



**Sample Pages from
Scarlet Expectations of a Drowned Maiden and
Two Greek Queens**

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SCARLET EXPECTATIONS OF A DROWNED MAIDEN AND TWO GREEK QUEENS

A COMEDY IN ONE ACT BY
Robert Wing



*Scarlet Expectations of a Drowned Maiden
and Two Greek Queens*
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Characters

IM+7W+4 Either

Dee Dee Dane: The greatest talk show host of all time! Legions of fans admire and model their lives after her.

Penelope: The wife of Odysseus. She waited patiently for her husband to come home. She is a model of patience and sacrifice...or is she?

Medea: When her husband, Jason, told her he wanted custody of the kids, she said "Sure, no problem. Which pieces?"

Hester Prynne: Her man, Reverend Arthur Dimmesdale, lets Hester spend her life paying for a crime that he was as equally guilty of – and she enjoys it!

Miss Havisham: Her man left her at the altar and she spends the rest of her life in that instant of abandonment.

Ophelia: Between her father and her boyfriend Hamlet, she doesn't have a chance.

Arthur Dimmesdale: He really should have thought first before agreeing to appear on the show.

Commercial Narrator: Narrates Commercials One and Two.

Players 1-4: Commercial characters.

A Few Words On Staging

Very simple and affordable. A director may stage the play with a half dozen folding chairs on an empty stage, or as elaborately as he or she wishes. Costumes may be easily pulled together from items in a costume box or, again, a director may go "all out" dress the actors elaborately.

The first staging of *Scarlet Expectations* used a pre-recorded "audience" soundtrack. Easy enough. However, a director may make use of applause signs, etc., much like real studios do to get the responses they want from their audiences. A director may be as creative as he or she wishes.

The first staging of *Scarlet Expectations* also made use of pre-recorded narrators during the commercials, but, again, a director may choose to make the commercial narration live.

Finally, cast size is very flexible. It may be performed with 10 students, or 20. *Dee Dee* is supposed to be "filmed before a live studio audience." So, non-speaking roles may be created for cameramen, or make-up people, or any role that you'd find in a television recording studio.

Have fun!

Performance History

Scarlet Expectations of a Drowned Maiden and Two Greek Queens was first performed (as *A Very Special Dee Dee*) at North Country Union High School in Newport, VT on April 2, 2013 under the direction of Cheri Skurdall. The cast was as follows:

Dee Dee Dane: Kendra Perkins

Queen Penelope: Jessi Sackett

Medea: Shannon Smith

Hester Prynne: Jade Cota

Miss Havisham: Erin Spoerl

Ophelia: Arden Leithead

Arthur Dimmesdale: Alex DeRoehn

Commercial Narrator: Duke Symanski

Commercial Player 1: Shania Russin

Commercial Player 2: Hannah Chitamber

Commercial Player 3: Mattie Matthews-Austin

Commercial Player 4: Keirstan Lague

Assistant Director: Keirstan Lague

Set and Costume Design: Robert Wing

Sound Design and Production: Alex DeRoehn

Lighting Design: Tristan Slicer

Technical Crew: Tristan Slicer and Joe Erwin

Dedication

To my lovely friend, Lana O'Neil.

Lights up. Music. The roar of an enthusiastic studio audience greets DEE DEE DANE as she bounds onto the stage.

DEE DEE: Hello, everybody! Welcome to a very special *Dee Dee Dane Show!* (*audience and music fades*) Today we're talking about bad boys and the women who love them. Let me introduce my first guest who waited twenty years for her husband Odysseus to return from the Trojan War. And while she was patiently waiting at home, he was hooking up with hoochies from here to Hades. Please welcome Queen Penelope.

Applause. Enter PENELOPE.

PENELOPE: Thanks for having me on today, Dee Dee.

DEE DEE: My next guest, Hester Prynne, went to her minister for a little "spiritual guidance" and, nine months later, along comes their love child, Pearl. Hester was forced to wear a scarlet "A" for the rest of her life as a reminder of her sin of adultery. Why? Because she refused to name the good Reverend Dimmesdale as her baby's daddy! Please welcome Hester Prynne!

