The Intruder

Maurice Maeterlinck
CHARACTERS:

The Grandfather, blind.
The Father
The Three Daughters
The Uncle
The Sister of Mercy
The Maid

The scene is set in modern times.

A somber room in an old château. A door on the right, a door on the left, and a small concealed door in a corner. At the back, stained-glass windows, in which green is the dominant color, and a glass door opening onto a terrace. A large Dutch clock in one corner. A lighted lamp.

THE THREE DAUGHTERS: Come here, grandfather. Sit down under the lamp.
THE GRANDFATHER: It does not seem to me to be very light here.
THE FATHER: Shall we go out on the terrace, or stay in this room?
THE UNCLE: Would it not be better to stay here? It has rained the whole week, and the nights are damp and cold.
THE ELDEST DAUGHTER: But the stars are shining.
THE UNCLE: Oh, the stars—that's nothing.
THE GRANDFATHER: We had better stay here. One never knows what may happen.
THE FATHER: There is no longer any cause for anxiety. The danger is past, and she is saved . . .
THE GRANDFATHER: I believe she is not doing so well . . .
THE FATHER: Why do you say that?
THE GRANDFATHER: I have heard her voice.
THE FATHER: But since the doctors assure us that we need not worry . . .
THE UNCLE: You know quite well that your father-in-law likes to alarm us needlessly.
THE GRANDFATHER: I don't see things as you do.
THE UNCLE: Then you ought to rely on those who can see. She looked very well this afternoon. She is sleeping quietly now; and we are not going to spoil the first pleasant evening that chance has put in our way. . . . It seems to me we have a perfect right to peace, and even to laugh a little this evening, without being afraid.
THE FATHER: That's true; this is the first time I have felt at home with my family since this terrible childbirth.
THE UNCLE: Once illness has come into a house, it is as though a stranger had

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forced himself into the family circle.
THE FATHER: And then you understand, too, that you can count on no one outside the family.
THE UNCLE: You are quite right.
THE GRANDFATHER: Why couldn't I see my poor daughter today?
THE UNCLE: You know quite well—the doctor forbade it.
THE GRANDFATHER: I do not know what to think . . .
THE UNCLE: It is useless to worry.
THE GRANDFATHER: (Pointing to the door on the left.) She cannot hear us!
THE FATHER: We will not talk too loud; besides, the door is very thick, and the Sister of Mercy is with her, and she is sure to warn us if we are making too much noise.
GRANDFATHER: (Pointing to the door on the right.) He cannot hear us!
THE FATHER: No, no.
THE GRANDFATHER: He is asleep!
THE FATHER: I suppose so.
THE GRANDFATHER: Someone had better go and see.
THE UNCLE: The little one would cause me more anxiety than your wife. It is now several weeks since he was born, and he has scarcely stirred. He has not cried once all the time. He is like a wax doll.
THE GRANDFATHER: I think he will be deaf, and dumb too, perhaps . . . That's the usual result of a marriage between cousins . . . (A reproachful silence.)
THE FATHER: I could almost wish him ill for the suffering he has caused his mother.
THE UNCLE: Do be reasonable; it is not the poor little thing's fault. He is all alone in the room?
THE FATHER: Yes; the doctor does not want him to stay in his mother's room any longer.
THE UNCLE: But the nurse is with him?
THE FATHER: No; she has gone to rest a little; she has well deserved it these last few days. Ursula, just go and see if he is asleep.
THE ELDEST DAUGHTER: Yes, father. (The Three Sisters get up, and go into the room on the right, hand in hand.)
THE FATHER: When will our sister come?
THE UNCLE: I think she will come about nine.
THE FATHER: It is past nine. I hope she will come this evening; my wife is so anxious to see her.
THE UNCLE: She is sure to come. This will be the first time she has been here!
THE FATHER: She has never been in the house.
THE UNCLE: It is very difficult for her to leave her convent.
THE FATHER: Will she be alone?
THE UNCLE: I expect one of the nuns will come with her. They are not allowed to go out alone.

