

Seminario de Drama

A MIRACLE OF SAINT ANTONY

A SATIRIC LEGEND

By Maurice Maeterlinck

Translated From The French

By Ralph Roeder



SEMINARIO MULTIDISCIPLINARI  
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RECINTO DE RIO PIEDRAS

Seminario de Drama

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CHARACTERS

Blessed Saint Antony

Gustavus

Achilles

The Doctor

The Pastor

Joseph

A Sergeant of Police

The Maiden Lady Hortensia

Virginia

Valentine

An Old Lady

A Guest

Another Guest

Another Guest

Another Guest

The action passes at the present day  
in a small provincial town in the Low  
Countries.

Escenario Multidisciplinario Joaquin González  
Bachillerato de Estudios Interdisciplinarios  
Facultad de Humanidades  
Universidad de Puerto Rico  
Recinto de Río Piedras

A MIRACLE OF SAINT ANTONY

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*Seminario de Drama*

Scene One

First Scene - The entrance-hall of an old and spacious middle-class homestead in a small town in the provinces. On the left the front door, giving onto the street. In the rear a small flight of steps leading up to a glass door, through which one enters the house. On the right another door. Against the walls leather-covered benches, a couple of wooden stoves and a clothes rack, on which are hats, a cape and wraps. As the curtain rises, the old drudge Virginia, her skirts trussed up and her legs bare, stands with her feet in wooden clogs amid pails and mops, whisks and brooms, washing away the tracks on the vestibule floor. From time to time she breaks off to blow her nose voluminously and to wipe a tear away with the corner of her blue apron. There is a ring at the house door; Virginia goes to open it, and on the sill appears, bare-headed and bare-footed, the tall and emaciated form of an old man, with scrubby beard and hair, clothed in a soiled, sack-like, faded and much dirtied cowl.

VIRGINIA (opening the door cautiously). Well, what is it?

God bless us! Another beggar! What are you after?

ST. ANTONY. Let me in.

VIRGINIA. No, you're too muddy. Stay out there. What do you want?

ST. ANTONY. To enter.

VIRGINIA. What for?

ST. ANTONY. To restore Miss Hortensia to life.

VIRGINIA. To restore Miss Hortensia to life? Go along!

Who are you?

ST. ANTONY. Blessed Saint Antony.

VIRGINIA. Of Padua?

ST. ANTONY. The same. (His halo glows and brightens.)

VIRGINIA. Jesus! Jesus! And His Mother Mary! Well!

Well! (She swings the door wide open, falls on her knees and begins to pray rapidly, running through the Angelic Salutation, her hands folded on her broomstick. Then she kisses the hem of the Saint's robe and resumes mechanically and without thinking) Blessed Saint Antony, have pity on us, Blessed Saint Antony! . . . Pray for us!

ST. ANTONY. Let me in and close the door.

VIRGINIA. (getting up crossly). Well, wipe your feet there on the mat.

ST. ANTONY (obeying her awkwardly). She is laid out in there.

VIRGINIA (bewildered but pleased). How did you know that? Sure enough, she is laid out in the parlor! Oh, sir, the poor old lady! Just turned seventy-seven -- that ain't much, is it? -- and wasn't she the God-fearing creature; you don't know the savings she laid oy . . . And the money owing to her! She was rich, sure enough. She's left a neat two millions behind her. Two millions is a heap of money, ain't it?

ST. ANTONY. Yes, indeed.

VIRGINIA. And it all goes to her two nephews, Mr. Gus and Mr. Achilles and their children. Mr. Gus gets the house too. And she left a sum to the pastor and to the church and to the sexton and the sacristan and to the poor and to the Vicar and to fourteen Jesuits and to all her domestics, according to how long they was in her service. It's me that gets the most of that: I was 33 years in her service. I'm down for 3,300 francs. That's a handsome sum!

ST. ANTONY. So it is.

VIRGINIA. She paid me my just wages regular. You can say what you please . . . there ain't many a master would treat you that way, after they're dead. Oh! She was a God-fearing soul! And they're burying her today. Everybody has sent flowers. You ought to see the parlor. On the bed, on the table, on the chairs -- the arm chairs -- the piano -- everywhere flowers! And all white, it's so pretty! We don't know where to put all the wreaths. (There is a ring. She opens the door and comes back with two wreaths) Here are two more. (She scrutinizes the wreaths and weighs them in her hand) They're fine-looking, ain't they? Just hold them a minute till I get through this washing up. (She gives the wreaths to SAINT ANTONY, who takes one in each hand obligingly) This afternoon she'll be taken to the cathedral! Everything's got to be in order and I've no more than time.

ST. ANTONY. Lead me to the corpse.

VIRGINIA. Lead you to the corpse? Now?

ST. ANTONY. Yes.

VIRGINIA. No! -- no, sir! You'll have to wait awhile; they're still at table.

ST. ANTONY. God has enjoined haste; it is time to restore her to life.

VIRGINIA. You don't mean to raise her up from the dead?

