

ESCAPE: “EVENING PRIMROSE”

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Written by John Collier. Adapted by John Dunkel

Transcribed by The Indefensible Craig Gustafson for "Those Thrilling Days of Yesteryear" old time radio recreations. www.ttdyradio.com

CAST

CHARLES SNELL:

ELLA:

MRS. VANDERPANT:

ROSCOE:

MRS. BILBEE:

SAM:

SADIE:

ANNOUNCER:

GEEZERS & CRONES:

GEEZER 1:

GEEZER 2:

CRONE 1:

CRONE 2:

CRONE 3:

SFX:

Footsteps

Key in lock

Door open & close

MUSIC UP

SPOOKY FANFARE

ANNOUNCER:

Did you lose an election bet yesterday? Feel a bad cold coming on? Want to get away from it all? We offer you... Escape.

MUSIC:

FOUR BARS OF “NIGHT ON BALD MOUNTAIN” UP, THEN UNDER DIALOGUE.

ANNOUNCER:

You are groping in the midnight dimness of a gigantic department store. And suddenly you realize that you’re not alone – but a hundred eyes are glaring at you from the shadows. A hundred hands reaching for your throat. And your most urgent desire is to... escape.

MUSIC:

STING.

ANNOUNCER:

“Escape.” Produced and directed by William N. Robson, and carefully plotted to free you from the four walls of today, for a half hour of high adventure.

MUSIC:

STING.

ANNOUNCER:

Tonight we escape to the dark labyrinth of a giant department store in the dead of night, and to a fantastic

world of night dwellers as John Collier imagines it in his eerie story, “Evening Primrose.”

MUSIC: STORY INTRO.

SFX: MUSIC FADES AS FOOTSTEPS APPROACH. A KEY TURNS IN A LOCK. DOOR OPENS, THEN SHUTS.

SAM: (HEAVY BROOKLYN ACCENT) Uh, Sadie...

SADIE: (SCREAMS)

SAM: Sadie, whatsa matter? It’s me!

SADIE: (ALSO HEAVY BROOKLYN; GETTING HER BREATH BACK) Oh, Sam, you nearly scared me to death! What do you mean, coming in so quiet?

SAM: I didn’t mean to scare you. I thought you’d be asleep, I didn’t want to wake you.

SADIE: Oh, Sam, I’m glad you’re home!

SAM: Hey, whatsa matter?

SADIE: Oh, it’s terrible! You gotta do something, Sam!

SAM: What’s terrible?

SADIE: It’s this. Just look at this.

SAM: What’s terrible about that? Looks like an ordinary pad of paper to me.

SADIE: That’s it. That’s just what I thought. But it’s got writing in it. It’s awful!

SAM: Now, wait a minute. Maybe you better tell me what this is all about.

SADIE: Well, today I went shopping down at Bracy’s Department Store.

SAM: Yeah...

SADIE: And I needed some writing paper, so I picked this up – it was on top of the pile – and bought it and brought it home. But tonight when I open it, I found it’s got writin’ in it.

SAM: Well, that’s nuthing so terrible. Just take it back tomorrow, make ‘em give you a new one.

SADIE: Ohh, no, you don’t understand. It’s what’s written in it that’s so terrible.

SAM: What do you mean, “what’s written in it”?

SADIE: Here. You gotta read it.

SAM: Oh, Sadie...

SADIE: (OVERLAPPING) No, no. Right now. Read it.

SAM: Look, Sadie, I’m tired, I been bowling all evening...

SADIE: (OVERLAPPING) Please, Sam, please. Just read it.

SAM: Ahhh, all right, but for Pete’s sake... (READS; HE IS BARELY LITERATE AND READS IN A MONOTONE) “October thirteenth. Today I made my... de-cision. I decided to say goodbye to the world to get out leave break away. And I have done it.” Ah, Sadie this is a lotta...

SADIE: Go on, read it.

