

RENT DAY

A melodramatic story

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Cast of Characters

DUPREE: A once wealthy lady,
penniless and at the mercy of
Lord Dank. Lilian's mother.

LILIAN: The only child of Madam
Dupree. Strong willed, with a
strong dislike of Lord Dank.

DANK: A selfish, vain man. Lord
Dank is rich and evil.

ED: Married to Ma Baker. Ed is
kind hearted and bullied by
his boss Lord Dank and his
wife.

BAKER: Ed's mean and hateful wife.

POLICE:

ACT IScene 1

Madam Dupree is sitting in a sparsely furnished room knitting, her daughter Lilian sits at her feet holding a yarn of wool wound around her hands.

DUPREE

Pearl one, knit two, pearl one, knit two, pearl one.

Dupree pulls on the yarn wrapped around Lilian's hands.

DUPREE

Pearl one, knit two...

LILIAN

You did pearl two.

DUPREE

What?

LILIAN

You did pearl two.

DUPREE

No, its pearl one, knit two.

LILIAN

I know.

DUPREE

Good. Now where was I.

LILIAN

Pearl two, knit one.

DUPREE

Pearl two, knit one. Pearl two, knit one.

(sighs)

I can't believe my life has come to this. Knitting scarves to make ends meet.

LILIAN

You could knit something else mother.

DUPREE

This is not the way my life was meant to be. It is your papa's fault. If only he was here.

LILIAN

Oh mama, what would he do?

DUPREE

Probably nothing, as was his life story. Did I ever tell you he had a photographic memory?

LILIAN

No mama.

DUPREE

Not that it matters, he never developed it.

LILIAN

Is that what made papa so negative?

DUPREE

No, he just couldn't focus.

LILIAN

But I'm sure he loved you mama.

DUPREE

Enough! It must be supper time. Go and see what we have.

LILIAN

Yes mama.

Lilian exits. Dupree checks to see if her daughter is coming, then takes a bite of chocolate/cake/biscuit which is hiding behind a cushion. She rushes to put it away as she hears Lilian returning.

Lilian enters, stops behind her mother.

LILIAN

Sigh!

Dupree does not respond, she is making sure there is no evidence of her snack. Lilian moves closer.

LILIAN

(louder)

Sigh!

Dupree does not respond to Lilian but rolls her eyes to the audience.

Lillian, flops down, unlady like in a seat.

LILIAN
Sigh!

There is nothing to eat mama.

DUPREE
As I expected my dear.

LILIAN
I'm soooooo hungry mama.

DUPREE
Yes my dear.

LILIAN
I can't express how hungry I am mama.

DUPREE
Be strong my dear.

Lillian starts to sob.

LILIAN
I would give anything for a slice of freshly baked bread. Even just a crumb.

DUPREE
Oh my dear girl. I wish I could give that and more.

Dupree begins to weep.

LILIAN
Oh mama!

DUPREE
We haven't a single penny left.

LILIAN
Nothing?

DUPREE
Nothing. The jewelry has been sold.

LILIAN
All of it?

DUPREE
The furniture is nearly all gone.

Dupree blows her nose loudly.

DUPREE

I have nothing left to give. We have nothing.
Nothing!

*Dupree starts to howl and sob very loudly.
Mother and daughter fall into each others arms.*

LILIAN

Oh mama!

DUPREE

Oh my darling daughter!

LILIAN

Poor, poor mama! Desolate and penniless. Oh mama, you
poor old thing.

DUPREE

Alright, don't rub it in. We have nothing. Just
forgive me and be done with it.

Lilian jumps up and starts pacing the floor.

LILIAN

Of course I forgive you mama. How could I not.

DUPREE

Thank you me dear.

LILIAN

It is that despicable Lord Dank who has made our life
a misery.

DUPREE

He certainly has not helped.

LILIAN

He puts up the rent, then he does it again, and
again!

DUPREE

It appears his greed knows no end.

LILIAN

He's a...a...

*Glances at her mother, then boldly states to the
audience*

LILIAN
...a scoundrel of a man!

DUPREE
Oh!

*Dupree dramatically faints and her daughter
rushes to her side*

LILIAN
Mama!

DUPREE
You mustn't talk like that.

LILIAN
I can't help it. He is a scoundrel.