Applause. Enter HESTER.

HESTER: Thank you, Mistress Dane, for your kind invitation.

DEE DEE: My next guest has spent more than a century shuffling around her gloomy, decaying mansion, reliving the pain of the day her fiancée left her at the altar. In fact, she wears her wedding dress to this day. Ladies and gentlemen, please give a warm welcome to Miss Havisham.

Applause. Enter MISS HAVISHAM.

MISS HAVISHAM: Thank you, Miss Dane.

DEE DEE: Between her overbearing father and her manipulative boyfriend Hamlet, my next guest didn't have a chance. Where'd she end up? Face down – floating in a stream. Now, it's never been established if she took her own life, but chances are she probably did. Please help me welcome, Ophelia!

Applause. Enter OPHELIA.

OPHELIA: (*timidly*) Hello.

DEE DEE: The mere mention of my next guest's name elicits a violent reaction from most people: Medea. (*audience boos*) After her husband left her and their two children for his young trophy wife,

Medea did the unthinkable: she killed their children to get back at him. (*audience boos*) Ladies and gentlemen – Medea.

Boos rising. Enter MEDEA.

MEDEA: (*shouting as she enters*) You don't know me! Don't judge me! I do what I want! You don't know me! (*audience boos*) Whatever!

DEE DEE: Welcome to the show, ladies.

ALL: (*talking at once*) (*H*) Hello, Mistress Dane, I am unused to appearing before such friendly crowds. (*MH*) I don't get out much and these lights are burning my eyes. (*O*) Elsinore Castle is so gloomy this time of year. It's nice to get away. (*P*) There was a bit of a delay at the airport, but I don't mind waiting. (*M*) Everybody judging me like they know me – whatever!

DEE DEE: Ladies, I've asked you here today to talk about... relationships.

ALL: (*talking at once*) (*MH*) Left at the altar! I was left at the altar! (*H*) A man of God can be very persuasive; I could not control my sinful urges. (*P*) Odysseus is a king, he can do certain things that I can't. (*O*) I don't know what I did to make Hamlet so mad. (*M*) Jason thought I'd go away quietly – think again!

DEE DEE: Ladies, let's get right to it. Tell me, why did sensible women like yourselves make such bad choices in men? I'll start with you, Penelope. Tell me, why did you wait twenty years for your husband Odysseus to come home from the Trojan War when everyone else had written him off as dead?

PENELOPE: (*casually*) Oh, I knew he'd be home – eventually.

MEDEA: Yeah, but did you know that while you were at home being the perfect wife, he was floating around the Mediterranean getting' it on with every demigoddess with a pulse? Face it, Penelope – your man's a dog!

PENELOPE: (*casually*) I think we can all agree that temptation is a very powerful force.

MEDEA rolls her eyes and makes an "Oh, please" face.

HESTER: I, too, have...succumbed to temptation...temptation of the flesh!

MEDEA and PENELOPE and MISS HAVISHAM: (*all at once*) (*MH*) Well, I certainly thought about it but I planned on getting married first

(M) Yeah, I might've done a couple of things I'm not too proud of
 (P) Look, Odysseus was away for a long time, a real long time.

DEE DEE: Ladies, I suggest we lay down a couple of ground rules. First, speak one at a time and second, and most importantly, we don't judge each other. Can we all agree on that?

ALL: (except OPHELIA) Yes...As you wish...Whatever.

DEE DEE: Ophelia, you're quiet. What's on your mind?

OPHELIA: Well, Dee Dee, I was thinking how I always did what I was told. I never talked back to my dad, and my ex-boyfriend, Hamlet, couldn't have asked for a better girlfriend than me. No matter what he said to me or no matter how crazy he acted, I never questioned him or shouted back at him. I was tempted to, but I didn't, because good girls don't.

MEDEA: And where did that get you? Huh? I'll tell you where it got you: dead – floating in a stream. (OPHELIA begins to cry quietly. Audience boos.) Hey, I'm just telling it like it is.