ST. ANTONY. Yes.

VIRGINIA. But she's three days dead; she's stale . . .

ST. ANTONY. Therefore, on the third day, I shall raise her.

VIRGINIA. For her to live again like she used to?

ST. ANTONY. Yes.

VIRGINIA. Then we ain't to inherit nothing?

ST. ANTONY. No.

VIRGINIA. But what'll Mr. Gus say to that?

ST. ANTONY. I don't know.

VIRGINIA. And my three thousand, three hundred francs -- now, that's too bad.

ST. ANTONY. Haven't you laid by anything, Virginia?

VIRGINIA. Not a farthing . . . I've a sick sister takes every penny I earn.

ST. ANTONY. Well, if you are afraid you'll lose three thousand francs.

VIRGINIA. Three thousand, three hundred francs!

ST. ANTONY. If you're afraid you'll lose them, I shall not resurrect Miss Hortensia.

VIRGINIA. Couldn't you arrange it so she could live just the same and I needn't lose the money?

ST. ANTONY. No, one thing or the other. I have heard your prayers and returned to earth, Virginia, and now you must choose ...

VIRGINIA (after brief reflection). Well, then ... resurrect her. (The halo glows again) What's the matter with you now?

ST. ANTONY. You have made me happy.

VIRGINIA. And when I do that, does your thing, your lantern there, begin to shine?

ST. ANTONY. Yes;--all by itself ...

VIRGINIA. That's queer. Don't stand so near the curtains; you'll set them on fire.

ST. ANTONY. Don't be afraid, the flame is heavenly. Lead me to the corpse.

VIRGINIA. I told you before, you must wait. I can't be disturbing them now. Can't you see they're all at table?

ST. ANTONY. Who?

VIRGINIA. Why, who do you think? The whole family! Her two nephews, Mr. Gustavus and Mr. Achilles with his wife and their children and Mr. George and Mr. Alberic and Mr. Alphonse and Mr. Desire, and our cousins and their ladies, and the Pastor and the Doctor, and I don't know who all besides. Friends and relatives we never see before, and some from way away! They're all rich people!

ST. ANTONY. Well, well.

VIRGINIA. You see the street, coming in, didn't you?

ST. ANTONY. Yes.

VIRGINIA. A grand street. Well, all the houses on the left side except the first--you know that little one where the

ST. ANTHONY:  
WHAT STREET?  
  
VIRGINIA:  
WHAT STREET?  
JESUS CHRIST!  
OUR STREET!  
IN FRONT OF  
OUR HOUSE,

baker lives--they all belong to my mistress. All the houses on the right side of the street belong to Mr. Gus, twenty-two of them in all. That's a neat sum!

ST. ANTONY. Yes, indeed.

VIRGINIA (pointing to the halo). Look, your thing there; your lantern's going out.

ST. ANTONY (feeling for his halo). Yes, I'm afraid.

VIRGINIA. It don't burn very long somehow, does it?

ST. ANTONY. It depends, Virginia, on the thoughts it encounters.

VIRGINIA. Hm! ... Well, they own woods and farms and houses, too. Mr. Gus has a birg starch factory--"Gustavus's Starch, Ltd."--you heard of it, I'm sure. Yes, it's a mighty good and a mighty rich family. Four independent gentlemen in it as never did a stroke of work! They're all come to the burial, and some from way away. There's one of 'em had to travel two days in the night to be here prompt. I'll show him to you, he's got a beard. They're all at table still. We can't be disturbing them now, I tell you, it's a right big lunch; twenty-four covers. I see the bill of fare: oysters, two soups, three entress, lobster jelly and trout a la Schubert ... Do you know what that is?

ST. ANTONY. No.

VIRGINIA. Well, no more do I; it's something good, but not for the likes of you and me. There's no champagne on account of the mourning, but all other kinds of wine. My mistress had the best cellar in town! I'll try to sneak you out a good glass if they leave us anything. Just you wait here, I'll see what they are doing now. (She goes up the stairs,



draws the curtains aside and looks through the glass doors)  
 I think it's that trout--that trout a la Schubert! Oh, there's  
 Joseph. He's just taking the pineapple off. They've a good  
 two hours ahead of them. You'd better sit down. No, no,  
 not on the leather there, you are too dirty; here, on this  
 stool. I must hurry and clean up now ... (ST. ANTONY sits  
 down on the stool, VIRGINIA goes back to her work and looks  
 for a pail) Look out, look out. Lift up your feet! I'm  
 pouring the water. No! No! get out of that, you're in my  
 way there! Sit down in that corner! Put the stool up  
 against the wall. (ST. ANTONY does as he is told) There now:  
 you won't get wet. Ain't you hungry?

ST. ANTONY. No, thank you, but I am in a hurry; so go and  
 tell your masters.

VIRGINIA. You're in a hurry? What have you got to do?

ST. ANTONY. A few miracles.