DUPREE
Shhhh! Don't let him hear you.

LILIAN
Anger rages within me mama. Just the sound of his
name. Lord Dank. Lord Dank. Lord Dank. Lord
Dank...stank.

DUPREE
Lilian stop! He'll have you arrested...
(gasps)
...or worse...he'll...he'll

LILIAN
What mother?

DUPREE
Nothing, don't think about it. He wouldn't dare.

LILIAN
Oh but he does dare mother.

*There is a loud knocking at the door. They both
look at the door, then at each other, then at
the audience.*

*There is a loud knocking at the door again.
Lilian helps her mama to sit up, then answers
the door.*

*Lord Dank enters without acknowledging either
lady. He is followed by his servant Ed Baker.*

Dank hands his hat to Ed without looking.

Dupree indicates for her daughter to stand behind her.

DUPREE

Lord Dank! What a lovely surprise.

DANK

I know.

ED

He knows.

When Ed speaks nobody takes any notice.

DUPREE

It is a pleasure to see you again.

DANK

I always find it a pleasure to see me too.

ED

It's all a pleasure.

Dank noticeably looks Dupree up and down.

DANK

Unfortunately, it's not a pleasure to see you.

Lilian steps forward, her mother stops her.

DUPREE

Please forgive me Lord...

LILIAN

Stank!

DUPREE

(coughing)

Dank. If I'd know you were coming I would be more prepared.

DANK

It would have made little difference. You seem, you look...old...dowdy even.

Dank pushes past her and walks slowly towards the daughter

DANK

But you my dear...

Dank takes Lilian's hand. She tries to hide her disgust.

DANK

...look divine.

Lilian gives an awkward curtsey.

LILIAN

Thank you my lord.

(aside)

Dank by name, rank by odour.

Dupree rushes over and pushes between Dank and Lilian.

DUPREE

Thank you for honouring us with this visit Lord Dank. Please do have a seat.

Dupree moves Dank to a seat, and pushes her daughter in the opposite direction.

Ed rushes to dust the seat clean, Dank sits when satisfied. Dupree and Lilian stand either side of Dank.

DUPREE

Can I offer you a cup of tea?

Dank raises his hand as if to speak. Ed nods to accept the offer.

LILIAN

Coffee?

Dank raises his hand as if to speak. Ed nods to accept the offer.

DUPREE

Water?

Dank raises his hand as if to speak. Ed nods to accept the offer.

LILIAN

A wash?

DUPREE

Whiskey!

Dank raises his hand as if to speak. Ed nods to accept the offer.

LILIAN

A bath?

Dank raises his hand as if to speak. Ed nods to accept the offer.

DUPREE

Biscuit!

Dank raises his hand as if to speak. Ed nods to accept the offer.

LILIAN

A cigar perhaps?

Dank raises his hand as if to speak. Ed nods to accept the offer.

DUPREE

Snuff?

Dank raises his hand as if to speak. Ed nods to accept the offer.

LILIAN

Brandy?

DUPREE

Perfect Lillian! Brandy for Lord Dank.

Dank raises his hand as if to speak. Ed nods to accept the offer.

LILIAN

Yes mama. Brandy for Lord Dank.

Lillian is shooed off by her mother, Ed holds his hand out as if awaiting a drink, Dank brings them all to a stop.

DANK

Enough!

ED

He said nuff!

They look at Ed, he looks behind himself.

LILIAN

You want snuff?

ED

He said nuff.

They look confused.

DANK

Enough.

ED

You said it again.

To Dupree and Lilian .

ED

He said it again.

DANK

(Aside)
Good help is hard to find.

DANK

I'm here because of your arrears.

ED

Your rears.

Dupree pats the back of her dress while Lilian looks at her mother's bottom. Using her hands as if trying to determine the size.

DUPREE

How dare you!

DANK

I dare madam as it belongs to me.

ED

Belongs to him, all rears.

DUPREE

This is despicable. I'll have you know I, I might be poor but I'm still, a lady.

LILIAN

Are you trying to ruin what is left of mamas reputation?

DUPREE

And I don't snack that much.

Lilian flashes a look at her mother.

DANK

I think Madam Dupree has done that already by letting things slip.

Dupree is swaying on the verge of fainting. Ed and Lilian try to catch her and help her to a seat.