THE FATHER: But she is the Superior.
THE UNCLE: The rule is the same for all.
THE GRANDFATHER: Do you not feel anxious?
THE UNCLE: Why should we feel anxious? What's the good of harping on that?
THE GRANDFATHER: Your sister is older than you?
THE UNCLE: She is the eldest.
THE GRANDFATHER: I do not know what is the matter with me; I feel uneasy. I wish your sister were here.
THE UNCLE: She will come; she promised to.
THE GRANDFATHER: Ah, if this evening were only over! (The three daughters come in again.)
THE FATHER: He is asleep?
THE ELDEST DAUGHTER: Yes, father; he is sleeping soundly.
THE UNCLE: What shall we do while we are waiting?
THE GRANDFATHER: Waiting for what?
THE UNCLE: Waiting for our sister.
THE FATHER: You see nothing coming, Ursula?
THE ELDEST DAUGHTER: (At the window.) Nothing, father.
THE FATHER: Not in the avenue! Can you see the avenue?
THE DAUGHTER: Yes, father; the moon is out, and I can see the avenue as far as the cypress groves.
THE GRANDFATHER: And you see no one?
THE DAUGHTER: No one, grandfather.
THE UNCLE: What sort of a night is it?
THE DAUGHTER: Very fine. Do you hear the nightingales?
THE UNCLE: Yes, yes.
THE DAUGHTER: A little wind is rising in the avenue.
THE GRANDFATHER: A little wind in the avenue?
THE DAUGHTER: Yes; the trees are trembling a little.
THE UNCLE: I am surprised that my sister is not here yet.
THE GRANDFATHER: I cannot hear the nightingales any more.
THE DAUGHTER: I think someone has come into the garden, grandfather.
THE GRANDFATHER: Who is it?
THE DAUGHTER: I do not know; I can see no one.
THE UNCLE: Because there is no one there.
THE DAUGHTER: There must be someone in the garden; the nightingales have suddenly stopped singing.
THE GRANDFATHER: But I do not hear anyone coming.
THE DAUGHTER: Someone must be passing by the pond, because the swans are frightened.

ANOTHER DAUGHTER: All the fishes in the pond are diving suddenly.
THE FATHER: You see no one?
THE DAUGHTER: No one, father.
THE FATHER: But the pond lies in the moonlight . . .
THE DAUGHTER: But I can see that the swans are frightened.
THE FATHER: They are afraid of my sister, I will go and see. (He calls.) Sister! Sister! Is that you? There is no one there.
THE DAUGHTER: I am sure it is my sister who is frightening them. She must have come in by the little gate.
THE FATHER: I cannot understand why the dogs do not bark.
THE DAUGHTER: I can see the watchdog right at the back of his kennel. The swans are crossing to the other bank! . . .
THE UNCLE: They are afraid of my sister. I will go and see. (He calls.) Sister! Sister! Is that you? There is no one there.
THE DAUGHTER: I am sure that someone has come into the garden. You will see.
THE UNCLE: But she would answer me!
THE GRANDFATHER: Are not the nightingales beginning to sing again, Ursula?
THE DAUGHTER: I cannot hear one anywhere.
THE GRANDFATHER: But there is no noise.
THE FATHER: There is a silence of the grave.
THE GRANDFATHER: It must be a stranger who is frightening them, for if it were one of the family, they would not be silent.
THE UNCLE: How much longer are you going to discuss these nightingales?
THE GRANDFATHER: Are all the windows open, Ursula?
THE DAUGHTER: The glass door is open, grandfather.
THE GRANDFATHER: It seems to me that the cold is coming into the room.
THE DAUGHTER: There is a little wind in the garden, grandfather, and the rose petals are falling.
THE FATHER: Well, then, shut the door. It is late.
THE DAUGHTER: Yes, father—I cannot shut the door.
THE TWO OTHER DAUGHTERS: We cannot shut the door.
THE GRANDFATHER: Why, what is the matter with the door, my children?
THE UNCLE: You need not say that in such an extraordinary voice. I will go and help them.
THE ELDEST DAUGHTER: We cannot manage to shut it tight.
THE UNCLE: It is because of the damp. Let us all push together. There must be something in the way.
THE FATHER: The carpenter will fix it tomorrow.
THE GRANDFATHER: Is the carpenter coming tomorrow?
THE DAUGHTER: Yes, grandfather; he is coming to do some work in the cellar.
THE GRANDFATHER: He will make noise in the house! . . .
THE DAUGHTER: I will tell him to work quietly.