VIRGINIA. Well, I can't be disturbing them at table. We  
 must wait till coffee is served. Mr. Gus might be very angry.  
 I don't know what he'll say to you, sir: he ain't for having  
 poor people come into his house. And you don't look over-  
 prosperous ...

ST. ANTONY. Saints are never prosperous.

VIRGINIA. But you get a good bit given away to you ...

ST. ANTONY. Not everything that is given reached Heaven,  
 Virginia.

VIRGINIA. Don't it? And it's the priests take what we give  
 you, is it? I've heard say that, but I wouldn't have be-  
 lieved it! Jesus Christ!--Listen to me!

ST. ANTONY. Well?

VIRGINIA. Do you see up there behind you--that brass tap?

ST. ANTONY. Yes.

VIRGINIA. Where the water's dribbling out--there's an empty pail behind you; suppose you was to fill it now.

ST. ANTONY. Certainly.

VIRGINIA. I'll never get this all clean if some one don't lend me a hand. And not a soul helps me; they're all off their heads. When a body dies, it's too much trouble! But I guess I know all about that! Lucky it don't happen every day, ain't it? This ain't what you'd call an easy job. I've still got the copper to shine. Now then, turn off the tap, that's it. And bring me the pail. Ain't your feet cold? Be careful of the wreaths there; lay them on the stool.

That's right ... Over there ... (ST. ANTONY brings her the pail) Thank you. If you're half as honest as you are obliging. (There is a sound of voices and of chairs being moved) Listen! (She goes to the glass door) They're quarreling! No, they're just eating! Joseph's just helpin' the pastor. The master's coming out. I'll tell him you want to .. Sh! Put down the pail! Sit down. (ST. ANTONY obeys and is about to sit down on the stool on which the wreaths are lying) Hey, what are you doing? You're sitting on the wreaths.

ST. ANTONY. Oh, I don't see very well.

VIRGINIA. Blockhead! They're a pretty sight now. What'll Mr. Gus say? Well, God be praised! They ain't so bad after all. Sit down over there, hold on to 'em and be quiet as a mouse. (Kneeling in front of the Saint) And now, sir, I would

like to ask you one more thing.

ST. ANTONY. Speak; do not be afraid.

VIRGINIA. Could you give me your blessing, sir, now as we're alone? When the company comes in, I'll be sent out of the room; and I won't see you no more. I'm old and may need it.

ST. ANTONY (rises and blesses her, his halo glowing). I bless you, my daughter, for you are good; guileless of heart, open of mind; without fault, without fear; without reticence before the great secrets, and faithful in your small duties. Go in peace, my child, and tell your masters.

(Exit VIRGINIA. ST. ANTONY sits down again on the stool. Presently the glass door opens and GUSTAVUS strides in followed by VIRGINIA.)

GUSTAVUS (his voice raised in anger). What's the meaning of this? What do you want? Who are you?

ST. ANTONY (rising discreetly). Blessed Saint Antony.

GUSTAVUS. Blessed Saint--

ST. ANTONY. Of Padua.

GUSTAVUS. What kind of a hoax is this? I am not in the mood for laughing. I guess you have had too much to drink. Well, speak up: what are you here for? What do you want?

ST. ANTONY. To revive your aunt.

GUSTAVUS. Revive my--? (To VIRGINIA) He's drunk! Why did you let him in? (To ST. ANTONY) Listen to me, my man, we have no time for fooling; my aunt is to be buried today. You can come back tomorrow. Here! Here are a few farthings.

ST. ANTONY (gently obstinate). I wish to revive her today.

GUSTAVUS. All right, all right! after the ceremony. Come

on now; here's the door.

ST. ANTONY. I shall not leave until I have revived her.

GUSTAVUS (flaming out). Here, you! I've had enough of this. You're getting tiresome; do you hear? My guests are waiting for me ... (He opens the street door) Out with you now and quick.

ST. ANTONY. I shall not leave until I have revived ...

GUSTAVUS. Oh, this is too ... Well, well, we'll see whether you will or not. (He opens the glass door and shouts) Joseph!

JOSEPH (appears on the step, a large steaming platter in his hand). Yes, sir.

GUSTAVUS (with a glance at the dish). What's that?

JOSEPH. The fowl, sir.

GUSTAVUS. Give <sup>it</sup> to Virginia and kick this vagabond out on the street, do you hear? And promptly.

JOSEPH (giving VIRGINIA the dish). Certainly, sir. (Going up to the Saint) Come on, old codger, didn't you hear? You're in the wrong house! Come along with you! Get out!... You won't? Open the door, Virginia.

GUSTAVUS. I'll open it. (He opens the street door.)

JOSEPH. All right, that's enough; he ain't ridin' out ... (rolling up his sleeves and spitting in his hands) So, now, we'll see about you. (He grasps ST. ANTONY firmly to swing him out, but the Saint stands rooted to the spot. Stupefied) Well, what the ...

GUSTAVUS. What's the matter?

JOSEPH. I don't know what's happened to him! There 'e

stands like 'e was rooted and growing there. 'E won't budge.