Ed starts to fan Dupree. Lilian rushes to get her some water.

Dank talks to the audience.

DANK

Life is never easy. Unless of course, you happen to be me. Which obviously is not possible, whose else could cope with such intellect, style and look this good.

Dank preens himself as he talks.

DANK

A little hardship is no reason to let things slip, to allow things to fall apart. Now Madame Dupree it is time to make amends.

Dank is still looking at the audience.

LILIAN

Lord Dank!

DANK

Lovely Lilian.

LILIAN

What right do you have to dishonour my mama?

DANK

Right! I have every right. She is in arrears and must pay.

LILIAN

Arrears?

DANK

Yes arrears!

DUPREE

Oh arrears, not rears.

DANK

What are you on about woman?

ED

Should I tell you my Lord?

Dank waves Ed away. Turns to address the audience.

DANK

Today, is rent day.

ED

Rent day!

DUPREE / LILIAN

Gasp!

DANK

Today!

DUPREE / LILIAN

No!

DUPREE

But I paid it last week.

DANK

That was the rent from the week before, the week before.

ED

The week fore, the week fore.

Ed looks confused.

ED

Or is that the week fore, the week fore?

They all look at Ed, he looks behind himself.

DANK

Madam Dupree your rent is due...today!

Ed goes to speak but is stopped by Dank.

DUPREE

But...but...Lord Dank.

DANK

Yes?

DUPREE

I...I...I don't have any money to buy food.

DANK

Soooooo, your problem is?

DUPREE

I don't have money for anything.

DANK

And?

DUPREE

(sobs)

I don't have money for the rent.

DANK

Well?

DUPREE

I...I can't pay the rent.

DANK

Oh, I see.

(pause)

So, what's the problem?

ED

What's the prob?

They all look at Ed, he silently looks behind himself.

DANK

Can you pay the arrears Lady Dupree?

DUPREE

No.

DANK

So is that the problem?

LILIAN

The problem Lord Dank, is you are a horrible...

Dupree rushes to stand in front of her daughter, pushing her away.

DUPREE

Horribly handsome man that...that no one can resist.

Dupree smiles flirtatiously at Dank. He turns from her in disgust.

ED

Get way!

DUPREE

How am I going to feed my daughter?

Lillian courtesy's to Dank.

DUPREE

My lovely, young, sweet innocent daughter.

ED

Get way I said!

Dank silences Ed and stares out into the audience.

Dupree and Lilian cling to each other hoping for mercy.

DUPREE

Please have mercy. I simply cannot...pay the rent.

Dank continues to stare at the audience. Dupree and Lilian are sobbing in each others arms.

DANK

I have a solution!

ED

He's got a lution.

Dupree and Lilian look hopeful.

DUPREE

Oh thank you Lord Dank. Thank you.

DANK

Pay the rent. No problem!

Dank gives an evil laugh. Dupree faints and is helped to the seat by Lilian. Dupree is sobbing loudly.

LILIAN

Have you no mercy?

DANK

No.

DUPREE

My Lord! Please, please...surely there is another way.

Lilian stands and looks to Dank who is still facing the audience.

LILIAN

Lord Dank.

(hesitates)

Could you give us more time?

Dupree is still sobbing.

DANK

No!

ED

You hear him. No.

Lilian appeals to Ed.

LILIAN

What if we...we pay double, no...triple next time.

ED

With what?

DANK

No!

LILIAN

But...We...please...please help me. Help us.

Lilian's appeals to Ed are making him waiver.

ED

Me Lord maybe they could...

Dank holds up his hand.

DANK

...pay the rent! Splendid idea.

Lilian stamps her foot in frustration and

returns to her mother.

ED

But if they have no money how are they meant to pay?

DANK

Not my problem.

DUPREE

Oh Lord Dank please have mercy.

Dupree looks to Ed and pleas with him.

DUPREE

Please tell him we need more time. Tell him, he can trust me, I will find the money. I will pay the rent. I...we just need more time.

Ed struggles with his conscience. He finally goes to Dank, tugging on his sleeve. Dank tries to brush his hand away, but Ed pulls him away from Dupree and Lilian to the front of the stage. Their discussion is focused towards the audience.

ED

I...I have a idea.

DANK

You!

Ed nods. Looks at Dupree and Lilian, crying quietly, and back to Dank.

