

ALEISTER CROWLEY

HOUSEHOLD
GODS

Aleister Crowley
Household Gods

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Household Gods / A Comedy:

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Household Gods / A Comedy

SCENE

THE HEARTH OF CRASSUS; AFTERWARDS THE
LAWNS, THE WOODS, THE LAKE, THE ISLE.

CHARACTERS

CRASSUS, a barbarian from Britain.

ADELA, his wife, a noble Roman lady.

ALICIA, a servant in the house.

A STATUE OF PAN.

A FAUN.

HOUSEHOLD GODS

THE SCENE is at the hearth of CRASSUS, where is a little bronze altar dedicated to the Lares and Penates. A pale flame rises from the burning sandal-wood, on which CRASSUS throws benzoin and musk. He is standing in deep dejection.

CRASSUS.

Smoke without fire!
No thrill of tongues licks up
The offerings in the cup.
Dead falls desire.

Black smoke thou art,
O altar-flame, that dost dismember,
Devour the hearth, to leave no ember
To warm this heart.

I see her still -
Adela dancing here
Till dim gods did appear
To work our will.

The delicate girl!
Diaphanous gossamer
Subtly revealing her

Brave breast of pearl!

Now – she's withdrawn
At dusk to the wild woods,
Mystic beatitudes
That dure till dawn.

Let life exclaim
Against these things of spirit,
Mankind that disinherit
Of love's pure flame!

[He bends before the altar and begins to weep.]

Ye household gods!
By these male tears I swear
That ye shall grant this prayer.
All things at odds

Shall be put straight -
Harmonized, reconciled
By some appointed child
Of some far Fate!

[A curtain has been drawn aside during this invocation,
and

ALICIA advances. She smiles subtly upon him; and,
giving a

strange gesture, makes one or two noiseless steps of dancing.]

ALICIA.

Master still sad?

CRASSUS.

These faint and fearful shores
Of time are beaten by the surge of sense,
Love worn away – by love? – to indifference.
Who knows what god – or demon – she adores?
Or in what wood she shelters, or what grove
Sees her profane our sacrament of love?

ALICIA.

I saw her follow
The stream in the hollow
Where never Apollo
Abides.
So thick are the trees
That never the breeze
Stirs them, or sees
What satyr inhabits the glen, what nymph in the
pools of it hides.

Lighter of foot
Than a sylph or a fairy,
Sinuous, wary,
I passed from the airy

Lawns, where the flute
Of the winds made tremulous music for man.

I followed the ripple
Of the stream; I crept
Where the waters wept -
The floss in the foss
Gurgling across
The bosses of moss,
Like a dryad's nipple
In the mouth of Pan!

CRASSUS.

O pearl of the house! you came to the end?

ALICIA.

The dusk of the slave, the dawn of a friend?

CRASSUS.

Freedom is thine for the skill and the will.

ALICIA.

The skill is mine – but the will lies still,
Still as the earth that dare not stir
Till the kiss of the sun awaken her!

CRASSUS.

Yet at these secrets and riddles? Behold!
I can fill thy lap with a harvest of gold.

ALICIA.

Yet all the gold you could give to me
Would fall at my feet when I rose to be free.

CRASSUS.

What will you then?

ALICIA.

No gift from men.

Of my own free will I give you wit,
(O man so sorely in need of it!)

And happiness; and the flame that hath dwindled
On this dull hearth shall be rekindled.

But this you must swear:

To will, and to dare,

To seek the spirit and slay the sense;

And for this hour

To give me power

To lead you in silent obedience,

Though I bade you fall on your sword....

CRASSUS.

Enough!

I give my life as I gave my love.

ALICIA.

O! love you have not understood.

You have not guessed its secret food.

You have not seen its single eye;

But fear and doubt and jealousy
Have risen, and now your love is trembling
Like a mountebank dissembling
When his trick's detected. Come!
To find home we must leave home.

CRASSUS.

Starless and moonless, hidden in cloud,
The night's one flame of pearl.

ALICIA.

The bat flaps; the owl hoots aloud.

CRASSUS.

Lead on; I trust you, girl.

ALICIA.

You are bold to trust me; or, have you divined
My secret?

CRASSUS.

No; the crystal of your mind
Shows only faint disturbing images,
Things passing strange, as if enchanted seas
Kept their great swell upon it, and strange fish
Played in its oily depths. Some monstrous wish,
The shadow of some unspeakable desire,
Strikes my heart cold, and sets my brain on fire.

ALICIA.

Learn this, as we pass through the portico:
Fear nothing; there is nothing you can know!
And by these terraces and steps that gleam
Wintry, although the summer night is hot,
This – what we seek is never what we find!

Life is a dream, like love; and from the dream
If we may wake, we never find it what
We would; for the wisdom of a mightier mind
Leads us in its own ways
To a perfected praise.

CRASSUS.

Why are these shadows thrown across the lawn
From the elms and yews? They were not wont to reach
Beyond the branches of that copper-beech.

ALICIA.

Attend the dawn
Of an unknown comet, that shall come
From the unfathomable wells of space
Into its halidom.

CRASSUS.

I know it not. Last night I walked alone
Here, and saw nothing.

ALICIA.

I was not with you!

There is no God upon the eternal throne
Of stars begemming the bewildering blue
Unless one has the eyes to see him. Think
How we two stand upon the brink
Of nothing! Here's a globe, whereto we trust,
No larger than the smallest speck of dust
Or mote in the sunbeam is to that sun's self,
And we are like dead leaves in autumn's whirl
Of wind upon it.

CRASSUS.

Mystify me, girl!
It is the right of an elf.
Surely your flickering fire
Will draw me to some mire!

ALICIA.

Here the stream dips its mouth into the wood.
So does youth's calm and chaste beatitude
Touch the black mouth of Love, the ancient whore.

CRASSUS.

Girl! what a scorpion leaping from your lips!

ALICIA.

My mouth stings as no scorpion ever stang.

Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.

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