GUSTAVUS. I'll help you. (Both try to push ST. ANTONY out, but he remains immovable. Half-aside) Well, on my soul! ... He's dangerous ... Be careful ... He's got the strength of a Hercules. We had better deal gently with him. Now listen to me, my friend, you understand, don't you, that on such a day, at the burial of my revered aunt ...

ST. ANTONY. Whom I have come to revive from the dead ...

GUSTAVUS. But you understand, surely, that this is scarcely the time ... The fowl will be cold, my guests are waiting, and we are not in the mood for laughing. (ACHILLES appears, napkin in hand, on the steps.)

ACHILLES. What's the matter, Gus? What's wrong? We're waiting for the fowl.

GUSTAVUS. The fowl! It's this old fool who won't go out ...

ACHILLES. Is he drunk?

GUSTAVUS. Of course.

ACHILLES. Put him out and be done with it. I don't see why our meal should be spoiled for a dirty tramp ...

GUSTAVUS. He won't go.

ACHILLES. What's that? Won't go? We'll soon see about that.

GUSTAVUS. Try him yourself.

ACHILLES. I'm not going to take such a dirty beggar by the throat. It seems to me that's Joseph's business, or--or the coachman's ...

GUSTAVUS. We've tried, we don't want to scuffle--in here--on such a day. (Other guests appear at the door, most of them still with their mouths full and their napkins under

their arms or around their necks.)

A GUEST. What's it all about?

A SECOND. What are you doing, Gus?

A THIRD. What's the beggar want?

A FOURTH. Where has he sprung from?

GUSTAVUS. He won't go out. Another blunder of Virginia's. As soon as she catches sight of a beggar, she ... she loses her head! She let this fool in; he insists on seeing Auntie and reviving her.

A GUEST. We must send for the police.

GUSTAVUS. For God's sake, no scene! I don't want the police in this house on a day like this.

ACHILLES. A moment, Gus.

GUSTAVUS. Well?

ACHILLES. Have you noticed that two or three tiles are cracked there on the left side, at the end of the corridor?

GUSTAVUS. Yes, I know. I'm going to have a mosaic floor laid in place of those tiles.

ACHILLES. It'll make it look more friendly.

GUSTAVUS. Yes--one more up to date. And in place of this door and these white curtains I thought of putting in painted window sashes, illustrating THE CHASE, INDUSTRY, and PROGRESS, with a garland of fruits and wild animals!

ACHILLES. Yes, that would be handsome.

GUSTAVUS. I'm thinking of having my office in there (pointing to the room right) and opposite the employees'.

ACHILLES. When are you moving in?

GUSTAVUS. A few days after the wake. It would scarcely be

becoming to move in the very next day.

ACHILLES. Of course, but meanwhile, we must get rid of this--this unbidden guest.

GUSTAVUS. He acts as if he were quite at home!

ACHILLES (to ST. ANTONY, sarcastically). Won't you have a chair?

ST. ANTONY (naively). Thank you, I am not tired.

ACHILLES. Let me have a try, I'll get him out ...

(Approaching the SAINT with a friendly gesture.) Well, my friend, won't you tell us who you are?

ST. ANTONY. Blessed Saint Antony.

ACHILLES. Why, of course, you are! (To the others) He sticks to that, but he's not vicious. (He notices the PASTOR among the GUESTS who have crowded around SAINT ANTONY with sceptical and derisive glances) Ah, here's the pastor, he knows you, and wants to pay you his respects. Come on, pastor, saints are your business. I know more about farmen's machines and ploughshares. Here is a messenger from Heaven, pastor, the mighty Saint Antony himself, who would like to speak to you. (Under his breath to the pastor) We want you to get him quietly to the door, without letting him notice it; as soon as he is outside, good-bye and Godspeed to him!

THE PASTOR (unctuously and paternally). Mighty Saint Antony, your vassal in all humility bids you welcome to this world, which we praise God you have elected to honor with your presence. What does your Holiness desire?

ST. ANTONY. I wish to revive Miss Hortensia.

THE PASTOR. Poor lady, poor lady! However, such a miracle would assuredly present no difficulties to the greatest of

our saints. The dear deceased had a particular cult for you. I will conduct you to her, if your Holiness will take the trouble to follow me ... (He goes to the street door and beckons to ST. ANTONY) This way, please.

ST. ANTONY (pointing to the door right). No, that way.

THE PASTOR. Your Holiness will pardon me if I seem to contradict you; but on account of the press of mourners the corpse has been removed to the house opposite, which if I may mention it, also forms part of the property of dear deceased.

ST. ANTONY (pointing to the door right). In there, in there.

THE PASTOR (more and more unctuous). To convince yourself of the contrary, your Holiness has only to follow me a moment onto the street; from there you will see the candles and black hangings ...

ST. ANTONY (immovable, pointing to the door on the right).

There will I enter; there; there:

A GUEST. He's got a nerve!

GUSTAVUS. He's going a bit too far, really ...

A GUEST. Suppose we open the door and all of us rush him out ...