SAM: Aw... (READS; STARTS FADING AWAY AS CHARLES TAKES OVER) “And now I am free. Really free. Yes, I am free at last.”

MUSIC: **BG MUSIC ENTERS WITH CHARLES.**

CHARLES: (OVERLAPPING. STARTS FADING IN ON FIRST “FREE.” VOLUME RISES UNTIL CHARLES IS NOW NARRATING. CHARLES IS A NICE FELLA, BUT RATHER IN LOVE WITH THE SOUND OF HIS OWN VOICE) ... Free. Really free. Yes, I am free at fast. The world is an intolerable place for a poet. I was broke. Starving. At my wit’s end. Then I had a brilliant idea. I would escape to a place where I had no need to earn a living. Where I could write to my heart’s content in peace and security. Where is this place? Right under your nose. So close, you’d never think of it. I am now living in Bracy’s Department Store. I have everything within arm’s reach that anyone would need or desire. And it’s all free. Absolutely free. (A PAUSE; MUSIC CONTINUES) I arrived this afternoon. I had spent three days looking over all the department stores in town. I decided on Bracy’s because of the completeness of their food department. Therefore, this afternoon I entered the store and went immediately to the fourth floor – to the rug department – and hid myself in this dusty, out-of-the-way corner, behind a pile of carpets. Once I’m settled, I’ll furnish it with the best of modern pieces from the

furniture department. It's small, but I'll be cozy enough – and safe. (A PAUSE; MUSIC CONTINUES) After the store closed, I made my first venture out. I tiptoed as far as the stationary counter and got this paper – the writer's primary need. Now, after making my initial entry, I'll go out and get food, wine, the pillows for my Bed, perhaps a fancy dressing gown! This is perfect! I'll be able to write here.

MUSIC: **BRIDGE. MUSIC CONTINUES UNDER:**

CHARLES: (TONE HAS CHANGED; EXTRANEIOUS CAPITOL LETTERS HAVE BEEN FORGOTTEN) Dawn, October fourteenth. I'm almost too unnerved to write this. The whole thing is unbelievable. After the store was dark and completely quiet, I crept out and started for the food department.

SFX: **FOOTSTEPS.**

CHARLES: One's footsteps echo hollowly in an empty department store at night, and I found myself gliding along the floor on tiptoe, moving as silently as possible. But the sound of footsteps persisted. Suddenly I realized they were not my own. The night watchman! I was in the Salon Moderne. Quickly I seized a mink coat from a hanger, draped it about my shoulders and stood stock still.

SFX: **FOOTSTEPS. SIX OF THEM. THEY CONTINUE UNDER:**

CHARLES: I could have reached out and touched him; but he passed by without so much as a glance. I started to smile – but the smile froze on my lips.

MUSIC: **STING.**

CHARLES: There was someone else here! I was looking straight into a pair of eyes. Large, flat, luminous, inhuman eyes, peering at me from among the Miss's tailored suits a dozen feet away. They belonged to a creature dressed as a man. But he was as pale as a creature found under a stone. His hands, hanging motionless at his sides, looked more like the fins on a fish than human hands. And then he spoke.

ROSCOE: (HIGHLY CULTURED. WELL-BRED SNEERING)
Not bad. For a beginner.

CHARLES: I'm sorry. I didn't know anybody else – uh – lived here.

ROSCOE: Oh, yes! We live here. It's delightful.

CHARLES: We?

ROSCOE: Yes. All of us. Don't you see? Look around you.

MUSIC: STING.

CHARLES: I looked around. I saw nothing. I looked again. I saw an old man come clambering out from behind a clock. There were three elderly ingénues, incredibly emaciated, pale as lace – almost transparent – simpering before the perfume counter. A chintzy lady swam out from the curtains and drapes. They came swarming thick around me, pale, thin, wispy, moving silently. Fluttering like gauze in the wind. Whispering.

(CRONES AND GEEZERS ARE MUTTERING)

CRONE 1: How rawwww he looks.