DANK

Well out with it.

ED

With what?

DANK

The idea.

ED

Oh. The idea.

DANK

Yes. The idea.

Ed says nothing.

DANK
Are you going to tell me your idea?

ED
You want me to tell you now?

DANK
Now would be good.

ED
Merriage.

DANK
Marriage?

Ed nods vigorously.

Dank looks over at the Dupree and Liian.

DANK
Never!

ED
It would solve...

DANK
Nothing. I would be losing money.

ED
But you would gain...

DANK
Nothing. I'd be a laughing stock.

ED
But ...

DANK
Nothing. Look at it!

They both look back at Dupree and Lillian who are still in a state of despair. Dank visibly shudders.

ED
No! The other one.

They both look back at Dupree and Lillian who are still in a state of despair.

ED
Merry the young one.

DANK
The daughter?

They both look back at Dupree and Lillian again.

DANK
Mmmm...maybe.

ED
Oh the daughter is for you me Lord.

They both look back at Dupree and Lillian again.

DANK
One for me.
(pauses)
One for you.

Ed starts to protest.

ED
No me lord.

DANK
I'm glad I thought of it.

ED
No me Lord.

DANK
No need to thank me.

ED
No, no me lord. It's just...

DANK
That I can't be seen with the old one, so I will
gladly give that one to you and I will take the young
one.

ED
No. I can't...I can't merry...

DANK
Of course you can.

ED
My lord it is not possible for me...

DANK

I insist!

ED

Yes me Lord, but I can't me Lord.

DANK

Enough! One each that is the deal.

Ed is distraught and backs away for Dank.

Dank turns to find Lilian standing, ready to confront him.

LILIAN

Lord Dank.

Her mother starts to panic.

DUPREE

Lilian, no!

LILIAN

We must make a stand mama.

DUPREE

It's not worth it my child, we are doomed.

LILIAN

But mama we must make a stand against evil. We must try to...

Dank holds up his hand to silence Lilian.

DANK

There may be a way.

DUPREE

Anything Lord Dank, anything.

DANK

Anything you say?

DUPREE

Yes.

ED

No.

LILIAN

Anything?

DUPREE
Yes Lilian. Anything!

DANK
Well then.

LILLIAN
What is it?

DUPREE
Anything Lord Dank.

DANK
Give me...

LILIAN
We have nothing to give Lord Dank.

DUPREE
But we will give that.

ED
No you don't want to give him that.

DANK
I want...your daughter's hand in marriage.
Lilian drops to the floor, Dupree jumps up.

DUPREE / LILIAN
Noooo!

DANK
Do not panic Madam Dupree you shall not be lonely.

ED
Yes she will!

DANK
You shall not be left to sit by yourself on cold winter nights, feeling depressed, crying.

ED
She can cry all she likes.

DANK
Ed here will marry you.

DUPREE / ED
Noooo!

Lillian sits up looking at Ed. Dupree places her hands on her hips and moves closer to Ed.

DUPREE

And why not?

LILIAN

Yes. What's wrong with my mother?

ED

Nothing.

It's not you, it's me.

DUPREE

I think the years have been good to me.

ED

They have.

DUPREE

Thank you.

ED

There's a problem...it's just that...well...

DUPREE

What's wrong with you?

ED

Nothing!

DANK

Great that's settled!

Lillian returns her head to the floor, silently, but visibly sobbing as Dupree and Raven battle it out.

DUPREE

No!

DANK

Yes!

DUPREE

No!

DANK

Yes!

DUPREE
No!

DANK
Yes!

DUPREE
No!

DANK
Yes!

ED
No!

DUPREE
Yes!

Dupree is shocked as what she has said. Lilian looks up from the floor in horror.

LILIAN
Noooo!

DANK
Yes!

ED
Noooo!

They all look at Ed, who looks behind himself. Lilian returns to sobbing on the floor.

DANK
The wedding shall be tomorrow.

DUPREE
My Lord please, please reconsider.

DANK
We will return later today to finalise the details.

DUPREE
I'm busy.

ED
She's busy.

LILIAN
We're busy.

DANK

Good. Busy organising the weddings.

DUPREE

But...but...umm...I have no money.

LILIAN

Yes! We have no money, so how can we arrange the wedding?

ED

That's right! They have no money and weddings are spensive.