GUSTAVUS. No! no! no scene! He might be nasty. He's not to be fooled with; he's got the strength of a bear. Keep your hands off. Joseph and I are strong men and we couldn't budge him.

ACHILLES. But who told him the corpse lay in there?

GUSTAVUS. Virginia, of course; she's babbled about as much as it was possible to babble.



VIRGINIA. Me, sir? No, sir! Not me, I was attending to my work. I answered Yes and No, nothing else -- Didn't I Saint Antony? (ST. ANTONY does not reply) Well, Speak up when a body talks to you friendly.

ST. ANTONY. She told me nothing.

VIRGINIA. There now, you see. He's a blessed saint; he knew it all beforehand. I tell you, there's nothing he don't know.

ACHILLES (going up to the Saint and clapping him amicably on the shoulder). Now, then, young fellow, come on; step along, come, come.

THE GUESTS. He's moving; no, he's not moving!

ACHILLES. I've an idea.

GUSTAVUS. Well?

ACHILLES. Where's the Doctor?

A GUEST. He's still at table; he's finishing his trout.

GUSTAVUS. Go and call him. (Some go off to get the doctor)

You're right, he's a madman; it's the Doctor's business.

THE DOCTOR (appears with his mouth full, his napkin around his neck). What's up? Is he mad? Is he sick? Is he drunk?

(Looking the SAINT over) A beggar! I can do nothing for him. Well, my friend, what's the matter with you?

ST. ANTONY. I wish to revive Miss Hortensia.

THE DOCTOR. I see you're not a medical man. Let me feel your pulse. (He feels his pulse) Do you feel any pain?

ST. ANTONY. No.

THE DOCTOR (feeling his head and brow). And Here? Does it hurt when I press?

ST. ANTONY. No.

THE DOCTOR. Good, good. Do you ever suffer from vertigo?

ST. ANTONY. No.

THE DOCTOR. And in your younger days? No serious accidents?

No ... no youthful indiscretions? You understand what I mean? Or constipation? Eh? Well, and your tongue? Let me have a look at that. That's right. Now breathe deep.

Deeper, deeper. That's right. What do you want here?

ST. ANTONY. To go in there.

THE DOCTOR. What for?

ST. ANTONY. To revive Miss Hortensia.

THE DOCTOR. She isn't there.

ST. ANTONY. She is there, I see her.

GUSTAVUS. He won't give it up.

ACHILLES. Couldn't you bleed him?

THE DOCTOR. What for?

ACHILLES. To put him to sleep. We could easily get him on the street then.

THE DOCTOR. No, no, that would be foolish. He's dangerous.

ACHILLES. That's the worst of it; he's equal to all of us put together. But, after all, we aren't called upon to put with vagabonds, and drunkards and fools. Are we?

THE DOCTOR. Do you want my opinion?

GUSTAVUS. Please.

THE DOCTOR. We have to deal with a madman, who can easily become dangerous if we cross him. Furthermore, there is no disrespect intended to the dear deceased. I don't see why

we should not gratify his simply desire and let him into the room for a moment.

GUSTAVUS. Never--as long as I live! What are we coming to if a stranger can force his way into a respectable family on the crazy pretext of reviving a dead woman who never did him any harm?

THE DOCTOR. As you please, it's for you to decide.

ACHILLES. The Doctor's right.

THE DOCTOR. There's nothing to fear. I hold myself personally responsible; and besides, we are all here and can go in with him.

GUSTAVUS. Well, as far as I am concerned, put an end to the matter. But don't let anybody talk about this ridiculous incident, will you?

ACHILLES.. Auntie's jewels are on the chimney, Gus.

GUSTAVUS. I know. I'll keep an eye on them. (To THE SAINT) Well, then, come on, this way. We haven't finished lunch yet. So a little lively, please. (All go into the room on the right, followed by SAINT ANTONY, whose halo suddenly flames out brilliantly.)

## SCENE TWO

A living room. In the rear on a huge canopy bedstead lies the corpse of the maiden lady, Hortensia. Two burning candles, some branches of box-wood, etc. Left, a door. Right, a glass door leading to the garden. All the characters of the first episode troop through the door (left) into the room, followed by SAINT ANTONY, to whom GUSTAVUS shows the corpse.

GUSTAVUS. Now, are you satisfied? Here lies the dear departed, quite dead, you see. And now I think we are entitled to be left alone. (To VIRGINIA) Lead the gentleman out by the garden door.

ST. ANTONY. One moment (He walks into the middle of the room and standing at the foot of the bed, turns toward the corpse and speaks in a strong, grave voice) Arise!

GUSTAVUS. There, there, that's enough. We can't stand by and have a stranger offend our most sacred feelings.

ST. ANTONY. Be quiet. (He goes nearer the bed and raises his voice more commandingly) Arise!

GUSTAVUS (losing patience). Now, that's enough. Here's the door.