GEEZER 1: Who is he?

CRONE 2: As coarse as the sun.

GEEZER 2: What is he doing here?

GEEZER 1: A detective. Send for the Dark Men.

CRONE 3: Yessss. Send for the Dark Men.

GEEZER 2: The Daaarrk Mennnn...

CHARLES: They were pressing around me, clawing, holding me, their pale faces contorted with venomous, inhuman hatred. I was paralyzed. All I could do was repeat over and over again, I'm not a detective, I'm not a detective, I'm not!

GEEZER 1: Burglar, then.

CRONE 1: A burglar!? Tie him up.

CRONE 2: Hold him, carry him to the Place.

GEEZER 2: Send for the Dark Men.

ROSCOE: Stop. Stop. Let him speak.

CHARLES: I... not a detective. Or a burglar. I'm a poet.

ROSCOE: Then what are you doing here?

CHARLES: I... I've renounced the world. I came here to live, where I could – (REALIZES; MUMBLES) be alone. (NORMAL VOLUME) Away from the world.

CRONE 3: Why, then – he's come over to us. He's just like us.

GEEZER 1: He's come over to us – a Poet.

CRONE 2: He must meet Mrs. Vanderpant!

GEEZER 2: Yes, Mrs. Vanderpant! She's coming now.

(CRONES AND GEEZERS MUMBLE)

CHARLES: I followed their eyes toward the balcony. There, coming down the wall like an ancient spider, clambored an old lady – wrinkled and cracked and emaciated. She must have been at least eighty. A shadowy matriarch. And the... things... around me bowed and scraped as she reached the floor and floated towards us.

MRS. VANDERPANT: What's going on here? Where is that stupid girl? What's keeping her?

ROSCOE: Oh, uh, Mrs. Vanderpant...

MRS. VANDERPANT: Well, what is it? Who's this, Mr. Roscoe?

ROSCOE: Mrs. Vanderpant, may I present Mr... uh...

CHARLES: Snell. Mr. Snell. Mr. Charles Snell.

ROSCOE: Yes, yes, of course. Mr. Snell. He is a poet, and he's come here to live.

MRS. VANDERPANT: Ooohhhhhh, he has, has he?

ROSCOE: That's what he says; and I believe him.

MRS. VANDERPANT: Well?

ROSCOE: He avoided the night watchman quite neatly; for a beginner.

CHARLES: Thank you.

MRS. VANDERPANT: Hmm. Very well; we shall see. A poet should find inspiration here.

ROSCOE: Mr. Snell, Mrs. Vanderpant is our Grand Old Lady.

CHARLES: Oh?

MRS. VANDERPANT: I am quite the oldest inhabitant here, Mr. Snell. Three mergers and a complete rebuilding – but they didn't get rid of me.

CHARLES: (POLITELY) Oh. Really? Hmm...

MRS. VANDERPANT: Where is Ella? Where is my broth?

ROSCOE: She's bringing it, Mrs. Vanderpant.

MRS. VANDERPANT: Terrible little creature. She is our foundling, Mr. Snell. She's not quite our sort.

CHARLES: Is that so?

MRS. VANDERPANT: I have been here, Mr. Snell, ever since the terrible times of the eighties. (SIGHS) I was a young girl, then. A beauty, they say. And poor Papá lost his money. (SIGHS) Bracy's meant a lot to a young girl in those days. So when I wasn't able to have a charge account, I came here for good. That's better than a charge account. I was quite alarmed when others began to come after the crash of nineteen hundred and seven. But it was (INTRODUCING THEM) the dear Judge...

CHARLES: How do you do?

MRS. VANDERPANT: The Colonel...

GEEZER 1: How do you do?

CHARLES: Yes...

MRS. VANDERPANT: Mrs. Bilbee.

MRS. BILBEE: How do you do?

CHARLES: Mrs. Bilbee.