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

THE GRANDFATHER: (With a shudder.) Oh!

THE UNCLE: What is that?
THE DAUGHTER: I don't exactly know; I think it is the gardener. I cannot see very well; he is in the shadow of the house.
THE FATHER: It is the gardener going to mow.
THE UNCLE: He mows at night?
THE FATHER: Is not tomorrow Sunday?—Yes. I noticed that the grass was very high around the house.
THE GRANDFATHER: It seems to me that his scythe makes a great deal of noise . . .

THE DAUGHTER: He is mowing near the house.
THE GRANDFATHER: Can you see him, Ursula?
THE DAUGHTER: No, grandfather. He is in the dark.
THE GRANDFATHER: I am afraid he will wake my daughter.
THE UNCLE: We can scarcely hear him.
THE GRANDFATHER: It sounds to me as if he were mowing inside the house.
THE UNCLE: She will not hear it; there is no danger.
THE FATHER: It seems to me that the lamp is not burning well tonight.
THE UNCLE: It needs filling.
THE FATHER: I saw it filled this morning. It has burnt badly since the window was shut.
THE UNCLE: I think the chimney is dirty.
THE FATHER: It will burn better soon.
THE DAUGHTER: Grandfather has fallen asleep. He has not slept for three nights.
THE FATHER: He has been so worried.
THE UNCLE: He always worries too much. At times he will not listen to reason.
THE FATHER: It is quite excusable at his age.
THE UNCLE: God knows what we shall be like at his age.
THE FATHER: He is nearly eighty.
THE UNCLE: Then he has a right to be strange.
THE FATHER: He is like all blind people.
THE UNCLE: They think too much.
THE FATHER: They have too much time to spare.
THE UNCLE: They have nothing else to do.
THE FATHER: And, besides, they have no distractions.
THE UNCLE: It must be terrible.
THE FATHER: Apparently they get used to it.
THE UNCLE: I cannot imagine it.
THE FATHER: They are certainly to be pitied.
THE UNCLE: Not to know where one is, not to know where one has come from, not to know where one is going, not to be able to tell midday from midnight, or summer from winter—and always the darkness, the darkness! I would rather not live. Is it absolutely incurable?
THE FATHER: Apparently so.
THE UNCLE: But he is not absolutely blind?
THE FATHER: He can perceive a strong light.
THE UNCLE: Let us take care of our poor eyes.
THE FATHER: He often has strange ideas.
THE UNCLE: At times he is not at all amusing.
THE FATHER: He says absolutely everything he thinks.
THE UNCLE: But he was not always like this?
THE FATHER: No; once he was as rational as we are; he never said anything extraordinary. I am afraid Ursula encourages him a little too much; she answers all his questions...
THE UNCLE: It would be better not to answer them. It's a mistaken kindness to him.

(Ten o'clock strikes.)

THE GRANDFATHER: (Waking up.) Am I facing the glass door?
THE DAUGHTER: You have had a nice sleep, grandfather?
THE GRANDFATHER: Am I facing the glass door?
THE DAUGHTER: Yes, grandfather.
THE GRANDFATHER: There is no one at the glass door?
THE DAUGHTER: No, grandfather; I see no one.
THE GRANDFATHER: I thought someone was waiting. No one has come?
THE DAUGHTER: No one, grandfather.
THE GRANDFATHER: (To the Uncle and Father.) And your sister has not come?
THE UNCLE: It is too late; she will not come now. It is not nice of her.
THE FATHER: I'm beginning to worry about her. (A noise, as of someone coming into the house.)

