

Lenore
A One Act Play

By Rene Zabel

| CHARACTER NAME | BRIEF DESCRIPTION | AGE | GENDER |
|----------------|--|---------|--------|
| Lord Dudley | A Gentleman Barrister. When his Father died Dudley was left his estate and quite a bit of debt. He lives in the manor with his butler, Barnes and Cook. His Mother passed away when he was an adolescent. | 30s | Male |
| Lord Thomas | Second son of the Duke. Lives off his trust fund. A life long bachelor. Has been friends with Lord Dudley since childhood. Thomas is very opinionated, cocky, but is loyal to his friends. He has a secret to which only Lord Dudley is priveleged to know. | 30s | Male |
| Lady Hyacinth | Life long friend of Lord Dudley. Her father is an Earl and quite wealthy. She is very eccentric. Wears men's clothing in private. She and Dudley made a pact in childhood that they would marry if Dudley did not find a match. | 20s/30s | |
| Lenore | Because she was a sickly child and couldn't play outside, she didn't have friends growing up. Her Mother and Lord Dudley's Mother were very close. Both Mother's died within a year of each other. Her Father had little patience with illness. | 20's | |
| BARNES | The quenticential English Butler. | | |

LENORE

SCENE ONE

Date: Winter early 1900s.

The den in LORD DUDLEY'S country house, near Devon, England. There is a window with red/maroon velvet curtains. Books lined part of the walls. A wooden desk with executive chair has a pile of books and papers, an ink well and fountain pen lay about the desk. Two high back arm chairs sit to the right of the window with a standing lamp beside it. A small table sits in between the arm chairs; a phonograph to the left. Alternatively, there could be a simple set without the desk and book cases) LORD DUDLEY and LORD THOMAS sit in the arm chairs, discussing the evenings festivities at the ball, both with sniffers of brandy.

LORD THOMAS:

Tonight was an unprecedent bore. I don't know why we continue to subject ourselves to such agony every year. The same inane people, yourself, excluded, of course.

LORD DUDLEY:

Of course.

LORD THOMAS:

Lady Beatrix outdid herself, in throwing "eligible" hens my way.

LORD DUDLEY:

I am relieved to hear you don't find my company unbearable. But, the Christmas ball isn't such a bad affair. You also know they will keep belting you with chickens until you marry.

LORD THOMAS:

An unfortunate fact, I can't deny. As you are well aware, I am forever the bachelor. Marriage is only needed if one must supply prodigy for the family line. Which, my dear Papa doesn't need from me. He has plenty from Richard.

LORD DUDLEY:

Aren't you afraid of growing old alone, with no one to care for you in your declining years?

LORD THOMAS:

Enjoying the Christmas ball is going to keep me from loneliness when I am old and decrepit? I think not.

LORD DUDLEY:

You could, at least, try to enjoy other people. The ball is just a way for everyone to be entertained for the holidays.

LORD THOMAS:

Of course you think it's fine entertainment. Once your eyes caught Hyacinth Edwards, that is. I could see your forehead beaded with perspiration.

(laughing)

I thought you were going to pass out, right there, on the ballroom floor.

LORD DUDLEY:

Thomas, I only perspired because the room was quite warm. The lack of air - stifling.

LORD THOMAS:

So it is Lady Hyacinth, for you then?

LORD DUDLEY:

Her features and disposition fit, perfectly, with my station. Plus, we have known each other our entire lives.

LORD THOMAS:

Her money doesn't hurt either, does it, my friend?

LORD DUDLEY:

Don't be so gauche. Not everyone lives as comfortable as you, even though you are the second son.

LORD THOMAS:

Touché. You know, you could be better off if you didn't take on so many pro bono cases. Countless full purses--

(A strange sound is heard from off stage, a scraping, squawking)

LORD DUDLEY:

Shhh...Did you hear that?

LORD THOMAS:

More than likely, just a rodent in the attic.

LORD DUDLEY:

You are, most assuredly, correct.

(a knock on the door.)

Who could be out at this hour?

(crosses to the door stage
left)

What the...

LORD THOMAS:

Is something the matter?

LORD DUDLEY:

No one is there. You heard the knock as well, didn't you?

LORD THOMAS:

It was probably the wind. It is a bit beastly out there.

(DUDLEY crosses to the brandy)

LORD DUDLEY:

(motioning with his sniffer)

Would you like a refill?

LORD THOMAS:

I must decline. I need to return home. My father has requested my presence in the morning.

LORD DUDLEY:

Very well, I will see you out, then.

LORD THOMAS:

Shall I see you at the club, tomorrow?

(as they cross to the foyer)

LORD DUDLEY:

Of course, goodnight sir.

(LORD THOMAS exits. LORD DUDLEY crosses to the arm chair.
Takes a drink. There is a knock on the door. As he crosses to answer)

Did you forget some...(he opens the door, LENORE stands just off stage, in the foyer, she is wearing a thin gown and cloak)thing... How...uh...how did you get in here?

LENORE:

(timidly)

The door was open.

LORD DUDLEY:

I thought...Well, never mind. Please, do come in and warm yourself.

LENORE:

Thank you sir, you are so kind.

DUDLEY reaches to touch LENORE's arm to show her in. HE recoils from the coldness permeating through her thin cloak.

LORD DUDLEY:

Oh, good Lord, you are freezing. Let's get you in and get you a warm blanket and hot tea.

LENORE:

Thank you sir, but I don't want to be an imposition.

LORD DUDLEY:

Not at all. Please, have a seat and I'll bring you a blanket and have Cook put the kettle on.

DUDLEY rings the bell on the desk.
BARNES enters up stage right.

BARNES:

Sir?

LORD DUDLEY:

Please, ask Cook to prepare tea and scones for our guest. She has caught a chill from being out in the cold.

BARNES:

Very good sir.

(BARNES bows and exits up stage right)

LORD DUDLEY:

(to LENORE)
I will return shortly with a warm blanket.

(DUDLEY crosses stage left and exits.)

LENORE stands, crosses to the desk, picks up a picture frame, it is a photo of DUDLEY, his Father and Grandfather. SHE traces the faces in the picture and brings the frame to her chest, returns the frame and crosses back to the chair, as DUDLEY enters with a blanket, wraps it around LENORE.

LORD DUDLEY:

There, that should warm you a little.

BARNES returns with a tray with scones and a silver tea service. DUDLEY crosses to the side board and prepares a cup and hands it to LENORE.

(OS)

Now, tell me, why are you out alone on this cold night? You aren't from around here. Did you just appear out of nowhere?

LENORE:

What makes you say that sir?

LORD DUDLEY:

I know everyone in this town. I was raised here, as were my Father and Grandfather.

LENORE:

Lord Edmond and Sir William, yes, I know.

LORD DUDLEY:

I don't understand, why you would, but somehow you know my family. However, I don't recall ever meeting you.

LENORE:

Oh yes, I grew up here.

LORD DUDLEY:

How can that could be? I've never met you and I know everyone.

LENORE:

Lord Dudley, why would I create a tale of where I grew up and whom I know?

LORD DUDLEY:

(Puzzled)

Who are you?

LENORE:

(her voice shakes as do her hands)

My name...is..

LENORE passes out.

DUDLEY rushes to LENORE

LORD DUDLEY:

Miss? Miss?

6.

DUDLEY picks LENORE up in his arms and exits stage right.

FADE