ST. ANTONY (in a deeper and yet more commanding voice). Hortensia, return and arise from the dead! (To the consternation of all present the dead woman stirs slightly, half opens her eyes, spreads her folded hands, slowly sits up in bed, sets her cap straight on her head, and looks around her, vexed and reluctant; she then proceeds quietly to scratch off a spot of candle grease which she discovers on the arm of her night dress. For a moment an oppressive silence reigns, then VIRGINIA leaves the speechless group about her, hurries to the bed and throws herself into the arms of the resurrected woman.)

VIRGINIA. Miss Hortensia! She's alive! Just look at her; she's scratching away a grease spot, she is looking for her glasses! Saint Antony! Saint Antony! A miracle! A miracle! Kneel down! Kneel down!

GUSTAVUS. Keep still, don't talk. This is not the time for ...

ACHILLES. There is no doubt about it; she's alive.

A GUEST. It isn't possible. What has he done to her?

GUSTAVUS. You can't take it seriously. She'll relapse immediately.

ACHILLES. Just see how she stares at us.

GUSTAVUS. I don't believe it yet. What kind of a world do we live in? Where are the laws of nature? Doctor, what do you say to this?

THE DOCTOR (embarrassed). What do I say? Why, I say...I say...that it's none of my business--it's quite outside my field: quite absurd--and quite simple! She lives: ergo, she was never dead. That's no reason for throwing up your hands and crying, A Miracle!

GUSTAVUS. But didn't you say--

THE DOCTOR. What did I say? I beg you to recall that I asserted nothing, absolutely nothing; I beg you to recall that I never even certified her death, did I? I even had very grave doubts--though I did not see fit to impart them to you at the time--for fear of raising false hopes. Besides, it is not probable that she will survive this long.

ACHILLES. Meanwhile, though, we must accept the evidence of our sense, the blessed evidence of our senses!

VIRGINIA. There ain't no doubt! I told you he's a Saint, a big Saint ... Just look, she's alive! And as fresh as a rose!

GUSTAVUS (goes to the bed and embraces the resurrected woman).

Aunt, my dear aunt, is it really you?

ACHILLES (also approaching the bed). Do you know me, dear aunt? I am Achilles, your nephew.

AN OLD LADY. And me, auntie? I am your niece, Leontine.

A YOUNG GIRL. And me, godmother? I am your little Valentine to whom you left all your silver ...

GUSTAVUS. She smiles! ... She recognizes us all.

ACHILLES (seeing the old lady open her mouth and move her lips). Listen! She is trying to speak.

VIRGINIA. Heavenly Father! And she has seen God Almighty! She'll tell us all about the marvels of Paradise! Kneel-- kneel down!

ACHILLES. Listen! Listen!

HORTENSIA (who has been eyeing ST. ANTONY with scorn and disgust, now speaks sharply). What sort of a creature is that? Who has so far forgotten himself as to introduce into my apartment such a barefoot scamp? He'll ruin the carpets! Put him out at once! Virginia, haven't I told you you're not to let beggars ...

ST. ANTONY (raising his hand commandingly). Silence.

(The woman stops short and sits open-mouthed, unable to utter a sound.)

GUSTAVUS. You must forgive her, she doesn't yet realize what she owes to you; but we--ah! we realize what we owe you! What you have accomplished today is something, I venture to say, which no one else in this room would-- or rather could--accomplish! Whether it was an accident or--

something higher--who can say? For my part, I will not presume to judge, but this much I will say: I am proud and happy to clasp your hand, sir.

ST. ANTONY. I wish to leave now, I have other work to do.

GUSTAVUS. Oh, don't be in such a hurry! We can't let you go empty-handed! I don't know what my aunt will want to give you--that's her business, but as far as I am concerned, I shall take the matter up with my brother-in-law, and whatever he may decide--accident or miracle--we'll pay--yes, sir, we'll pay and no words wasted either! Yes, sir: you shan't regret what you have done. Eh, Achilles?

ACHILLES. Why, certainly! He shan't regret what he has done.

GUSTAVUS. Well, we ain't very wealthy, of course; we've got children, and our ... our expectations have all vanished now; but we'll prove our gratitude. The honor of the family demands it. We couldn't let it be said that a beggar, a stranger did us a--a peculiar service, and departed unrecompensed--eh? Of course, the regard will have to be in proportion to our means, which as I say are now sadly shrunken; but as far as in us lies, we will pay--pay for a good deed! To be sure, there are some services that cannot be bought--which indeed one should not attempt to pay for. But... don't interrupt me ... That's no reason for doing nothing at all. So now, tell us what you would like ... hm...

ACHILLES. I propose we take up a little collection, not by way of settlement, out--

ST. ANTONY. Another corpse.

GUSTAVUS. Another corpse! Nothing but corpses ... Well, I must say, I hope you don't prefer the dead to us.

ACHILLES. I know what it is ... You would rather eat downstairs in the kitchen, wouldn't you? You'd feel more at home there.

GUSTAVUS. Then he can come upstairs for coffee.