THE UNCLE: There she is! Did you hear?
THE FATHER: Yes; someone has come in through the basement.
THE UNCLE: It must be our sister. I recognized her step.
THE GRANDFATHER: I heard slow footsteps.
THE FATHER: She came in very quietly.
THE UNCLE: She knows there is someone sick here.
THE GRANDFATHER: I hear nothing now.
THE UNCLE: She will come up directly; they will tell her we are here.
THE FATHER: I am glad she has come.
THE UNCLE: I was sure she would come tonight.
THE GRANDFATHER: She is slow in coming up.
THE UNCLE: It must be she...
THE FATHER: We are not expecting any other visitors.
THE GRANDFATHER: I cannot hear any noise in the basement.
THE FATHER: I will call the servant. We shall see how things stand. (He pulls a bell-rope.)

THE GRANDFATHER: I can hear a noise on the stairs already.
THE FATHER: It is the maid coming up.
THE GRANDFATHER: It seems to me that she is not alone.
THE FATHER: She is coming up slowly...
THE GRANDFATHER: I hear your sister's step!
THE FATHER: I can only hear the maid.
THE GRANDFATHER: It is your sister! It is your sister! (There is a knock at the little door.)
THE UNCLE: She is knocking at the door of the back stairs.
THE FATHER: I will go and open it myself, because that little door makes too much noise; we use it only when we want to come up without being seen. (He opens the little door partly; the Maid remains outside in the opening.) Where are you?
THE MAID: Here, sir.
THE GRANDFATHER: Your sister is at the door?
THE UNCLE: I can only see the maid.
THE FATHER: It is only the maid. (To the Maid.) Who was that who came into the house?
THE MAID: Came into the house!
THE FATHER: Yes; someone came in just now?
THE MAID: No one came in, sir.
THE GRANDFATHER: Who is it sighing like that?
THE UNCLE: It is the maid; she is out of breath.
THE GRANDFATHER: Is she crying?
THE UNCLE: No; why should she be crying?
THE FATHER: (To the Maid.) No one came in just now?
THE MAID: No, sir.
THE FATHER: But we heard someone open the door!
THE MAID: It was I shutting the door.
THE FATHER: It was open?
THE MAID: Yes, sir.
THE FATHER: Why was it open at this time of night?
THE MAID: I do not know, sir. I had shut it myself.
THE FATHER: Then who was it that opened it?
THE MAID: I do not know, sir. Someone must have gone out after me, sir...
THE FATHER: You must be careful.—Don't push the door like that; you know what a noise it makes!
THE MAID: But, sir, I am not touching the door.
THE FATHER: But you are. You are pushing as if you were trying to get into the room!
THE MAID: But sir, I am three steps away from the door!
THE FATHER: Don't talk so loud.
THE GRANDFATHER: Are they putting out the light?
THE ELDEST DAUGHTER: No, grandfather.
THE GRANDFATHER: It seems to me that it has suddenly grown dark.
THE FATHER: (To the Maid.) You can go down again now; but do not make so much noise on the stairs.
THE MAID: I did not make any noise.
THE FATHER: I tell you that you did make noise. Go down quietly; you might wake your mistress. And if anyone comes, say that we are not at home.
THE UNCLE: Yes, say that we are not at home.
THE GRANDFATHER: (Shuddering.) You must not say that!
THE FATHER: . . . Unless it's my sister or the doctor.
THE UNCLE: When will the doctor come?
THE FATHER: He will not be able to come before midnight. (He shuts the door. A clock is heard striking eleven.)
THE GRANDFATHER: She has come in!
THE FATHER: Who?
THE GRANDFATHER: The maid.
THE FATHER: No, she has gone downstairs.
THE GRANDFATHER: I thought that she was sitting at the table.
THE UNCLE: The maid.
THE GRANDFATHER: Yes.
THE UNCLE: That's all we would need!
THE GRANDFATHER: No one has come into the room?
THE FATHER: No; no one has come in.
THE GRANDFATHER: And your sister is not here!
THE UNCLE: Our sister has not come.
THE GRANDFATHER: You want to deceive me!
THE UNCLE: Deceive you?
THE GRANDFATHER: Ursula, for the love of God, tell me the truth!
THE ELDEST DAUGHTER: Grandfather! Grandfather! What is the matter with you?
THE GRANDFATHER: Something has happened. I am sure my daughter is worse! . . .
THE UNCLE: Are you dreaming?
THE GRANDFATHER: You do not want to tell me! . . . I can see quite well that something has happened . . .
THE UNCLE: In that case you can see better than we can.
THE GRANDFATHER: Ursula, tell me the truth!
THE DAUGHTER: But we have told you the truth, grandfather!
THE GRANDFATHER: You are not speaking in your ordinary voice.
THE FATHER: That is because you've been frightening her.
THE GRANDFATHER: Your voice has changed, too.
THE FATHER: You are going mad! (He and the Uncle make signs to each other to signify the Grandfather has lost his reason.)
THE GRANDFATHER: I can hear quite well that you are afraid.
THE FATHER: But what should we be afraid of?
THE GRANDFATHER: Why do you want to deceive me?
THE UNCLE: Who is thinking of deceiving you?
THE GRANDFATHER: Why have you put out the light?
THE UNCLE: But the light has not been put out; there is as much light as there was before.
THE DAUGHTER: It seems to me that the lamp has gone down.
THE FATHER: I see as well now as ever.
THE GRANDFATHER: I have milestones on my eyes! Tell me, girls, what is going on here! Tell me, for the love of God, you who can see! I am here, all alone, in darkness without end! I do not know who is sitting down beside me! I do not know what is happening two steps from me! . . . Why were you talking in a low voice just now?
THE FATHER: No one was talking in a low voice.
THE GRANDFATHER: You did talk in a low voice at the door.
THE FATHER: You heard everything I said.
THE GRANDFATHER: You brought someone into the room!
THE FATHER: But I tell you no one has come in!
THE GRANDFATHER: Is it your sister or a priest?—You should not try to deceive me.—Ursula, who was it that came in?
THE DAUGHTER: No one, grandfather.
THE GRANDFATHER: You must not try to deceive me; I know what I know!—How many of us are there here?
THE DAUGHTER: There are six of us around the table, grandfather.
THE GRANDFATHER: You are all around the table?
THE DAUGHTER: Yes, grandfather.
THE GRANDFATHER: Are you there, Paul?