DUPREE / LILIAN

Very expensive.

ED

Very, very spensive.

LILIAN

And of course you would want nothing but the best.

DANK

Oh, my dear girl. Already thinking of me.

LILIAN

No!

DUPREE

Tradition states that father of the bride pays for the wedding.

LILIAN

And I have no father.

ED

Or money.

Dank indicates for Ed to bring his hat. There is a muddle as Dupree gets in the way.

DANK

Ladies. Until this evening.

Dank leaves laughing. Ed hesitates, he wants to speak to Dupree but is called to follow his master.

Dupree helps Lilian up, they hug, stare at each other and then start to pace the floor. Each

time they met in the middle of the stage they look at each other, the audience and then pace away from each other. This is repeated a few times. Standing on the opposite side of the stage Dupree makes a suggestion.

DUPREE

We could poison him!

LILIAN

Yes poison!

They consider the idea, then look at the audience.

DUPREE / LILIAN

No!

LILIAN

To good for him.

DUPREE

Not painful enough.

They pace the floor once again. Standing on the opposite side of the stage Lilian makes a suggestion.

LILIAN

We could...

Lilian acts out shooting Lord Dank.

DUPREE

We don't own one.

LILIAN

Pity

They pace the floor once again. Standing on the opposite side of the stage Dupree makes a suggestion.

DUPREE

You could...you know...

Dupree shimmy's her shoulders, lifts her skirt up, as if flirting.

DUPREE

...get a job.

They consider the idea, then look at the audience.

LILIAN
No!

DUPREE
You sure?

LILIAN
Yes. I'm sure.

They pace the floor once again. Standing on the opposite side of the stage Lilian makes a suggestion.

LILIAN
What about?

DUPREE
Gone.

LILIAN
And the...

DUPREE
All gone. I told you Lilian there is nothing left to sell. Nothing left!

They pace the floor once again. Lilian suddenly rushes to her mother.

LILIAN
I have it! I have it!

Lilian rushes out.

DUPREE
Lillian! Where are you going?

LILIAN
Oh mama do not worry, I know what to do.

She starts to rush after her daughter but stops and returns to the seat muttering. She blows her nose loudly and returns to her knitting.

There is a knock, then a coughing noise from the doorway. Dupree does not hear it. Ed enters very quietly, he keeps looking around as if he is scared of being seen.

ED

Beaten by wife and master.

DUPREE

Oh the sorrows of the down trodden.

ED

If my wife knew I was here, well there'd be hell to pay.

DUPREE

Your wife!

ED

She's the jealous type.

DUPREE

You offer to marry me when you're already married.
Oh, no wonder your wife beats you.

ED

It...it wasn't me! Lord Dank is making me do it.

DUPREE

I'm worth marrying you know.

ED

You may be but me Lord just wants you out of the way.

Off stage yelling can be heard, then there is a banging on the door. Ed is horrified, as it is his wife.

ED

I'm doomed! It's her! The missus!

DUPREE

Quick hide!

Hide in here!

Dupree pushes Ed behind a screen. She moves to the front of the stage adjusting her clothes as she walks. Just before she sits down there is a loud knocking and Baker, Ed's wife, storms in.

BAKER

Where is he?

DUPREE

Excuse me? May I help you?

BAKER

Tell me where he is?

DUPREE

My good lady I have know idea who you are, or who, or what you are talking about.

Baker and Dupree start to circle each other.

BAKER

(laughs, mimics)

My good lady I have know idea...drop the act!

You're no good lady, you're just a low down, good for nothing, husband thief!

DUPREE

Husband thief?

BAKER

Yeah! Mine! Now where is he.

While Baker is rolling up her sleeves and preparing for a fight, Ed's starts to sneak out from behind the screen. Dupree notices him so ties to prevent Baker from noticing. She moves towards the front of the stage. Ed goes back behind the screen a few times then slowly continues to sneak across the back of the stage, stopping every now and then.

DUPREE

Now, now. I have done no such thing! Please. Come. Sit and...

BAKER

Don't play nice with me. I'll kill you..

DUPREE

Kill!

Ed jumps as Dupree yells.

BAKER

With pleasure.

DUPREE

Wait! How do you know your husband is here?

BAKER

Dank brought him here this morning and he ain't come home.