HESTER: (comforting OPHELIA) Who are you to judge Ophelia? You murdered your own children! I say, "judge not lest ye be judged."

MEDEA: And I say, "lex talionis" – that's Greek for "An eye for an eye." And that's how Greek girls roll. Right, Penelope?

PENELOPE nods in agreement.

DEE DEE: (sensing that things could get out of hand) Ladies, today's show isn't about dispensing blame; today's show is about understanding the choices each of you made, choices that had enormous consequences for yourselves and your families. No one judges anybody on the Dee Dee Dane show. (audience applauds)

MEDEA: Dee Dee, it's the same old story – here we sit, another group of women buying that lame old "temptation" excuse. I'm sick of it!

DEE DEE: Medea brings up a good point. Isn't it about time we women stop buying the "temptation" excuse? What do you think about "temptation," Miss Havisham?

MISS HAVISHAM: (without missing a beat) I believe temptation is the most powerful force in the universe and women must learn to control it.

HESTER: I agree! We must learn how to suppress temptation at all times! It is wicked!

MISS HAVISHAM: You misunderstand me, Hester Prynne. I mean to say that we must learn how to use temptation to control and, ultimately, destroy all men, for men are the root of all evil!

HESTER: But women are the embodiment of temptation! Surely you haven't forgotten Eve in the Garden of Eden? I was like Eve to the good Reverend Dimmesdale! I tempted him! I was his gateway to sin! (*indicating the "A" on her bosom*) To adultery! (*sobs*)

MEDEA: You Christians sure love your original sin!

PENELOPE: I know, don't they?

DEE DEE: Miss Havisham, I want to go back to a the point you just made. You said, "We must learn how to use temptation to control and destroy men." Elaborate, please.

MISS HAVISHAM: I believe that we must train our daughters to drive men mad with desire; we must train our daughters to toy with the affections of men just as they've toyed with ours for centuries. Look at Ophelia here. Between her domineering father that abusive boyfriend of hers she never had a chance! She was driven to madness by men!

MEDEA: Excuse me, Miss Hawthorne, but it's time you had a reality check. Look at you, staggering around in that filthy wedding dress, giving up on life because a no-good man left you at the altar.

DEE DEE: Miss Havisham, this seems like a good time for our studio audience to learn a little more about the circumstances surrounding the choices you've made.

MISS HAVISHAM: Well, Dee Dee, my story is not unlike many other women's stories. I fell in love with a charming man. We courted, he asked me to marry him, and I said yes. The date was set for the wedding... and he never showed up. Any trust I had in men was shattered on that day – and I've never recovered!

DEE DEE: (*notices a curious expression on PENELOPE'S face*) Penelope, you look like you want to say something.

PENELOPE: Dee Dee, I think Miss Havisham... How do I say this? I think she missed an opportunity. The way I see it, men aren't very smart and when their backs are turned, well...

MEDEA: Finally, someone on this stage is talking sense! Dish girl, dish!

PENELOPE: Think about this for a second: it took ten years for my husband and his buddies to come up with the idea of hiding themselves in a big wooden horse to defeat the Trojans. Ten

years! All that time and that's the best they could come up with?
And the Trojan men – how stupid are they, right?

MEDEA: I know! A big wooden horse left at the gates of their city as a present? I mean, come on! (*the others nod in agreement*) What did they think was inside of it?

PENELOPE: Look, you know how they say, “when the cat's away the mice will play?” Well, I say, when the big, dumb dog is away, the cat can...take a few liberties. See where I'm going with this?

MEDEA : Testify my Grecian sister!

HESTER and OPHELIA look shocked and share looks of disapproval with each other throughout; they do not like what they hear. MISS HAVISHAM looks intrigued.

PENELOPE: Those years I spent patiently waiting for husband to come back? Please, I knew what he was up to. So he hooked up with a few Mediterranean bimbos. Big deal. (*smiles wickedly*) I got what I wanted...

MISS HAVISHAM: And what was that?