THE FATHER: Yes.
THE GRANDFATHER: Are you there, Oliver?
THE UNCLE: Yes, of course I am here, in my usual place. You are joking, aren't you?
THE GRANDFATHER: Are you there, Genevieve?
ONE OF THE DAUGHTERS: Yes, grandfather.
THE GRANDFATHER: Are you there, Gertrude?
ANOTHER DAUGHTER: Yes, grandfather.
THE GRANDFATHER: Are you here, Ursula?
THE GRANDFATHER: Are you here, Ursula?
THE ELDEST DAUGHTER: Yes, grandfather, next to you.
THE GRANDFATHER: And who is that sitting there?
THE DAUGHTER: Where do you mean, grandfather?—There is no one.
THE GRANDFATHER: There, there, in the midst of us?
THE DAUGHTER: But there is no one, grandfather?
THE FATHER: We tell you there is no one!
THE GRANDFATHER: But you cannot see—any of you!
THE UNCLE: Come now! You are joking.
THE GRANDFATHER: I do not feel like joking, I can assure you.
THE UNCLE: Then believe those who can see.
THE GRANDFATHER: (Undecidedly) I thought there was someone... I believe
I shall not live much longer...
THE UNCLE: Why should we deceive you? What good would that do?
THE FATHER: It would be our duty to tell you the truth...
THE UNCLE: What good would it do to deceive each other?
THE FATHER: You'd find out the truth in no time.
THE GRANDFATHER: (Trying to get up) I should like to pierce this darkness...
THE FATHER: Where do you want to go?
THE GRANDFATHER: Over there...
THE FATHER: Don't be so anxious.
THE UNCLE: You are strange tonight.
THE GRANDFATHER: It is all of you who seem strange to me!
THE FATHER: What are you trying to find?...
THE GRANDFATHER: I do not know what is the matter with me!
THE ELDEST DAUGHTER: Grandfather! Grandfather! What do you want, grandfather?
THE GRANDFATHER: Give me your little hands, girls.
THE THREE DAUGHTERS: Yes, grandfather.
THE GRANDFATHER: Why are all three of you trembling, girls?
THE ELDEST DAUGHTER: We are scarcely trembling, grandfather.
THE GRANDFATHER: I believe all three of you are quite pale.
THE ELDEST DAUGHTER: It is late, grandfather, and we are tired.
THE FATHER: You must go to bed, and grandfather himself would do well to
get a little rest.
THE GRANDFATHER: I could not sleep tonight!
THE UNCLE: We will wait for the doctor.
THE GRANDFATHER: Prepare me for the truth!
THE UNCLE: But there is no truth!
THE GRANDFATHER: Then I do not know what is the matter!
THE UNCLE: I tell you there is nothing the matter!
THE GRANDFATHER: I wish I could see my poor daughter!
THE FATHER: But you know quite well it is impossible; she must not be awaken-
ed needlessly.
THE UNCLE: You will see her tomorrow.
THE GRANDFATHER: There is no sound coming from her room.
THE UNCLE: I should be uneasy if I heard any sound.
THE GRANDFATHER: I have not seen my daughter for a very long time... I
held her hands yesterday evening, but I could not see her... I do not know
what has happened to her... I do not know what she looks like... I do
not know what her face is like anymore... She must have changed these
past weeks... I felt her small cheekbones with my hands... There is
nothing but the darkness between her and me, and all of you... I cannot
go on living like this... This is not living... You sit there, all of you, with
eyes wide open looking into my dead eyes, and not one of you feels any pity!
... I do not know what is the matter with me... No one ever says what
should be said... And everything is terrifying when you think about it...
But why don't you say something?
THE UNCLE: What should we say, since you will not believe us?
THE GRANDFATHER: You are afraid of betraying yourselves!
THE FATHER: Come now, be reasonable!
THE GRANDFATHER: You have been hiding something from me for a long time!
... Something has happened in the house... But I am beginning to
understand now... You have been deceiving me for too long!—You think
that I shall never find out anything!—There are moments when I am less
blind than you, you know!... Do you think that I have not heard you whisper-
ing, for days and days, as if you were in the house of someone who had
hanged himself?—I dare not say what I know tonight... But I shall know
the truth!... I shall wait for you to tell me the truth; but I have known it
for a long time, in spite of you!—And now, I feel that you are all paler than
the dead!
THE THREE DAUGHTERS: Grandfather! Grandfather! What is the matter, grand-
father?
THE GRANDFATHER: It is not you that I am speaking of, girls. No; it is not
you that I am speaking of... I know quite well you would tell me the truth,
if they were not here!... And besides, I feel sure that they are deceiving you
as well... You will see, children, you will see!... Do I not hear all three of
you sobbing?
THE FATHER: Is my wife really in danger?
THE GRANDFATHER: You mustn't try to deceive me any longer; it is too late
now, and I know the truth better than you...!
THE UNCLE: But we are not blind; we are not!
THE FATHER: Would you like to go into your daughter's room? This
misunderstanding must come to an end. Would you like to?
THE GRANDFATHER: (Suddenly hesitant.) No, no, not now... not yet...!
THE UNCLE: You see, you are not reasonable.
THE GRANDFATHER: One never knows all that a man has been unable to ex-
press during his life... Who is making that noise?
THE ELDEST DAUGHTER: It is the lamp flickering, grandfather.
THE GRANDFATHER: It seems to me to be very unsteady... very unsteady
...
THE DAUGHTER: It is the cold wind troubling it...
THE UNCLE: There is no cold wind, the windows are shut.
THE DAUGHTER: I think it is going out.
THE FATHER: There is no more oil.
THE DAUGHTER: It has gone completely out.
THE FATHER: We cannot stay like this in the dark.
THE UNCLE: Why not?—I am quite used to it.
THE FATHER: There is a light in my wife's room.
THE UNCLE: We will go get it later on, after the doctor has come.
THE FATHER: Well, we can see enough here; there is light from outside.
THE GRANDFATHER: Is it light outside?
THE FATHER: Lighter than here.
THE UNCLE: For my part, I would just as soon talk in the dark.
THE FATHER: So would I. (Silence.)
THE GRANDFATHER: It seems to me that the clock makes a great deal of noise!