MRS. VANDERPANT: Mrs. Bilbee writes plays...

CHARLES: Oh?

MRS. VANDERPANT: ... and comes of an old Philadelphia family. Oh, you will find us quite nice here, Mr. Snell.

CHARLES: I'm sure I will.

MRS. VANDERPANT: And of course, all our Dear Young People came in nineteen twenty-nine. Their poor Papás jumped from skyscrapers. They couldn't bear to be without charge accounts, either.

CHARLES: Do you mean... all these people live here?

ROSCOE: Oh, and many more. You shall meet them all later.

MRS. VANDERPANT: Oh, here comes Ella with my broth.

MRS. BILBEE: Come, come, you stupid thing!

- ROSCOE:** Mrs. Vanderpant is waiting!
- ELLA:** Yes, ma'am. Yes, sir. I'm coming as fast as I can. Here.
- MRS. VANDERPANT:** (overlapping) Now, be careful! Don't spill it!
- CHARLES:** Oh, but – she's young.
- ROSCOE:** Well, of course she is a little younger than most of us.
- CHARLES:** And she... she's different. she's beautiful.
- MRS. BILBEE:** Mr.Snell – Ella is Mrs. Vanderpant's maid.
- ROSCOE:** That's right, old man. She's really not our sort at all.
- CHARLES:** You shouldn't say such things. She can hear you.
- MRS. BILBEE:** Oh, that doesn't matter.
- ROSCOE:** You'll understand these things better after you've been here a while.
- CHARLES:** But it seems to me that you would...
- MRS. VANDERPANT:** Mr.Snell. We have certain rules here. They are necessary for our survival. I'm sure you won't find it hard to observe them.
- CHARLES:** Well, yes, I appreciate...
- MRS. VANDERPANT:** (OVERLAPPING) I should advise that you try. If you do not, that would be most unfortunate, Mr.Snell. Most unfortunate for you.
- MUSIC:** STING.
- CHARLES:** October fifteenth. You can imagine my feelings last night. My first thought was to escape as quickly as possible. In fact, I planned to wait til morning, when the store opened, then quit my hiding place, mingle with the crowds and leave Bracy's forever. But just before dawn, Mr.Roscoe brought me a cup of coffee, which must have been drugged – for I fell asleep. And when I awoke I found I had slept all day – and night was closing over the store once more.
- MUSIC:** BRIDGE.
- CHARLES:** Later. I've spent my second night here. I saw Ella again. Ella – the Pearl of this Remote, Fantastic Cave. She's not like the others. A trifle pale, but otherwise Normal. And Human. And Beautiful. A child of perhaps

eighteen. She's the only thing that makes this nightmare bearable.

MUSIC: **BRIDGE.**

CHARLES: October twentieth. Escape seems almost impossible. There's a very effective burglar alarm system and the doors are all carefully guarded. But that's nothing compared to the Dark Men. Who are the Dark Men? I don't know; but they threaten any transgressor with these Dark Men. I shall try to discover who they are. At least, I'm sure I am watched, though they've begun to trust me now. Speaking to the night watchman would be suicide, even if he believed my fantastic story, or didn't shoot me as a burglar. I'm convinced that neither Ella nor I could get out of here alive. She and the night watchman are the only real people here. And how the others hate the night watchman.

MRS. BILBEE: Odious, vulgar creature. He reeks of the coarse sun.

CHARLES: (OVERLAPS AFTER "REEKS") Oh, come now, Mrs. Bilbee. He's really a personable young man. Very young for a night watchman.

ROSCOE: Mr. Snell. Sometimes I wonder about your "taste."

MRS. BILBEE: You mustn't stay so much to yourself, Mr. Snell. You must become better acquainted with our ways.

ROSCOE: Yes, old man. You must come to the play tonight. We're going to be entertained with one of Mrs. Bilbee's tragic comedies. "Love in Shadowland." I'm sure you'll enjoy it.