DUPREE

You mean that Ed fellow?

Baker does a little dance.

BAKER

I knew it! I knew it!

Baker pulls a gun from her apron pocket or basket.

DUPREE / ED

Gasp!

Baker turns at the sound to see Ed behind her. She waves the gun at him, indicating he come and stand next to her.

BAKER

Not here she said. Don't know him she said. Well, who's this then?

DUPREE

Madam! I assure you there was nothing going...

BAKER

I don't wanna hear it. I know he's pathetic looking, a bit dim, and to come to think of it, a little on the lazy side. But he's mine damn it! And no snooty hag like you is going to have him!

DUPREE

Hag! Now look here.

BAKER

That's it! You want him, you can have him!

DUPREE / ED

What!

BAKER

But it will cost you! 50 pounds.

DUPREE

I don't want to buy your husband.

BAKER

You're right that's too much. 10 pound. Take it or leave it.

DUPREE

I'll leave it thank you very much.

BAKER

Too late. He's damaged goods, no refunds.

DUPREE

But he was yours first.

BAKER

Save it! We're leaving and he...ain't coming back for free. I want my money by this evening.

Dupree is shocked and stares at them as they leave. Ed is being bullied off the stage. Just before leaving Baker turns back.

BAKER

Remember, 10 pound for my pathetic Ed or else you're dead. That includes your daughter, don't want no loose ends.

Baker exits, yelling at Ed. Dupree flops into the seat and sits fanning herself. She does not respond to the sound of Lilian's voice.

LILIAN

Mama, I'm home.

Lilian sees her mother slumped in the seat and rushes over to her.

LILIAN

Oh mother what's wrong?

Dupree does not respond.

LILIAN

Everything is going to be alright. Look I have the money.

Lilian places a wad of money on Dupree's lap.

DUPREE

Lilian! Where did you get this?

Dupree finally looks up and sees her daughter,

she gasps at Lillian's short hair.

DUPREE

Your hair.

LILIAN

I...I sold it. The wig maker has paid us well.

DUPREE

You sold your hair to the wig maker?

LILIAN

Yes.

DUPREE

Oh the shame of it!

LILIAN

I was not seen mother and it was the only answer.

DUPREE

My dear child, so brave but...but I fear it has all been for nothing.

LILIAN

We are saved mother. We can pay the rent and the arrears.

DUPREE

Yes this week, but what about next week, and the week after that. Lord Dank will get his way. He will marry you and then there is Ed's wife.

LILIAN

You mean Ma Baker?

DUPREE

The one and only. She says she will kill us both if we do not pay 10 pounds for Ed.

LILIAN

But we don't want Ed.

DUPREE

Obviously, neither does she.

There is a knock at the door. Dank and Ed enter. Ed is very nervous and Dank is wearing a new wig. He parades in front of the ladies and stands facing the audience preening himself. Dupree and Lillian recognise the wig.

DUPREE

Good afternoon Lord Dank.

DANK

Yes it is a good afternoon isn't it.

DUPREE

What can I do for you?

DANK

I wanted to check on the wedding arrangements.

DUPREE

Yes of course. The wedding arrangements.

Lilian silently indicates for her mother to be quiet and to sit down. Lilian then approaches Dank.

LILIAN

Oh my Lord how dashing you look.

DANK

I am, aren't I.

Dank smiles and flicks the long wig. Lilian walks around him as if admiring his new outfit and wig.

LILIAN

There is something different about you Lord Dank.

DANK

Do you think so?

LILIAN

Oh yes my lord.

DANK

Does it stand out? Do you think it's too much?

LILIAN

It is a subtle change. But whatever it is, it makes you more handsome, more desirable.

(aside)

Gets him every time.

Dank takes her hands as she passes, he kisses it.

DANK

Lilian my love. I cannot wait until we are wed.

LILIAN

My Lord I too cannot wait.

She turns away from him
But alas I fear we will never know such happiness.

DANK

Do not let such sorrow darken your young heart. We are to be wed tomorrow. Happiness is but a few short hours away.

LILIAN

If only it was possible.

DANK

Tell me young, sweet innocent Lilian, what troubles you.

LILIAN

How can I embrace happiness when I know my mother's life is in danger.

DANK

Ed will care for her my love.

LILIAN

He has not told you...he is...he is married.

