

THE CANTERVILLE GHOST

Pre-set - NIGHT.

DUKE: What can I do? I have not a penny to my name. Ladies and Gentlemen, Canterville Castle is for sale!

(He attempts to hang the for sale sign on the castle and is magically opposed. He falls. Dawn slowly to daylight **LX to DAY** to reveal the prone figure of the DUKE lying face down in the "mud" by the door. The Otis family appear - they drive a car but there is no car simply a steering wheel for Mom).

MOM: Why, this is old England!

KIDS: How cute!

MOM: Livin' history! (They sing and spin the wheel of the car - the style is rock and roll).

OTIS FAMILY: England is a place we never bin before

England got a feel like it bin here for evermore
England is so old it makes you wanna scream
England's like a story book - a livin' dream!
(pointing to sights)

London Bridge - is falling down!

The Bloody Tower - now calm down!

There's Big Ben - what a big dong!

Stinky old Thames - sure smells strong!

London town is cute but its falling down!

Pap pap pap, hey hey hey!

You cusey limey critters git outta ma way!

Look Admiral Nelson, stuck up over there

Trafalgar? Trafalgar! We find it so square

Laff at the cops, dressed up in blue

Uh oh Constable - (accent) How do you do?

Wha wha wha boom boom boom

That should wake 'em up (wave)

In the British Museum Reading Room!

Cadillac, Pontiac, Studebaker, - Rmm Rmm

Rmm,

Where's the skyscrapers? There ain't no takers!

Whoa whoa whoa! Pa Pa parp!

We got more guns in Central Park! (Ma fires in air)

Than they got guardin' Buckin'ham Palace

Yep, the Yanks are comin' to make a pass

(Then bluesy)

At the Dainty little Lady with the delicate hand

That blushin' old world rose called Eng - u-land!

VIRGINIA: (Holding up picture book.) Why, Mom, I do believe that is the castle!

MOM: The Lord be praised, he has guided us to Canterville! Parp parp!

VIRGINIA: Mom, this castle's real dirty and smells old. You never said!

MOM: Well, history is kinda dirty, but we's gonna clean it up.

WASHINGTON: Hey Ma, what's that there raggedy thing a lyin' in the mud?

VIRGINIA: Aah! It's a man!

MOM: I do declare it is some hobo or a wino, fallen on hard times and soft mud.

Them English is finished.

VIRGINIA: I'm gonna poke 'im. See if he's alive!

WASHINGTON: Let me poke 'im too! ("No me" x4)

MOM: Such cute li'll kids!

(VIRGINIA and WASHINGTON poke the DUKE awake).

DUKE: Ah, hobgoblins, demons, familiar devils away! It is dawn, dawn! Why has the sun not sent you to the shadows? (Runs thru door) Still here, you spectres! You wicked helpers of the Canterville Ghost! Go away!

VIRGINIA: Gee, Mom, he is wacky!

WASHINGTON: He was crazy!

VIRGINIA: Ma, that hobo was hallucinatin'! Do you think it was on account of his having TOO much past?

MOM: (Aside) A lot of good women have been ruined by their past!

VIRGINIA: What's that, Ma?

MOM: Hush daughter, I's safe here, no one's even heard of the Silver Garter Saloon in quaint li'll ol' England! (Then to all the Family:) Now listen up, Family Otis, that guy ain't no hobo! That guy's all dressed up to be like some butler or valet or summat! And if there's a butler, there's sure to be a Lord! Knock on that door, young Washington! (WASHINGTON knocks.) Let's hope he's a man we can do business with! Let's hope and pray HE ain't been a drinkin' spirits like his butler! Gin and whiskey is the ruin of England.

VIRGINIA: Thank the good lord he told us Americans to drink only coffee and coca cola.

ALL: (Sing) Praise coca cola and praise the Lord.

(The DUKE, re-enters, tentatively. He has spied on them for a few moments before speaking.)

DUKE: What is going on here? I most respectfully wish to know your business on my property.

OTIS FAMILY: Your property? (Laugh).

DUKE: I am the Duke of Canterville. (Sings)

Canterville, Canterville Con de Ville,

Con the town what the Devil!