CHARLES: I'm sure I will.

MRS. BILBEE: It's really a festive occasion, you know. Wanamaker's is coming over, you know.

CHARLES: Wanamaker's?

ROSCOE: Yes, the entire colony over at Wanamaker's is coming here en masse to attend the play.

CHARLES: You mean there are people living in other stores?

MRS. BILBEE: Oh, dear, yes! Didn't you know? Of course, the best people live at Bracy's. And Wanamaker's.

ROSCOE: Oh, come now, Mrs. Bilbee, there are some very nice people over at Alton's.

- ELLA:** (APPROACHING) I beg your pardon, Mrs. Bilbee.
- CHARLES:** Oh, hello, Ella!
- ELLA:** Good evening, Mr.Snell. Mrs. Bilbee...
- MRS. BILBEE:** Well, what is it?
- ELLA:** Please, ma'am, I'd so love to see your play tonight. May I have your permission...
- MRS. BILBEE:** Certainly not! You know better than that, you stupid creature. You know where you belong. In the basement, with the garbage cans.
- CHARLES:** But Mrs. Bilbee, couldn't you...
- MRS. BILBEE:** (OVERLAPPING) Hush, Mr.Snell.
- ROSCOE:** Ella, you're becoming entirely too forward as of late. I'd advise you to watch your step. Remember the... Dark Men.
- ELLA:** Oh, no! Please, Mr.Roscoe! I'll be good, I promise I will! No, please don't send for the Dark Men. I'm sorry, Mrs. Bilbee, excuse me...
- CHARLES:** Ella, come back!
- ROSCOE:** Mr.Snell, you forget yourself. Let her go.
- CHARLES:** But how can you treat her like that? Why do you always frighten her? And what is all this about the Dark Men?
- ROSCOE:** Well, the Dark Men...
- MRS. BILBEE:** Oh, please, Mr.Roscoe, not now! You'll spoil our whole evening. (COQUETTISH) And I do so want Mr.Snell to enjoy my play!
- ROSCOE:** Very well. Later, Mr.Snell.
- CHARLES:** But I want to know about the Dark Men.
- MRS. BILBEE:** Later, later!
- MUSIC:** **BRIDGE. CONTINUES UNDER:**
- CHARLES:** October twenty-first. At last I found an opportunity to speak to Ella alone. I hadn't dared to Speak to her before. Here, one has a sense always of pale eyes secretly watching. But last night at the play, I induced a fit of hiccups. As I anticipated, I was sternly reprimanded and told to go and secrete myself in the basement, where the night watchman wouldn't hear me.

This was exactly what I had planned: I went to the basement.

SFX: FOOTSTEPS UNDER CHARLES' SPEECH.

ELLA: (CRYING SOFTLY)

CHARLES: There in the darkness, among the garbage cans and the rats, I heard sobbing. (CALLING OUT) Ella? Ella!

ELLA: Oh!

CHARLES: Ella, is that you?

ELLA: Yes.

CHARLES: Why are you crying? What is it, Ella?

ELLA: They... they wouldn't even let me see the play!

CHARLES: Is that all?

ELLA: Oh, Mr.Snell! I'm so unhappy!

CHARLES: There, there. You mustn't cry.

ELLA: You're the only one – the only one who's kind.
(SNIFFS)

CHARLES: Ella, why are you here? Why do they treat you so differently?

ELLA: Because I'm not like them. I didn't choose to come here.

CHARLES: (HORRIFIED) You mean you're held prisoner?

ELLA: Yes. You see, I was only six. I came here on a shopping tour with my mother. I got lost and fell asleep behind a counter. It was dark when I awoke, and They found me. Some of them wanted to send for the Dark Men, because they were afraid I would tell on them. But Mrs. Vanderpant said no – I could stay and be her maid. And I've been here ever since.

CHARLES: Since you were six? Haven't you ever tried to get away?