THE ELDEST DAUGHTER: That is because we are not talking anymore, grandfather.
THE GRANDFATHER: But why are you all silent?
THE UNCLE: What do you want us to talk about?—You are really very peculiar tonight.
THE GRANDFATHER: It is very dark in the room.
THE UNCLE: It is not very light. (Silence.)
THE GRANDFATHER: I do not feel well, Ursula; open the window a little.
THE FATHER: Yes, child; open the window a little. I'm beginning to feel in need of air myself. (The Daughter opens the window.)
THE UNCLE: I really believe we have stayed shut up too long.
THE GRANDFATHER: Is the window open?
THE DAUGHTER: Yes, grandfather; it is wide open.
THE GRANDFATHER: One would not have thought it was open; there is not a sound from outside.
THE DAUGHTER: No, grandfather; there is not the slightest sound.
THE FATHER: The silence is extraordinary.
THE DAUGHTER: One could hear an angel tread.
THE UNCLE: That is why I do not like the country.
THE GRANDFATHER: I wish I could hear some sound. What time is it, Ursula?
THE DAUGHTER: It will soon be midnight, grandfather. (The uncle begins to pace up and down the room.)
THE GRANDFATHER: Who is that walking around like that?
THE UNCLE: It is II! It is II! Do not be afraid. I feel the need to walk about a little.
(Silence)—But I am going to sit down again;—I cannot see where I am going.
(Silence.)
THE GRANDFATHER: I wish I were out of this place.
THE DAUGHTER: Where would you like to go, grandfather?