PENELOPE: A houseful of hard-bodied young men fighting over me – for years – wearing their skimpy loincloths, all oiled up, flexing their firm muscles, begging me to give them the time of day. (*MISS HAVISHAM and MEDEA are in the palm of her hand*) Girls, I'm telling you – HOT! I had all the male attention a woman could ask for – with none of the subservience men expect. (*MEDEA and MISS HAVISHAM nod in agreement*) And here's the best part: the goddess Athena was so pleased with my “remarkable patience” (*rolls eyes*) that she restored my youthful looks. This gorgeousness you see before you? It's called a divine intervention body lift.

MEDEA: I knew you had work done!

MISS HAVISHAM: Your story is an excellent example of how women can beat men at their own game. I say take what you want from men, discard them – and move on!

HESTER and OPHELIA can't take it any longer.

OPHELIA: The three of you should be ashamed of yourselves!

HESTER: These women are the worst kind of sinners! They don't repent and, worst of all, they don't suffer!

DEE DEE: Hester, I want you to hold that point until we come back from our commercial break. (*to the audience*) We'll be right back.

COMMERCIAL #1

Lights up on a couch. Teenagers are sprawled all on it. One is carelessly eating chips while reading a comic book, the other is clipping his/her toenails while talking on a phone, the other has the hand controls of a video game in his/her hands and bobs, weaves and jerks to an invisible TV screen. NARRATOR speaks.

NARRATOR: It's not easy being a mom, is it? You're up at the break of dawn, you get the kids on the bus and then it's off to work. You toil all day for an unappreciative boss, and then stagger home (*enter MOM carrying bag of groceries*) only to do it all again the next day. Mom, you need a break. Introducing Scent-Tastic Air Freshener. (*MOM puts shopping bag on floor, pulls an air freshener out of the bag, opens it, and places it on a side table next to the couch.*) Simply lift the scent dispersal cone and breathe deeply. (*The kids, unaware of MOM'S presence, begin to fight soundlessly about something. They push, shove, wrestle, on the couch.*) Let yourself be carried away by an exotic blend of smells. (*MOM wraps her arms around herself, smiles, does a little twirl behind the couch as NARRATOR speaks*) There's Cinnamon Oasis, Vanilla Vacation, Jasmine Journey, Rain Cloud Respite, and Desert Delirium. But that's not all. When you purchase any Scent-Tastic Air Freshener you are also buying the rest and relaxation every working mother deserves – guaranteed. Simply place the provided Scent-Tastic Olfactory Blocker in place (*MOM puts a clothes pin on her nose*) and experience true relief. (*Children on couch stop their fighting, become drowsy, then collapse, unconscious, in a pile on the couch*) That's right. The good folks at Propulsa Pharmaceuticals, a subsidiary of Toxicana Chemicals, in collaboration with its partners in the military industrial complex have created a product that takes masking unpleasant odors to a whole new level. Forty-five seconds after peeling back the scent dispersal tape, Scent-Tastic Air Fresheners release a weapons-grade nerve gas that renders its victim unconscious for 12 hours. Now, busy mothers can experience the “me time” they deserve. (*MOM pushes unconscious kids off the couch to make room for herself. She picks up the chips and comic book and plops down on couch.*) Scent-Tastic Air Fresheners are also effective against home invaders, door-to-door salesman, nosey neighbors, grumpy husbands, rabid dogs, and mothers-in-law. Scent-Tastic Air Fresheners, from the good people at Propulsa Chemicals, a subsidiary of Toxicana Chemicals – because there's hope.

Lights down on couch. Lights up on DEE DEE and guests.

DEE DEE: Welcome back to the *Dee Dee Dane Show*. Just before the commercial break, Hester had some pretty strong words to say about Penelope and Medea's views on marriage. Please, carry on.

HESTER: Dee Dee, Ophelia agrees with me – and I'm sure Miss Havisham feels the same way when I say that Penelope and Medea should repent for their sins!

MISS HAVISHAM: Leave me out of this. I'm for the destruction of all men by any means necessary!

