow Lenore once and a man, dark,
strong like the willows overhead,
once Lenore, and later they'll say,
once Lenore, poor Lenore.
(begin weeping sounds)

(narrator:)

Jules takes Lenore into his arms.

(jules:)

Oh Lenie, why are you crying?
It's my fault too;
didn't I give you a liking
for these stories without end?

Here you are a lark caught in the trap,
in the trap of my two arms.

What came to rest in your hair
while I was riding on my bike on the road,
while I was a big business man:
and my tankers took oil from the Mexican coast;
and in all the stock exchanges throughout the world
what a shout went up!

Bankers paled before the little snake of figures
which uncoils on their tables.

And I, when I come back to the house on the hill,
I bring my Lenie a magnificent
allegorical group in bronze for the mantel piece:
oil comes from a well to meet Happiness.

Hammer in my pocket:
when my hand found it the oil flew away.

To chase young monsters out of young little heads,
let's simply open up their hiding place.

(narrator:)

Jules stretches his hand out to the wardrobe;
with his hand on the key he stops for a long while;
he looks at Lenore motionless.
Her eyes are far away.

(jules:)

Aren't you going to stop me any more?
Suddenly my thoughts don't make sense any longer.

(lenore:)

Sometimes.

(jules:)

They pass by me.
You could have warned me.
What's in the wardrobe Lenore?
What a death's head.

(narrator:)

Jules shakes Lenore by the wrist.

(jules:)

I don't know what I'm doing anymore.
Peasant, I shake you like a plum tree.
And after all ...

(long pause)

(jules:)

Yes, but ... your words,
I wasn't listening to you at first,
the game,
then everything comes back to me
and looks different:
the wind, the stars, the whole caboodle.

It's stupid Lenie, stupid.

(lenore:)

Yes, don't look at me so bewildered.
You'd better open it.

(jules:)

It's you who ...
But before,
before I make an end of these nights instead of days;
before I end this milkiness in which
our arms form great infinite spaces
of brightness like this ...

(narrator:)

In the air Jules draws
several figure eights on their side.

(jules:)

... before I finish with this piece of sky your dress,
and my surprise when I'm sleeping
and stretch away from a breast like a peach
under my fingers which gradually feel
the hard nut through the pulp;
before I make an end of our lies;
this hide-and-peek;
the hill and the roof over our heads;
of your hair my girl.

(narrator:)

Jules suddenly unpins Lenore's hair
which falls 'round her face;
Jules' hand stays trapped in it;
he raises it with the veil of her hair,
then ...

(jules:)

Oh, no my little one you weren't looking at me.

(lenore:)

Don't tear my heart out.

(narrator:)

Jules then releases Lenore.

(jules:)

So what is there in the wardrobe?

(lenore:)

You know what I say about your hands.
The key.

(jules:)

The key to the mystery,
stop me from opening the door
or I'll go mad like a madman.

(lenore:)

Like a madman with red eyes?
The hammer. Open up.

(jules:)

What if I were to kill you before I opened it?

(narrator:)

Lenore crouches down and hides her face in her hair.

(lenore:)

There's the horror.

(narrator:)

Jules picks up the hammer.

(jules:)

All this passes my imagination.
I was coming home with my riches,
a builder of villages in the distant west.

The customs chalked my tank-cars.

I was here, my mind turned upside down
by this cat now with her dishevelled hair.

(narrator:)

Jules makes a gesture of washing his hands.

(jules:)

There on the ground, and in the wardrobe
there's something according to Lenie
which is enough to drive a sane man mad.
Open? No.

(lenore:)

Are you joking?

(jules:)

Joking? Speak for yourself.
You seem to like it that way.

(lenore:)

Open it.

(jules:)

Now that gives me something to think about.

What's the hurry? I obey.

(narrator:)

Jules stretches out his hand,
then changes his mind.

(jules:)

You didn't flinch.

So you hate *his* suffering more than death.

He'd suffocate wouldn't he?

Yes. Who is it?

(lenore:)

What are you asking of me?

Open up.

(jules:)

Who is it?

(lenore:)

Open it yourself, you wouldn't believe me.

(jules:)

Who is it?

Hunch back for example:

you swooning away as only you can do,

eyes closed and your hand furtively on his hump:

to bring you good luck.

(lenore:)

Open.