ELLA: Oh, no. I don't know anything about... out there. I wouldn't know what to do. Besides, I'm afraid. If anyone tries to get out, they send for the Dark Men.

CHARLES: Ella, who are the Dark Men?

ELLA: Don't you know? Oh, it's horrible.

CHARLES: Tell me.

- ELLA:** You know how people live at all the stores; at Gimbel's and Bloomingdale's and...
- CHARLES:** (OVERLAPS AFTER "BLOOMING") Yes, yes, I know.
- ELLA:** Well, the Dark Men live at... the undertaker's.
- CHARLES:** Good heavens.
- ELLA:** And whenever someone dies, or breaks the rules, or when a burglar gets in and sees these people and might tell – they send for the Dark Men.
- CHARLES:** How horrible!
- ELLA:** They put the body in the butcher shop in the food department. And then the Dark Men come. I saw them once. It was terrible.
- CHARLES:** What do they do?
- ELLA:** They go in where the dead person is; they have wax with them, and all sorts of things. And when they're gone, there's just a wax model left on the counter. Then our people put a frock on it, or a bathing suit and mix it up with the other wax models in the windows. And nobody ever knows.
- CHARLES:** But aren't they heavier than the others, these wax models? You would think they'd be heavier.
- ELLA:** No. They're not heavier. I think there's a lot of them... gone.
- CHARLES:** Oh, dear.
- ELLA:** Yes. And if you displease these people – the same thing will happen to you.
- CHARLES:** Ella. You mean all these dummies around us?
- ELLA:** Oh not all of them. But if displease these people, the same thing will happen to you.
- MUSIC:** BRIDGE. CONTINUES UNDER:
- CHARLES:** October thirtieth. I haven't kept up my journal. Writing has been out of the question. Once more, I'm frozen with terror. But not for myself, now. For Ella. They hate her. Anytime, they might turn against her and send for the Dark Men. My Mind is filled with Her; I dream of her everyday. I live to see her at night. We've managed it several times. They trust me now and let me roam about

without interference. Finally, tonight, I met her again—and said it.

MUSIC: _____ **OUT.**

CHARLES: Ella, I love you!

ELLA: Oh, Charles...

CHARLES: I love you, Ella! Let's get married – or whatever they do here. Then we can live together in my home in the carpet department. They wouldn't dare hurt you, then.

ELLA: Oh, Charles, I...

CHARLES: (OVERLAPPING) Don't look so dismayed. If you like, we'll go away from here. Maybe we can get transferred to... to Bergdorf-Goodman's, overlooking Central Park.

ELLA: Don't, Charles, don't. You mustn't...

CHARLES: But I love you. (PAUSE) Ella, you're not in love with someone else?

ELLA: Yes, Charles. I am.

CHARLES: But who? I thought you hated them all. It must be Roscoe; he's the only one that's young enough.

ELLA: Oh no, Charles, not Roscoe. Especially not him! I do hate them all. They make me shudder.

CHARLES: Who is it, then?

ELLA: It's... him.

CHARLES: Who?

ELLA: The night watchman.

CHARLES: No; impossible.

ELLA: I love him! He smells of the sun.

CHARLES: Ella...

ELLA: Oh, it was wonderful, the way it happened. (ALARMED) Don't tell on me, Charles, or they'll punish me!

CHARLES: Oh no, no...

ELLA: I was careless, and there he was, coming around the corner in the ladies lingerie department. I was caught. There were only some wax models in their underthings. There was nothing else to do. I slipped off my dress and stood still.

CHARLES: (QUIET; SCANDALIZED) Oh. I see.

ELLA: He stopped and looked at me. And Charles, he spoke to me! He said, “Say, honey, I wish they made ‘em like you on Eighth Avenue.” Charles, wasn’t that a lovely thing to say?

CHARLES: (PRIMLY) Personally, I should have said Park Avenue.

ELLA: It doesn’t matter what street. It was a lovely thing to say.