OPHELIA: (*pointing at MISS HAVISHAM*) Repent!

HESTER: Repent before it's too late – all of you!

PENELOPE: Why should I repent? The gods don't.

OPHELIA: Listen to you – blaspheming your own gods! You should be ashamed!

PENELOPE: Look, think of it this way. Hester, Ophelia – you both agree that we should emulate God in all ways, right?

HESTER and OPHELIA: Of course! Amen!

MEDEA: Well, the Greek gods we worship are murderous, greedy, selfish, vain, and lustful. So, the way I see it, Penelope and I picked the right gods to emulate. Am I right, girlfriend? (*PENELOPE nods*)

HESTER: Ophelia and I will pray for you!

MEDEA: Yeah, Penelope and I will sacrifice a bull for you!

OPHELIA is visibly shaken; HESTER comforts her.

DEE DEE: Ladies, let's pause for a second. Yes, centuries and vast cultural differences divide you, but one thing unites you: your downfall – men. Ophelia, you look like you want to say something.

OPHELIA: Dee Dee, there are so many things I'd like to say to my ex-boyfriend Hamlet, but I just don't know how. I'm no good with conflict.

DEE DEE: (*an idea comes to her*) Ophelia, I want you to pretend that Miss Havisham is your ex-boyfriend and I want you to tell her all the things you want to say to him but are afraid to.

OPHELIA: Miss Havisham? Hamlet? I can't... It wouldn't be right.

DEE DEE: Why wouldn't it be right, Ophelia?

OPHELIA: Because...because...good girls don't talk back.

MEDEA looks fit to burst.

DEE DEE: Come on, you can do it. Start slow.

OPHELIA: Okay. Here goes. (*facing MISS HAVISHAM*) Hamlet, I just want to say...that I don't want...I mean, I don't like the way... (*looks to DEE DEE for strength; DEE DEE gives her a look that says "You can do it."*) I mean, it would be better if ...It's no good, Dee Dee! I can't do it! (*she sobs*)

DEE DEE: Yes, you can. I believe in you. We all believe in you, right audience? (*audience applauds*) Come on Ophelia, you can do it.

OPHELIA: I'll try, Dee Dee. (*steadies her nerves*) Hamlet, I just want to say that I think you were really mean to me when all I tried to be was nice to you. I never said what I felt when you told me you were going off to college in Germany, I was all like "Yeah, that's great. See you when I see you." But, that's not how I felt inside. (*looks to DEE DEE for approval.*)

DEE DEE: Good job, Ophelia. Now tell Hamlet how you felt inside.

OPHELIA: (*with as-to-before unseen confidence*) I felt...I felt...sad! (*audience applauds; it gives OPHELIA courage*) The idea of you going away made me miserable. (*audience approval; OPHELIA'S courage increasing*) I wanted to tell you that when you came back to Denmark for your father's funeral, but then there was your mom and uncle's wedding and then you started acting so...weird – and mean! I don't know what I said, or what I did and when I asked you just got crazier and meaner! What did I do? If I did something wrong I'm sorry. I want to make it up to you, but you won't give me a chance. Why did you break up with me? Why? Why? (*sobbing*)

DEE DEE: We, too would like to know why Hamlet treated you the way he did. Our producers reached out to Hamlet and asked him if he'd like to come on the show. He declined our offer. He did send us this letter, though. And I'd like to read it to you, Ophelia, and to our studio audience now. (*she reads*) "Dear Dee Dee,"

MEDEA: That dog! He didn't even address it to Ophelia.

DEE DEE: (*continues reading*) "...My reasons for dissolving my relationship with Ophelia are complicated, too complicated to get into. Let's just say I was going through some things."

MISS HAVISHAM: The staggering arrogance of men!

DEE DEE: *(reading)* "...Sometimes, people grow apart and they start to want different things. I tried to give her some signs, some subtle hints that I needed to focus on myself for a while, but she just didn't pick up on them."

MISS HAVISHAM: "Subtle"! He stabbed her father to death! That's "subtle"?