DANK

And the problem is?

LILIAN

Oh the pain and sorrow.

DANK

Let me ease your worries. What can I do my sweet girl?

Lilian stops sobbing, turns to Dank and links her arm in his. Dank looks very happy with himself.

LILIAN

Pretend to be mother when Ma Baker comes back to kill her.

DANK
Kill!

Dank tries to escape, but Lilian pulls him back.

LILIAN
You are so brave to do this my Lord. You are the only one brave enough to save mother and win my heart.

DANK
No I not.

LILIAN
Yes you are.

DANK
Not.

LILIAN
Are.

DANK
Not.

LILIAN
Are.

DANK
Not.

LILIAN
Woe is me! The pain of disappointment in the one I love.

DANK
You love me?

LILIAN
Once.

DANK
So...ummm...what do I have to do?

LILIAN
It's very simple. First the disguise.

Lilian leads Dank to the screen at the back of the stage. She pushes him behind it and places her hands on her hips.

LILIAN

Now get if off?

DANK

But we're not married yet.

Lilian steps behind the screen to help Dank dress. Clothing is thrown out onto the stage and collected up by Dupree. Noises and comments can be heard from behind the screen. Ed rearranges the seat, so it is center stage.

DUPREE

Ed you must go for the police.

Ed rushes from the stage. Dank is lead out by Lilian. He is wearing Dupree's dress.

LILIAN

He looks lovely doesn't he mother?

DUPREE

Yes he does, but there is something missing.

Lilian leads him to the seat and pushed him into it. Dupree has removed her mop cap and placed it on his head. She also fusses with the dress and hands him her knitting.

DUPREE

That's much better. I wouldn't sit there doing nothing now would I.

DANK

I can't knit.

Lilian places a shawl on his shoulders hiding some of his long hair.

LILIAN

Don't want you to catch cold.

DANK

I don't want to do this!

LILIAN

You don't want to marry me?

DANK

Of course I do.

LILIAN

No. It's obvious you don't love me enough.

DANK

Of course I love you...it's just that...

As they are talking Ed appears with a policeman. Dupree rushes to them, Dank tries to turn around and look, but Lilian stops him.

LILIAN

The wedding is off.

DANK

No!

LILIAN

Now my brave Lord you must not turn around.

DANK

Why?

LILIAN

It will spoil the plan. We need to catch Ma Baker in the act. So she must not know it is you and not my poor, dear mother.

There is a loud knocking at the door.

BAKER

(off stage)

I know you're in there.

Lilian starts to rush off to the side - stops and blows Dank a kiss. He faces the audience, reacting to everything Baker says but not turning round.

More loud knocking.

BAKER

(off stage)

You can't hide from me. I want my money.

Baker storms on stage waving a gun, when she sees Dank. Baker stops and points her gun at Dank.

BAKER

Times up Dupree! Where's me money?

Baker looks around. Dank says nothing.

BAKER

Do you hear me!

Baker steps closer. Dank says nothing.

BAKER

I don't have time for your games.

ED! ED!

Where is that no good man when you want him.

Baker holds the gun with two hands. Dank says nothing.

BAKER

I'm counting to three.

One (pause)

Two (pause)

Three!

Two loud shots are heard. Dank falls to the floor. Baker stands over him and shots him one more time. She laughs. Lilian appears on stage, Baker laughs again.

BAKER

Too late! Now it's your turn.

POLICE

Ma Baker! You're under arrest for the murder of Lord Dank.

Baker hesitates, looks at Dank on the floor. The policeman handcuffs Baker, while Lilian removes the mop cap and wig.

BAKER

What! I thought it was her. It was meant to be her!

DUPREE

You mean me.

BAKER

Why you no good, husband stealing hag.

ED

Take her away.

The policeman leads her off stage.

BAKER

You'll pay for this! They can't hold me forever.

Baker can be heard yelling off stage.

Ed reaches inside Dank's coat and brings out some papers, he hands to Dupree.

ED

These are for you.

DUPREE

I don't believe it. It's a dream come true.

LILIAN

Are they...

DUPREE

Yes they are.

Dupree and Lilian hug.

LILIAN

No more worries.

ED

No more groveling.

DUPREE

No more rent days!

Lillian: No more worries.

All three link arms and leave the stage.

THE END