In our veins flows blood royale

Canterville Canterville feel the real

Nobility, let none speak ill

Of Cant of Cant of Canterville

Or we'll send them to the Devil!

I'm Lord of the Manor a well mannered Lord

Permitting the peasants to fall on my sword

So common folk kneel

To the ancient appeal

Of Cant, of Cant of Canterville, Con de Ville!

The very Devil! (Enchanted the Otis family

kneel before him)

MOM: I am a Republican! (Pulling herself up)

I will not have our family behave like this - stand up! (Spits at Duke and knocks him down, then shakes his hand). Mr Duke, pleased to

meet yer. I am Mabelene B. Otis, and we are the Otis family.

OTIS FAMILY: Otis, Otis, Otis family. Otis, Otis. Go go go!

DUKE: I know who you are! You're from that dreadful old colony - what's it called - the one

over the water where there was all that trouble about putting our tea in the water or water in the tea or something and no one had the good manners to put the milk in first? Fancy holding tea parties in the jungle! What's it called? Boston!

MOM: The intellectual capital of the world!

OTIS: Boston, Boston, fishing, football, Harvard, Yale!

DUKE: Boston's the capital, but what is the name of the colony - not Australia, you'd all be walking on your hands- er - what is it? 'Can' something- Can - Can- you're not French are you?

Otis family: We're American!

MOM: As apple pie!

OTIS family: God bless America!

MOM: And we have come to buy your castle. How much do you want?

DUKE: Buy the castle? But I wasn't expecting foreigners! Canterville is an English property! It's very ancient!

VIRGINIA: I knew it was! Just like Robin Hood!

DUKE: The Cantervilles are a Saxon family, one of the oldest aristocratic families in this glorious realm, this sceptered isle, this throne of kings...and now you! - Americans! -you come here, with no history, no manners, waving your cheque book, and you think that just because the English aristocracy have fallen on hard times, with inheritance tax and death duties ruining old families like mine, you think you can come here dangling your dollars at an English Lord, flaunting your grubby colonial cash before a family who built this castle on the blood spilt at Agincourt, Trafalgar and Waterloo - by the way, how much were you thinking of offering? In pounds?

MOM: You tell me what's the best offer you had so far and I'll beat it!

VIRGINIA: God bless the almighty dollar and Henry Ford!

OTIS FAMILY: (Sing) Drink Coca cola and praise the Lord.

DUKE: The best offer so far? What offer!. O dear. (Puts on an act. Coughs:) Good Americans, I am a gentleman....

VIRGINIA: Ooo! Our own real English gentleman! (Hugs Mom).

DUKE: I cannot tell a lie.

WASHINGTON: Just like GEORGE Washington!

DUKE: Who? There have not been any other offers to buy Canterville Castle.

MOM: Why not! It is such a cute castle. Don't it have rustin' suits of armour?

DUKE: It does.

WASHINGTON Old swords and pistols?

DUKE: It does.

VIRGINIA: Four poster beds, creepin' ivy and creakin floors!

DUKE: (Nodding to each) It does.

MOM: Buckets of history

DUKE: It overflows!

VIRGINIA: I... LURVE it!

Otis family: We gotta have it!! History! We want it! History! Give it to us! History! (Sing) That's what we want!

DUKE: But you can't have it! There's a curse on the castle!

MOM: How cute!

DUKE: But it is NOT at allcute! O, damnation and curses! (He despairs.) I cannot deceive you! You must know the nature of the curse! (He cries.) You will never buy Canterville Castle! No one will! For whoever buys Canterville Castle - also buys **the Canterville Ghost!**

(LX Blackout, howls, a flash of lightning, the Duke screams - LX lights up).

DUKE: Now! What do you think of THAT!

WASHINGTON: Our tornadoes are much bigger in Kansas!

MOM: Mr Duke, I will take the castle, includin' the furniture, the cobwebs, the bad weather, the charming ghost story and as much history as you can throw in!

DUKE: The Canterville ghost exists! He is real! He is terrifying!

OTIS FAMILY: Bullshit!

DUKE: I say!

MOM: My family speaks cowboy. An' cowboys don't hold with no ghosts!

DUKE: But this ghost has been seen here for the last three hundred years and - now heed my warning - it always appears before the death of a member of the resident family!!!