DEE DEE: *(reading)* "...It's too bad Ophelia couldn't see beyond her own needs to realize that I was going through a really rough time when I came home for my father's funeral."

MISS HAVISHAM: It's the classic "blame the victim" defense. Used by countless rogues over countless centuries!

DEE DEE: *(reading)* "...I was trying to give Ophelia the hint that I needed a little breathing room, but I guess I should've tried harder. When it comes down to it, Ophelia is a very needy person who needs to think about others once in a while. Thank you for giving me the opportunity to share my side of the story. Yours, Hamlet. P.S. I love your show!"

MISS HAVISHAM: My dear, you're better off without him. Take it from me. Cut that man out of your life! Just pick yourself up and dust yourself off and, and...get on with your life.

MEDEA starts a slow, mocking clap; PENELOPE's face has a look that's as equally as mocking as MEDEA's clap.

MEDEA: Just listen to old Miss Stinky Dress, dispensing medicine she's afraid to take herself.

DEE DEE: Miss Havisham, I've got to say that I agree with Medea and Penelope. Studio audience, do you agree? *(audience applauds)*

MISS HAVISHAM: You're ganging up on me. *(to the studio audience)* You're all ganging up on me!

DEE DEE: No one is ganging up on you, Miss Havisham. It's just time for what Medea calls a "reality check."

MISS HAVISHAM: Medea? She killed her children to get back at her cheating husband! What kind of a reality is that?

DEE DEE: I agree with you that Medea's crime was terrible. But I want to move away from a place of judgment and shine a light on your choices. And Medea is right: who are you to tell Ophelia to get back into the world when you removed yourself from it? I think you need to take a moment and examine the advice you just

gave her and ask yourself: could I benefit from the same advice? (*audience applauds*) Can you do what you've told Ophelia she needs to do? Can you dust yourself off? Can you pick yourself up and re-enter the world? You know, it's never too late. (*Audience applauds; DEE DEE'S words have had a visible effect on MISS HAVISHAM; she begins to sob.*) That's all right, Miss Havisham, let it out. Let the years and years of pain out.

MISS HAVISHAM: Dee Dee, you don't understand! No one understands!

DEE DEE: Try us, Miss Havisham. Come on, open up.

MISS HAVISHAM: Dee Dee, it's all a lie! Yes, I was heartbroken when my fiancée called off our wedding at the last minute. And when I vowed never to change out of my wedding gown and swore I'd live in a perpetual state of gloom, I really meant it. Well, that was all fine and good, but a few years elapsed and I got over being jilted and I wanted to get back into the swing of things, but it was too late! I'd really, really let myself go. Look at me!

ALL AT ONCE: (P): Nonsense; you look fine (H): You have inner beauty (O): Some guys care about more than looks (M): Girl, you're a wreck. It's like somebody hit you over the head with an ugly stick.

DEE DEE: Miss Havisham, I want you to listen to me. (*MISS HAVISHAM looks up*) If there's any message I want you and our studio audience to walk away with from the *Dee Dee Dane Show* it's this: it's never too late to start living a deep, spiritual and profoundly meaningful life – and that starts with one thing: – a TOTAL MAKEOVER! (*Audience erupts in applause; the actors are enraptured! They jump up and down and hug each other.*) That's right, Miss Havisham, the *Dee Dee Dane* glamor squad is going to give you a total makeover! (*DEE DEE puts her arm around MISS HAVISHAM and brings her to the edge of the stage*) Audience, when we come back from our commercial break, we're going to see a whole new Miss Havisham! (*audience applauds*) So don't touch that dial – the *Dee Dee Dane Show* will be right back!

Audience roars. Lights down on DEE DEE and cast; MISS HAVISHAM exits in the dark for a quick costume change.

COMMERCIAL 2

Soothing music plays. Lights up on a WOMAN holding a bouquet of flowers; she looks at the flowers with sadness and sighs. On the other side of the stage, the NARRATOR steps into a pool of light. The NARRATOR role could be pre-recorded; in fact, given the long list of side effects, it is advisable to pre-record this. But, a director may approach this commercial any way he or she wishes.