(jules:)

He must look funny in his box.

(narrator:)

Jules brandishes the hammer.

(jules:)

Can you hear me, ox?

I called him ox. What's his name?

(lenore:)

Red brow.

(jules:)

I can't think who it is ... some peasant, slut?

(lenore:)

Jules.

(jules:)

Madame will excuse me.

In the past I had the Milky Way in my eyes.

His name and I'll open up.

You're as obstinate as a brick wall.

Is he at least good looking, he who's about to die?

You're afraid of him eh?

Let's play at drawing his portrait.

Fair, dark? tight mouth? well, a readhead.

Quite hefty I'll bet.

And good teeth on this point you're most exigent.

Does he make you swoon with a kiss?

Does he have my arms, my hands,
which carried you off God knows where?

Sunflower, you were blushing.

Aren't you going to say anything?

(lenore:)

Speak to the fire.

(jules:)

Trash.

(narrator:)

A woman's head suddenly appears at the window.

Jules changes his tone.

(jules:)

If it isn't Madame Leon, how are you Madame Leon?

(mme leon:)

Well, I'm exhausted. Can I come in?

(jules:)

Of course.

(narrator:)

Madame Leon disappears from the window.

Jules pushes Lenore toward the alcove as he says ...

(jules:)

Your hair, it's broad daylight.

(narrator:)

As Lenore goes out, Jules opens the door.

(mme leon:)

Are you on your own?

(jules:)

Lenore's here.

(mme leon:)

You haven't seen Leon have you?

I've been chasing after him since this morning.

(jules:)

Sit down Madam Leon. I haven't seen him anywhere.

(narrator:)

Madame Leon accepts his offer and sits saying ...

(mme leon:)

I don't mind if I do.

(pause)

He didn't come home to lunch.

I'm almost always alone
and now it's evening already.

(jules:)

I was in town buying this hammer.
Do you like it?

(mme leon:)

It's a fine hammer.

(jules:)

Isn't it? Solid too.
No, I haven't seen anyone.
But perhaps Lenore ...
(shouting)
Lenore, Lenore!
She was here alone.
Lenore! Madame Leon is here.
And she was frightened too.

(mme leon:)

Frightened?

(jules:)

Oh you know, if a door creaks.
The house is isolated.

(mme leon:)

Yes of course, but in the day time ...

(jules:)

Precisely in the daytime, a real baby,
especially when evening comes.

(mme leon:)

But you're home in the evening.

(jules:)

Eh, alone with a man in the evening
in a lonely place.

(mme leon:)

Well, it is her husband. If it were me ...

(jules:)

Just think of it Madame Leon.

(laughs coarsely)

Now Leon.

(narrator:)

Lenore returns. Her hair is drawn back.
She has a handkerchief screwed up in her left hand.

(mme leon:)

Good evening neighbor.

(lenore:)

Good evening Madame Leon.

(narrator:)

All three sit down.
Jules sits between Lenore and Madame Leon.

(mme leon:)

What have you done to your hair?

(jules, who has just noticed:)

Well, you see she's heard somewhere
that you mustn't have a hair out of place.

(mme leon:)

What a pity, your pretty hair.

(narrator:)

Lenore distractedly touches her hair and smiles.

(lenore:)

It's so unimportant, so unimportant.

(mme leon:)

Well, Madame Jules, and what about your husband?

(jules:)

It's not her hair I go for.

(mme. leon laughs here)

Have you seen Leon today?

(lenore:)

Me? I haven't seen anyone.

(jules:)

Don't tell lies my love, Leon?

(lenore:)

Leon? No, of course I haven't seen Leon.

(mme leon:)

So I've run all this way for nothing.
And your hill's steep, I'm dead-beat.

(lenore:)

Are you looking for your husband?

(mme leon:)

This morning yet again he goes off
saying I'll be back in a few minutes.

And no doubt he's prowling around drinking
and he'll come home drunk or worse
and I bet he's been telling tales to some woman
who'll make me pay for it.

(lenore:)

Shame on you Madame Leon,
aren't you ashamed to say that in front of us
when we'll laugh about it as soon as you've gone?

Come on, even if he's unfaithful and a liar
your other half will come back sooner or later
and he's really quite something.

(mme leon:)

Neighbor, you've defended him as long as I can remember.
It'd make a saint jealous.

(jules:)

Crafty.