CHARLES: But what can you do about him? Ella, he belongs to another world.

ELLA: Yes! To Eighth Avenue! I want to go there! Charles, are you really my friend?

CHARLES: Yes, of course I am.

ELLA: Then I’ll tell you: I’m going to stand there again in the lingerie department. So he’ll see me.

CHARLES: And then?

ELLA: Perhaps he’ll speak to me again.

CHARLES: Ella, you’re only torturing yourself.

ELLA: No. Because this time, I shall answer him. He’ll take me away.

CHARLES: Take you away? Oh no, Ella, I couldn’t bear that. You don’t love him. You only think you do because you think he’ll take you out of here, but you don’t know that he will. And I will, Ella! I’ve made up my mind.

ELLA: No, Charles, I couldn’t let you do it. Even if I loved you, you couldn’t do it, Charles.

CHARLES: Why not?

ELLA: Because – you really belong here. You’re – you’ve become one of them now.

CHARLES: Ella, you mustn’t say that!

ELLA: It’s true. And – Charles, I’ve got to go. There’s someone watching us; I feel it.

CHARLES: No, wait, Ella...

ELLA: Goodbye, Charles.

CHARLES: No, Ella – come back. Ella!

ROSCOE: (OFF-MIKE) Please, old man. You'll arouse the night watchman.

CHARLES: Roscoe!

ROSCOE: Yes. (SIGHS IRONICALLY) Oh, love can be very upsetting, can't it?

CHARLES: You heard?

ROSCOE: Yes. Just the last moment or so. Tsk tsk tsk. Very touching. And yet, it's understandable. I've been attracted to Ella myself. So she loves another, hmm? Too bad, old boy. Who could it be? Could it be that I'm the cause of your heartbreak?

CHARLES: You flatter yourself too much, Roscoe.

ROSCOE: Well then, whom? The old Judge? Oh, certainly not. The Colonel? Hardly.

CHARLES: None of those.

ROSCOE: Oh, not one of the customers!?! The staff?

CHARLES: She loves the night watchman! Can you imagine that? She loves the—

ROSCOE: Oh?

CHARLES: (A BEAT) Roscoe, I shouldn't have said that. It's not true. At least, I don't think it's true. You wouldn't... (PAUSE) Roscoe, you said you loved her too. You wouldn't do anything? Tell anybody? This is a secret between us. Between friends; isn't it?

ROSCOE: Of course, old man. As secret as the grave.

CHARLES: She's young. Perhaps he'll leave, and she'll forget him in time, who knows? Perhaps she'll learn to love... you. Or me.

ROSCOE: Of course. In time.

CHARLES: And we'll figure a way to keep her safe here.

ROSCOE: Absolutely safe. Now don't you worry about it. It's almost dawn; time for bed. Good morning, Mr. Snell.

MUSIC: **OMINOUS BRIDGE. CONTINUES UNDER:**

CHARLES: Early evening; November fourth. I was a fool! I should have known he couldn't be trusted. He must have gone straight to Mrs. Vanderpant, because this evening the

atmosphere has changed! People flicker to and fro, smiling nervously – horribly – with a sort of frightened, sadistic exaltation. An informal dance in the record department has been called off. I can't find Ella! I'm going out again now to look for her.

MUSIC: STING.

CHARLES: Roscoe, what have you done with her?!

ROSCOE: Sh sh sh sh sh. Quiet, old boy. The night watchman.

CHARLES: I don't care. What have you done?

ROSCOE: Whatever I did was for your own good as well as for the good of us all.

CHARLES: Wait a minute.

SFX: SEVERAL PAIRS OF OMINOUS FOOTSTEPS.

CHARLES: What is that? What are those people carrying? (PAUSE)
That's Ella! She's tied up. They're carrying... Ella!
Ella!

| | | | |
|--------------|--|-----------------|---|
| ELLA: | (OFF-MIKE) Charles! Help me! Save me, Charles! | CHARLES: | No, let me go! |
| | | ROSCOE: | No, Charles, stop it. You'll arouse the night watchman. |

ROSCOE: Charles, stop
it!

