

# Marking my Linen or Adventures in Provocation: A Play in Two Acts

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Folks, I hardly know where to begin as I attempt to keep within the bounds of what propriety I may possess (which, as some of you know, is not necessarily all that much). Anyway, here goes.

Maintaining what have, so far, been fairly good relations with many neighbors, some of whom I have begun to call my (West) Addams Family, is proving a bit difficult, right now. With, in particular, events of last night suggesting a concerted attempt to sour said relations with a rank bit of provocation whose origins go back some months, thrown in as well.

Fasten your seat belts as some of the following bits of theater may put some of you off your feed. Bear with me, Gentle Reader™.

## Cast of Characters

- ANGEL.....A neighbor for about a decade, in his early twenties, living in bungalow nearby. Our relations cordial, always.
- THE “BANSHEE” .....A recent arrival, young woman in her twenties, live upstairs in the back building. Equipped with a decent pair of lungs along with, perhaps, a certain lack of *retenue*; whence the moniker.
- THE “BANSHEE’S” ROOMMATE.....A silent partner.
- “LURK” .....A recent arrival, in her forties, she lives with her roommate in the bungalow directly across from mine. With *retenue* up the yin-yang, this one. One hardly ever hears her. Quiet as a church mouse, she is.
- “LURK’S” ROOMMATE
- ‘X’.....A fiend. The villain of the piece. Traditionally, ‘X’ is known as the unknown quantity, though I have my suspicions as to who this is.
- BERGIE.....A Moor.
- FIRST NEIGHBOR
- SECOND NEIGHBOR
- THIRD NEIGHBOR ET AL.
- POLICEMAN.....Or one announcing himself as such.

## Background

To my incredulity more than disgust, about a month ago, as part of my bungalow reorganization demanded by the City, going through a number of unused bed sheets, I came across one which had been used for a purpose *other* than that for which sheets are generally considered fit. The *only* possible explanation given the nature of what I had to clean. Call the author of this provocation ‘X’, the unknown quantity. In a foray into my bungalow, ‘X’ must have found it in him/herself (so to speak) to literally “mark my linen,” as the happy British euphemism goes. Months later, with no reaction evident on my part, the other shoe drops. This is a phenomenon I encounter often, something I have come to call the “Greek chorus,” where a point, previously made, is underlined, sometimes repeatedly. Rubbing it in, as it were. Some party is evidently hoping something, anything, will shake loose in this sorry affair. Provocation most foul!

Another bit of background. Whenever the “Banshee” and her roommate happen to pass me on their way out, regardless of the sometimes demented level of histrionics on display the previous night (a level at times causing me to

wonder whether an ambulance or the police are called for. Not kidding), it is as though nothing unusual had happened. Regardless of the blood-curdling screams of the night before, the two usually, politely, one of them often with a blank look, as though she were a “Stepford wife,” say hello before continuing on their way.

## Act 1

### The Events (Chronology not entirely accurate as I was in bed, trying to sleep, during most of it)

1. The “Banshee” cuts loose during the earlier evening with a preparatory verbal (?) barrage.
2. Minutes later, stepping outside, I try to make recording of her screams, but fail.
3. Just then I run into Angel, as he comes out of his bungalow. We exchange greetings as he makes his way out of the complex.
4. Minutes later, I cross the street to check the reach of the “Banshee’s” voice which can still be heard from time to time.
5. More special effects from the “Banshee,” continuing sporadically for some time.
6. I retire to my loft bed. After midnight (?), I begin to hear an argument between “Lurk” and her roommate. Unusual as the pair is always very quiet.
7. “Go!”, “Leave!” “Drugs!” “You locked me out!”
8. “You wiped yourself/your ass (?) with my shirt” (Repeated by “Lurk” many times throughout the next hours as the argument continues.
9. More of this around 3AM. Followed by a pause.
10. Still more beginning at about 5AM.
11. Another voice, outside, is heard: “This is the police” (repeated several times).
12. Around 6AM, persistent, light knocks on the door of “Lurk’s” bungalow . Then, as the day begins, silence descends.
13. Remaining mute throughout, I get up around 8:30AM, bemused.

Later that day, I went about the neighborhood trying to hand out free copies of my book, of which I have distributed about ten with only one refusal so far. Seeing a neighbor entering the complex next to mine, I approach and begin flogging my wares as he backs his car. Fruitlessly, as he would not even look in my direction. I, becoming increasingly upset, shout at him from outside, his electric gate remained open though I did not enter. “Can I give you a free copy of my book?”, “Sir, may I come inside to hand you a copy of my book?”, “My autobiography: *Schizophrenia Weaponized*, available for free!”, “Hello!”. After some minutes of this (what *can* the neighbors be thinking of my performance?), as he disappeared behind a building without so much as a glance in my direction, I gave up.

## Act 2

(Update 10-29-2021) More “heart-rending shrieks, issuing from the formless void” this evening, courtesy of the “Banshee” and maybe her roommate but mostly the first.

Later, in the night, long before I get up, another altercation wakes me. Once again between “Lurk” and her roommate. At one point he outside, pounding on the door, threatening: “I’m going to violate my parole!” (Slight chill runs down my back). She: “Outside!” (Repeated), then (possibly): “Leave!” (Possibly repeated). Back and forth accusations, at one point the roommate seems to bemoan “Lurk’s” attitude: “Who do you think you are?” (Repeated). Several names of personalities follow. Then: “Michelle Obama?” “Barack Obama?”, etc. “Do you think you are better than the rest of us?” Then, interjected: “You lived in a garage with a phone!” (Funny, that; as I listened to them while trying to get back to sleep, it came to me that I, too, had once lived in a garage and that I, too, had had a phone there)... Followed by more verbal back-and-forth. Eventually, as the day dawns, quiet.

*Exeunt omnes.*

Thank you for your attention,

(signed)

*il serenissimo*

P.S. To my sister Irene: May our tears eventually prove invincible.