(lenore:)

Do you by any chance think your lost Leon
is hiding under my skirts?

Go on, you can sleep easy
and he can ogle as much as he likes.

(mme leon:)

It has been known.

(lenore:)

Look under the furniture, open the wardrobes.

(mme leon:)

No hard feelings neighbor,
I was passing by and just popped in to see you a minute.

To kill two birds with one stone.

But I'll go now and don't laugh too heartily at me
you two who always face the world together.

Goodbye neighbor. Goodbye Madame Jules.

(narrator:)

They all shake hands.
Jules shows Madame Leon out
while Lenore slowly comes downstage.
Jules then returns.

(jules:)

Hey, he's really quite something;
even unfaithful, even a liar and all that jazz.
You think so, eh?
And under the furniture and in the wardrobes ...
plural N.B. What a farce.

(lenore:)

Anyone would think her husband
were the only man in the world.

(jules:)

Is there any other man but me?

(lenore:)

Hundreds and hundreds as sweet as blackberries,
strong as the metro,
tender as hazel trees.

(jules:)

Tantalizing woman.
But excuse me, I was forgetting our resident Vesuvius.

(lenore:)

Go and open it.

(jules:)

Here caterpillar. Are you yawning?
You could at least hide it.

(lenore:)

Pretend?

(jules:)

Artless girl.

And she puts her hair up like a nun.

Go on, undo it for me.

(lenore:)

Am I ugly enough like this eh?

Ugly enough for my friend the hunchback!

The last one to be touched is "it".

(laughs)

(narrator:)

Lenore jumps up onto a chair taunting Jules.

(lenore:)

The husband is "it."

(jules:)

I'm the husband.

Get down heavenly tart,

I'll just drag you by one foot.

(narrator:)

Jules drags Lenore down from the chair.

She falls onto her knees.

Then, standing over her, Jules undoes Lenore's hair.

(jules:)

Witch, your hair around you like your vices.

Beautiful hair.

(lenore:)

Jasmin.

(sound of tussle, narrator:)

Jules throws Lenore down onto the floor.

(jules:)

That's the perfume he smelled all day long
while they were looking for him at the merchants'
who trade in another intoxication,
your fine Leon,
snow coming down the chimneys;
here he dragged his tall body,
there he pressed his lips,
a fine specimen.

(lenore:)

Leon?

(jules:)

Not him?
Your whoever you like.
What do I care about his name?
I can see him now biting your shoulder.

(narrator:)

Jules bites Lenore's shoulder.

(jules:)

My God, tell me his name.

(lenore:)

You peasant, peasant; it's bleeding.

Open it! And we'll have some peace.

(jules:)

You don't lose your bearings do you?
Listen ... it's creaking.

(narrator:)

Jules grinds his teeth close to Lenore's ear.
Lenore shivers and runs towards the wardrobe.

(lenore:)

Idiot, look.

(narrator:)

Jules stops Lenore by threatening her with a raised hammer.

(jules:)

One more step and you'll feel the hammer on your temple.

(lenore:)

You're trying to scare me.

(narrator:)

Jules walks slowly towards Lenore while
Lenore watches his approach in the mirror.
Lenore wants to cry out, but she can't.
Jules points to the mirror with the hammer.

(jules:)

This vertical lake separates you, my lambs.
She's looking in the depths of the mirror
for the look from which she's still drunk,
but she only finds her own orbs emptied by terror
to make me take pity on her.

(lenore:)

Credulous, incredulous, credulous, credulous.

(jules:)

Do you think he can hear you?
Despite everything it continues, a mad hope,
but suppose he wanted to sneeze.

(lenore laughs)

(jules:)

You laugh, get back;
he could make signs to you.
How?
Go on, I know all the tricks.

In the past before I was harnassed by you
I had my share of leaving through windows,
hiding quickly in cupboards;

I had my nights
full of the passionate gleams in women's eyes.

Once, for seven deadly winter hours in a dark room,
not being able to get out or to breathe.

In the mountains somewhere
where the people are hard and quick off the mark.

I linger thus in an obscure past
and no one can say to me:
on such and such a day you were here,
and there, no one.

I myself forget, phew ...

And tomorrow, talking about Leon, or about anyone else,
or about you Lenore my love,
I could say to myself any time you are there,
and the hole which is long rather than wide
and the earth gradually piled up
and the four elements on your cursed heads ...