NARRATOR: (*soothingly*) Is life getting you down? Have the demands of modern life taken their toll? Are you finding it harder to meet life face-to-face? If you answered yes to any one of these questions, the good people at Propulsa Pharmaceuticals, a subsidiary of Toxicana Chemicals might be able to help. Introducing Melancholexia. (*Enter the Toxicana Chemicals BUTTERFLY; it gracefully flutters around the sad WOMAN with the flowers; the WOMAN comes to life and flirts and cavorts with the BUTTERFLY in a gentle, pastoral fashion throughout the commercial.*) Melancholexia, was designed to alleviate the symptoms of M.M.D., Modern Malaise Disorder. 3% of Guantánamo Bay prisoners who participated in testing the effectiveness of Melancholexia, reported feeling happier, focused, and ready to face the day.

So, if you want to regain the confidence and joy you once had, try Melancholexia and start living again.

The side effects are shared in the same soothing voice.

Side effects might include drowsiness, fatigue, severe thirst, weight gain, migraines, hair loss, dry mouth, skin rashes, weight loss, hair growth, body odor, toenail discoloration, constipation, lazy eye, joint pain, migraines, early-onset menopause, flatulence, scurvy, irritable bowel syndrome, involuntary spitting, rickets, hysterical blindness, uncontrollable drooling, glaucoma, shingles, heartworm, cholera, and that disease the Elephant Man had. Melancholexia users should not operate heavy machinery, stand in sunlight, walk by open windows or eat. Melancholexia users should avoid open flames, sharp objects and homeless people. Women who are pregnant or might become pregnant or who can define the word pregnant shouldn't use Melancholexia. Stop taking Melancholexia if you experience chest pain, bloody stool, or spontaneous combustion. (*The WOMAN and the BUTTERFLY stop cavorting; the WOMAN is fully recovered and happy. She offers a flower from her bouquet to the BUTTERFLY.*) Melancholexia – because there's hope.

Lights down on the commercial and up on DEE DEE.

DEE DEE: And we're back. Before we broke for commercial, Miss Havisham told us that she felt she'd let herself go and would never be able to make up for the decades she'd spent in filthy seclusion. Well, we had a thing or two to say about that, didn't we ladies? (*ladies on stage, along with the audience applaud enthusiastically*) So, I put her in the capable hands of my glamour squad and they whisked her away backstage and have worked their magic. Are you ready to meet the new and improved Miss Havisham? (*audience and actors roar*) I can't hear you! I said Are you ready to meet the new and improved Miss Havisham? (*audience erupts*)
COME ON OUT MISS HAVISHAM!

Music plays as MISS HAVISHAM enters and walks along the edge of the stage, like a beauty pageant winner, waving and blowing kisses to the audience. The others are enraptured by the new MISS HAVISHAM. DEE DEE wears the proud look of ownership; she knows she has made this all possible. MISS HAVISHAM's tattered wedding gown has been switched out for a dress worthy of a beauty pageant, and her ratted-out, filthy wig has been switched with a fabulous one. She looks great, but a little over-the-top. After she has blown enough kisses and waved to the audience long enough, she takes her seat and the music and applause stops.

ALL: (*talking at once*) (O) You look sooo beautiful! (P) Men will fight over you! Trust me, I know. (H) This transformation is surely a sign of God's favor! (M) That's how you do it! Work it, girl! Work it!

DEE DEE: Miss Havisham, tell us how you're feeling right now.

MISS HAVISHAM: I feel young and beautiful and like there's nothing I can't do! (*audience applause*) And I owe it all to you, Dee Dee. (*audience applause*)

DEE DEE: So, Miss Havisham, what's the first thing you're going to do when you go home today?

MISS HAVISHAM: Well, first off, I'm going to fix up my wreck of a house and put it on the market. Maybe I'll buy myself a condominium in one of those swinging singles complexes.

MEDEA: Now, you're talking!