CHARLES: No, they're taking... taking her in... into the butcher shop! (PAUSE; IN HORROR:) Roscoe... ?

ROSCOE: Yes. Those... are the Dark Men.

CHARLES: Good lord.

MUSIC: OMINOUS BRIDGE. CONTINUES UNDER:

CHARLES: Midnight. I'm scribbling this last entry hurriedly.
They... are in there... in the butcher shop... with Ella.
The Dark Men. There's only one thing to do. I'm going
to find the night watchman and tell him. He and I will
save her. If we can.

MUSIC: EERIE VIOLIN STUFF. CONTINUES:

CHARLES: And if we are overpowered—well, I will leave this pad on the stationary counter. Tomorrow—if I live—I will recover it. If I do not: whoever finds this and reads it... look in the store windows. Look for three new wax dummies. Two men—one rather sensitive looking—and a girl. She has blond hair, and blue eyes, and her nose turns up a little. Look for us. And then, find them. Smoke them out. (FADING OUT) Exterminate them...

SAM: (FADES IN, OVERLAPPING; TAKES OVER NARRATION) Exterminate them. Avenge us.

SADIE: Oh, Sam, isn't it horrible?

SAM: Wow.

SADIE: Well, we gotta do something! Tell somebody; something! Oh, Sam, what'll we do?

SAM: Do? Nothin'. Go to bed.

SADIE: But Sam... !

SAM: Whoever wrote this has sure got a weird sense of humor! It's probably some clerk down at Bracy's who oughta be fired.

SADIE: But... you mean... you think it's just a story?

SAM: Are you kiddin'? You don't believe this stuff, do you?

SADIE: Well... well, I don't know, I just thought—

SAM: Oh, forget it, baby, snap out of it! I shouldn't leave you alone; you get too many ideas when I go out bowlin' at night.

SADIE: But, uh... don't you think maybe we oughta just... take it back and show somebody?

SAM: Ahhh, nuts! It's not worth the bother; they'd laugh at you, baby. They'd think you were crazy or something.

SADIE: Yeah. (BEAT) Yeah, I guess you're right. I guess I was silly.

SAM: Forget it. Ah, come on, let's go to bed, huh? I'm tired.

SADIE: Okay. Okay, Sam. Gee, you know there, for a while there I sure was scared. (HAPPY; CHATTY) Oh! I even forgot what I was gonna tell you. Sam, I found the cutest dress today – only nineteen ninety-five.

SAM: Yeah, baby?

SADIE: Yeaah. It was in the window at Bracy's. It was on a beautiful little wax model, with (LESS ENTHUSIASTICALLY) blond hair... (SHE'S GONE COLD) blue eyes... (BREATHLESS WITH HORROR) and a turned-up nose... (DOESN'T WANT TO COME TO THE END OF THIS ROAD) and there were... two men standing beside... (A BEAT; SHE CAN'T CONTAIN IT ANYMORE – THIS IS A FULL-THROATED SCREAM:) **SAM!!!!**

MUSIC: **END OF STORY MUSIC.**

ANNOUNCER: Escape – is produced and directed by William N. Robson, and tonight brought you “Evening Primrose” by John Collier, adapted for radio by John Dunkel. With Elliott Lewis as Charles Snell, Paul Frees as Roscoe and Pat Lowery as Ella. The special musical score was conceived and conducted by Cy Feuer.

MUSIC: **SPOOKY FANFARE.**

ANNOUNCER: Next week: after you've had a tough day at the office, or leaning over a hot stove... when your four walls seem to be closing in on you, next week at this same time, when you want to get away from it all... we again offer you – Escape.

MUSIC: **CLOSING THEME.**

ANNOUNCER: This is CBS – the Columbia Broadcasting System.

THE END