ACHILLES. Yes, yes. Ha! Ha! That's more to his taste. Virginia, leave your mistress a moment; she doesn't need you now; take this gentleman downstairs and do him "the honors of your realm"! Ha! Ha! I guess Virginia and you won't go to sleep together! (He slaps the SAINT familiarly on the belly) Ha! ha! You old hypocrite, I see though you! So run along ... You old swindler, you damned old swindler!

VIRGINIA (alarmed). But, master!

GUSTAVUS. What's wrong?

VIRGINIA. I don't know; Miss Hortensia ain't free to speak no more.

GUSTAVUS. What?

VIRGINIA. No, sir, just take a look at her yourself, please, sir. She's got her mouth wide open, and moves her lips, and works her hands; but it's like her voice was gone.

GUSTAVUS. Dear Aunt, what's the matter? Is there something you want to say to us? (She nods) And you can't? Now, now, just make an effort, it's a little stiffness, that's all.

It will soon pass. (She makes a sign that she can no longer speak) What's the matter with you? What do you want? (To



ST. ANTONY) What's the meaning of this?

ST. ANTONY. She will speak no more.

GUSTAVUS. She will speak no more? But...but...she spoke just now. You heard her... She was rude to you.

ST. ANTONY. She will speak no more.

GUSTAVUS. Can't you give her back her voice?

ST. ANTONY. No.

GUSTAVUS. But when will her voice come back?

ST. ANTONY. Never again.

GUSTAVUS. She'll be dumb till the day of her death?

ST. ANTONY. Yes.

GUSTAVUS. Why?

ST. ANTONY. She has beheld secrets she may not reveal.

GUSTAVUS. Secrets? What secrets?

ST. ANTONY. In the world of the dead.

GUSTAVUS. In the world of the dead? This is going too far. She spoke, we heard her, we have witnesses. You've deprived her of speech with a purpose which I now begin to see through. You have betrayed our confidence.

ACHILLES. Yes, our confidence; you're absolutely irresponsible.

GUSTAVUS. Who asked you to come here anyway? It's a hard thing to say, but I'd rather see her dead than in this condition. This is too terrible, too painful for us who love her.

THE DOCTOR. Allow me a word. Be quiet please. (Going up to the SAINT) Let me have a look at your eyes, my friend... Just what I thought ... I knew what I had to expect ... You see, she never was dead. There is nothing supernatural or mysterious about this. The fellow is simply gifted with a

rather extraordinary nervous force. He came just at the right moment.

GUSTAVUS. But what are we going to do now?

THE DOCTOR. Send for the police. He's dangerous.

GUSTAVUS. That's what he deserves ... (Shouting) Joseph!

JOSEPH. Yes, sir?

GUSTAVUS. Run to the station and fetch a couple of officers. Tell them to bring handcuffs.

JOSEPH. Yes, sir. (He runs out.)

ST. ANTONY. I ask your permission to withdraw.

GUSTAVUS. All right, you old rascal. Your time's up. You will be able to withdraw in a very few minutes, and in first rate company, too, just wait and see.

ACHILLES. And one more bit of advice ... These gentlemen who are about to honor you with their company--talk to them of farming and stock--of stock and horseflesh! Let your trade be stock farming: that's the way to get along with them ... Here they are.

(JOSEPH comes back accompanied by two officers and a police sergeant.)

SERGEANT (pointing to ST. ANTONY). Is that the offender?

GUSTAVUS. That's the man.

SERGEANT (laying his hand on St. ANTONY). Your papers.

ST. ANTONY. What papers?

SERGEANT. You haven't none? I knew it. What's your name?

ST. ANTONY. Blessed Saint Antony.

SERGEANT. Saint Antony? What do you take me for? That's no Christian name. I want the other, your real one.

ST. ANTONY. I have no other.

SERGEANT. Where did you steal this garment?

ST. ANTONY. I didn't steal it. It's my own.

SERGEANT. Where were you born?

ST. ANTONY. In Padua.

SERGEANT. In Padua? Where's that? What province?

GUSTAVUS. It's in Italy, Sergeant.

SERGEANT. I know, I know, but I want him to tell me. So you're an Italian! Just what I thought. Where do you hail from?

ST. ANTONY. From Paradise.

SERGEANT. From Paradise? And what sort of a reformatory is that?

ST. ANTONY. It is the abode to which the souls of the departed in the bosom of their Maker turn ...

SERGEANT. What has he done? ... Stolen?

GUSTAVUS. I shouldn't like to say whether he has stolen or not. I haven't had time yet to see, and I don't believe in offhand accusations; but what he has done is, in my opinion, far worse.

SERGEANT. Of course ... Of course!

GUSTAVUS. You know what an affliction we are laboring under, Sergeant. Apparently, he reckoned on the upset condition of the household and our grief to get a good haul. He had probably learned from an accomplice that the jewels and the silver of our dead aunt had been laid out on the chimney. Well, unluckily for him, our aunt was not dead. When she saw this suspicious-looking person in her room, she came to and began to scream for help. whereupon in revenge for his

failure he deprives her of speech, and in spite of our pleading refuses to restore it to her,--naturally in the hope of being able to bring us to terms! I beg of you to notice that I am not lodging a complaint, I am merely stating the facts of the case. Besides, you can ask the Doctor here.