THE GRANDFATHER: I do not know where—into another room, no matter where! No matter where!
THE FATHER: Where would we go?
THE UNCLE: It is too late to go anywhere else. (Silence. They are sitting, motionless, around the table.)
THE GRANDFATHER: What is that I hear, Ursula?
THE DAUGHTER: Nothing, grandfather; it is the leaves falling.—Yes, it is the leaves falling on the terrace.
THE GRANDFATHER: Oo and shut the window, Ursula.
THE DAUGHTER: Yes, grandfather. (She shuts the window, comes back, and sits down.)
THE GRANDFATHER: I am cold. (Silence. The Three Sisters kiss each other.) What is that I hear now?
THE FATHER: It is the three sisters kissing each other.
THE UNCLE: It seems to me they are very pale this evening. (Silence.)
THE GRANDFATHER: What is that I hear now?
THE DAUGHTER: Nothing, grandfather; it is the clapping of my hands. (Silence.)
THE GRANDFATHER: And that? . . .
THE DAUGHTER: I do not know, grandfather . . . perhaps my sisters are trembling a little! . . .
THE GRANDFATHER: I too am afraid, children.

(A ray of moonlight penetrates through a corner of the stained glass and throws strange gleams here and there in the room. The clock strikes midnight and at the last stroke a sound is heard, very vaguely as if someone were getting up in haste.)

THE GRANDFATHER: (Trembling with special horror.) Who is that who got up?
THE UNCLE: No one got up!
THE FATHER: I did not get up!
THE THREE DAUGHTERS: Nor I!—Nor I!—Nor I!
THE GRANDFATHER: Someone got up from the table!
THE UNCLE: Light the lamp! . . .

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

THE FATHER: Listen! The baby!
THE UNCLE: He has never cried before!
THE FATHER: Let us go and see!
THE UNCLE: The light! The light!

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

THE GRANDFATHER: Where are you going?—Where are you going?—They have left me all alone!

END