His name, quickly, for politeness sake.

(narrator:)

Jules takes one step backwards
and catches sight of himself in the mirror.

(jules:)

There you are Jules
a man who likes to make a good impression.
Behind your back you feel the sweaty body
which rolled about with your wife.
Crush it between the walls and you.

(narrator:)

Jules runs at his reflection,
his arms open wide.

(jules:)

Jules the husband!

(narrator:)

With his breath,
Jules steams up his reflection.
He raises the hammer and strikes.

**(sound of hammer striking and glass shattering
and of Lenore crying out)**

(jules:)

Splinters of glass could pierce his chest.
But there's only one star,
one big one which bars my way.

Or a spider, an evening spider ...
which of us three can still nourish a grain of hope in his heart?

(narrator:)

Jules turns to confront Lenore.

(jules:)

You?

(lenore:)

The mirror's broken; who'll have the bad luck?
Seven years.

But what a face,
the hammer, Jules, Jules.

You know in the night,
birds' wings knock against the roof tiles,
then I throw myself against your body
and half awake
you murmur into my hair words like revolving lights ...
my little breasts,
and how I laugh, nervous,
when you caress my back where the shoulders die away.

Jules, when I step out of my dress,
when you sit down watching me,
moving your hand, Jules?
when your whole face begins to dance ...
I'm too frightened ...

(narrator:)

Lenore rushes to the door.
Jules throws the hammer across the room and it falls at Lenore's feet.

(sound of hammer hitting floor)

Lenore stops and looks down at the hammer.

(jules:)

It's an extraordinary sight,
it's not a banal sight.

The hammer on the ground, the roof above,
the sky above the roof,
the whole sky above a summer's evening,
the whole last sky of your life;
vast, vast with its little singing bull finches;
regrets, regrets, a hundred youthful thoughts;
bravo for the one golden cloud,
and the sun which will never again set or rise
but which will henceforth travel the byeways like a madman
and wander into the beds of wanton women,
laughing hee hee ha ha.
There are arms ready to defend you,
those fine arms of a while ago,
prisoners, it sounds silly,
behind a broken mirror.

There are my hands and my rage
one summer's evening.

You know these thick hands
which drug you with their skill
when they come to meet you,
these hands which made you
like the warm wind blowing from out of town.

(narrator:)

As Jules speaks, he follows Lenore to the alcove.

Halt.

They exit.

There is a long pause.

While night falls,
on the wall the calendar becomes luminous,
bats come in at the windows
and get tangled in the curtains.

Jules reappears, hair dishevelled, tie unknotted.
He wipes his mouth.
He looks at his hands,
the alcove and the wardrobe.

Then Jules goes calmly up to the wardrobe,
then changes his mind and turns back whistling
(sound of man whistling)
to look for the hammer in front of the door.

Again, in front of the mirror,
he catches sight of his tie hanging loose.

Jules puts the hammer back on the ground,
re-knots his tie, smooths his hair,
picks up the hammer and raising it in his left hand
quickly opens the right-hand door of the wardrobe.

It's almost dark.
We see all the characters from the prologue
climb out of the wardrobe.
They are holding each other's hands.

They come to the front of the stage
while the stage gets gradually darker and the curtain falls.

Then they take each others arms and dance a jig.
(sound of jig music and footsteps)
Then they stop and all sit on the ground.

Theodore Fraenkel gets up.

(fraenkel:)

We've got to talk politics,
it's now or never.

(narrator:)

Theodore Fraenkel then leads the President to the prompt box.
Then Theodore Fraenkel sits down.

**(music begins, the President
makes a great show of clearing his throat and then sings)**

(president:)

The tree in love with a serving dear
sang this refrain to the passer-by
ivy calm the fear
of she who is near.

My bark-arms, my bird-arms
embrace the air I breathe.
Her two legs are knives
against which the wind jibes.

In the kitchen a boat
comes in at night
and it's the sun which dies
on her thighs.

Red hands, bleeding hands
whose hands
the sun's hands. Lazy hands
will fly away.

A force bends trees to
water.
She has gathered melilot
right up to my shadow.

(narrator, as a waltz begins to play:)

The auditorium and the stage dim.
When the lights go up the stage is empty.
finis

and at this point have voice #1 give the credits.