THE DOCTOR. I will give the required information in the presence of the Police Lieutenant. If you wish I will draw up a report.

ACHILLES. He is either a malefactor or a madman, or both; in any case a dangerous individual who ought to be kept under lock and key.

SERGEANT. Of course. Rabutteau!

THE OFFICER. Yes, sir.

SERGEANT. The handcuffs.

GUSTAVUS. And now, gentlemen, after all this trouble, won't you do us the honor of drinking a glass of wine with us before you go?

SERGEANT. My word, we won't say No to that, eh, Rabutteau, particularly as our charge here don't look very sociable inclined.

GUSTAVUS. Joseph, a bottle of wine, and glasses. (Exist JOSEPH) We will drink to the recovery of my aunt.

SERGEANT. Not a bad idea--in such weather!

GUSTAVUS. Is it still raining?

SERGEANT. A regular flood, sir! I just stepped across the street, and look at this cloak!

(JOSEPH returns with a tray and passes glasses to the assembled company.)

SERGEANT (raising his glass). Ladies and gentlemen, your health!

GUSTAVUS. Your health, Sergeant. (All touch glasses with the officers) Won't you have another?

SERGEANT. I'm ready enough. I guess. (Licking his lips) It's a good wine, sir.

ST. ANTONY. I am thirsty. I would like a glass of water.

SERGEANT (scornfully). A glass of water! Ha, but to hark to the storm outside! You'll get plenty of water in a minute. Just wait, young man, till we get you out--you'll get your mouth full. Well, come on, we've delayed long enough.

(The street bell rings.)

GUSTAVUS. There's a ring. (JOSEPH goes out to open the door) How late is it? It's probably the after-dinner guests.

ACHILLES. Not yet ... It's only three o'clock. (The POLICE LIEUTENANT strides in) Here comes the Police Lieutenant, Mitou.

LIEUTENANT. Good day, ladies and gentlemen. I've heard all about it. (Looking at ST. ANTONY) Yes, I suspected as much, it is St. Antony himself .. the great St. Antony of Padua.

GUSTAVUS. You know him then?

LIEUTENANT. I should say I do: We've turned him out of the hospital three times. You understand, he's a little (he points to his forehead) and each time he's turned out, he plays the same pranks, heals the sick, makes the ~~halt~~ <sup>DISEASED</sup> whole, steals the doctors' work and all without a license! (He

goes up to the SAINT and looks him over carefully) Yes, he's the man. Or at least, well, he's changed since his last escapade. But if it ain't he, it's his twin. I don't know, there's something about him don't seem to me quite right, but we'll see about that in court. Come on, I've got no time to waste. March, my man, march.

GUSTAVUS. Take him out this way through the garden, it won't attract so much attention.

(The door to the garden is opened. Snow, wind and rain drive into the room.)

ACHILLES. Devilish weather!

(ST. ANTONY is led to the door.)

VIRGINIA (hurrying forward). But, master, the poor man... Look! He's barefooted!

GUSTAVUS. Well, what of it? Are we to get him a carriage or a holy shrine?

VIRGINIA. No, I'll lend him my sabots. Take them Blessed Antony, I've got others.

ST. ANTONY (putting on the sabots). Thank you. (His halo begins to glow.)

VIRGINIA. And aren't you wearing anything on your head? You'll catch cold.

ST. ANTONY. I have nothing.

VIRGINIA. Take my little handkerchief. I'll get you my umbrella. (She hurries out.)

ACHILLES. The old fool ...

GUSTAVUS. That's all right, but meanwhile, there's a devil of a draught coming in.

VIRGINIA (returns with a huge umbrella which she gives ST. ANTONY). Here's my umorella.

ST. ANTONY (showing his hands). They have bound my hands.

VIRGINIA. I'll go with you! (She opens the umbrella and holds it over ST. ANTONY, who goes out between the two officers. The halo glows under the umbrella and the group disappears through the garden in the snow.)

GUSTAVUS (closing the door). At last.

ACHILLES. What a rascal.

GUSTAVUS (going to the bed). Well, Aunt?

ACHILLES. What's the matter with her? She is failing.

THE DOCTOR (hurrying up). I don't know. I believe ...

GUSTAVUS (bending over the bed). Aunt! Aunt! How are you?

THE DOCTOR. This time she is really dying. I told you so.

GUSTAVUS. Impossible.

ACHILLES. But, Doctor, is there nothing we can do?

THE DOCTOR. Nothing -- unfortunately!

(Silence. All gather around the bed.)

GUSTAVUS (the first to recover). What a day!

ACHILLES. Listen! Did you ever head such a storm?

GUSTAVUS. Well, now, you know, we were a bit hard on the poor beggar! When you come to think if it, he really didn't do us any harm ...

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