MISS HAVISHAM: Or, who knows? Maybe I'll move to a warmer climate? England is so cold and rainy. Maybe the Mediterranean?

PENELOPE: How about Ithaca?

MISS HAVISHAM: You mean...live with you?

PENELOPE: Sure, why not? And you, too, Medea, and Ophelia and Hester. Odysseus is never home and the palace has been so empty since he killed all of my suitors. Frankly, I'm lonely. I feel like I've made four new friends today. Come on, what do you say?

ALL squeal with joy at the idea except HESTER, who is quietly crying.

DEE DEE: Hold on a minute ladies. (*focuses her attention of HESTER*) Hester, what's going on? What are you feeling right now?

HESTER: Oh, Dee Dee. I feel so...so...guilty. (*cries more*) I just can't get over... my sin. This scarlet letter on my chest, it burns... I just can't let go of my adulterous past, I can't.

OPHELIA: Hester, I don't think this is about your sin. I think this is about...his sin.

HESTER: No, it's not about my beloved Reverend Arthur Dimmesdale!

OPHELIA: Stop it now! You'll never be happy and you'll never get on with your life until you just...just tear him right out of your heart!

HESTER: I can't! I can't!

OPHELIA: You can, Hester! If I can do it, then you can do it. Today, on this stage, with Dee Dee's help – and the support of this studio audience and these exceptional, women, I was able to say things to Hamlet that I couldn't say to him because I was too afraid. I want you to have the same opportunity. I want you to say everything you need to say to that man who ruined your life. Say it so that you can move on! Do you agree with me audience? (*audience applauds*) Dee Dee, do you agree?

DEE DEE: Yes, I do, Ophelia. I think Hester should have the opportunity to tell Reverend Dimmesdale just what's on her mind. (*audience roars*) To that end, my producers invited him to be on today's show.

HESTER: What?

DEE DEE: Your partner in sin, the father of your daughter, Pearl, is backstage.

HESTER: No!

PENELOPE: Here's your chance!

MISS HAVISHAM: You can put the past behind you!

MEDEA: You can wring his scrawny neck!

DEE DEE: Ladies and gentlemen, please welcome Reverend Arthur Dimmesdale!

DIMMESDALE enters to mild, polite applause. He is carrying a bouquet of flowers. The ladies are still standing protectively around HESTER. They step back, slightly, to allow DIMMESDALE to get close to HESTER. He doesn't speak but gently presents the flowers to HESTER. The audience 'Awwww's.'

HESTER: (*with tenderness*) For me? They're so pretty.

MEDEA: (*a gentle and calm expression has come over MEDEA*) They're beautiful! Here, give them to me. I'll put them in some water for you. (*HESTER hands them to MEDEA. She cradles them in her arms and smells their fragrance deeply. She then pummels REVEREND DIMMESDALE with them.*) You no-good dirty dog!

DEE DEE: Medea! No! (*OPHELIA, PENELOPE and MISS HAVISHAM restrain MEDEA and get her back to a chair*) Medea! Reverend Dimmesdale is a guest on my show and no guest is mistreated on the *Dee Dee Dane Show*. I believe that there is goodness in everybody; it just needs the chance to come out. I've given you that chance today, Medea, and now I'm giving it to Reverend Dimmesdale. (*audience applauds*) Welcome to the *Dee Dee Dane Show*, Reverend.

DIMMESDALE: Thank you, Miss Dane. Thank you from the bottom of my heart (*touches chest; grimaces in agony*) – Ah! The pain!

HESTER: My darling! Does your scarlet letter still cause you pain?

DEE DEE: For those of you in the studio audience who don't know, Arthur carved a scarlet letter in his own flesh to privately punish himself for the pain he caused Hester.

The audience aaaawwwwws. OPHELIA, PENELOPE, MISS HAVISHAM, HESTER, and DEE DEE all look sympathetic. They are falling for it; MEDEA isn't.

MEDEA: (*sarcastically*) Here we go.

DIMMESDALE: Though I didn't have the courage to stand on the scaffold of public shame alongside Hester and Pearl, I suffered... in secret.



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