MOM: Well? So does the family doctor. There ain't no such thing as a ghost.

(WASH meanwhile has sidled off, and killed a crow, proudly returning with the corpse).

MOM: Trappers; its in the blood, Mister Duke! We Americans have blood too, you know. (Then quickly:) But no pasts! My lill' Injuns!

DUKE: Do not hurt the Canterville crows! For when the black birds depart from Canterville all England will fall into the sea!

MOM: That's another great story! I'm mighty proud of my children, Mr Duke, and I've brought them up right. They believe in God and machines. They don't need ghosts when they got gasoline!

WASHINGTON Chew gum, Mr Duke?

DUKE: Oh then.(To himself:) Damn you then! (To the Otis Family:) If you don't mind having the ghost in the house then take it! I did my duty as a gentleman! I warned you! I did my best! But I need the money! O, Canterville, Canterville! (Hugs castle). My heart breaks. (Howl).

MOM: Indigestion, Duke?

DUKE: No, despair!

VIRGINIA: How romantic!

DUKE: I hate to bring up the subject...it is such bad manners to mention such things in polite company, I know...but with the taxman so demanding....I...how much are you willing to offer?

MOM: I offer you the mighty Dollar! In God we trust.

KIDS: All others pay cash.

MOM: It's getting late. Kids unpack the car! We'll settle the final price tomorrow over breakfast.

DUKE: I'm afraid there is no food in the castle.

MOM: We'll feed you up, Mister Duke. America is the land of milk and honey and much, much more! We've got: (Family sing as they take possession of the castle and the DUKE takes down the Union Jack)

Pecan pie and Turkey

Apple pie and blueberry

Rye and pasterami!

Stuffin down a BLT!

You ain't seen nuthin

Till you seen ma's muffins!

Hamburger and hot dogs!

Frankfurter in a big big bun!

Slide it down and have some fun!

Finger lickin Southern Chickin!

T bone, rump and belly buster

Wolf it down like General Custer

We got everythin that's good for stuffin!

But no Siree you ain't tasted nuthin

Till you sunk you teeth in old ma's muffins

MOM: I's the true thanksgivin' bird

ALL: So give thanks! Ain't you heard?

The Otis family have picked up the bill For the famous old castle of Canterville!

We got everythin that's good for stuffin!

But no Siree you ain't tasted nuthin

Till you sunk you teeth in old ma's muffins!

MOM: Ma Otis of Canterville!

(Duke exits. The Otis family raise the American flag).

MOM: Into bed at the double!

KIDS: (Exit into doors chanting and doing marine style exercises)

Moma says we got to go to bed

And we all heard wot Moma said.

Moma got arms like old King Kong

Moma can't do or say no wrong

Moma got a shout like Niagara falls

Got a getta bed before she breaks our -

KIDS: We love you, Mom. (Exit)

MOM: I love my kids. (Exit)

(Sharp light change to **LX night**. Owls, moon etc - the American flag is torn down by crows.. Duke chuckles. Then scared.)

DUKE: (Popping out) Was that you, Sir Simon? (Horrible moan over megaphone). I'm sorry about the castle! But I've got to sell it! What is so wrong with Americans, anyway? They are just the same as English people except they speak a foreign language. (Jumps)

LX GHOST VERTICAL LIGHT. Take you icy hand off my shoulder Agh! Agh! (The beam of a powerful torch has moved slowly towards him, it rests on his shoulder then goes for his face, and the Duke wrestles with the light in a frantic fight to weird percussive sound from behind the castle wall.) Sir Simon, stop, stop, listen, please - listen or do I have to shout! What choice do I have? Death duties and inheritance tax, this isn't the sixteenth century!!

(Starts to sing **LX Possible increase in light?**)

Castles today are a luxury item
I'm sorry for I do not want to frighten
You, but I've not got a ghost of a chance
To raise the needed finance

The truth we must swallow the bitter pill
And abandon the castle of Canterville
(A chorus of CROWS descend on the DUKE.)
Chorus: Your grace we beg you please foot the bill

Americans quite frankly make us feel ill
Why must you swallow this bitter pill?
Save your honour and the castle of Canterville
DUKE: My blood may be blue but my wallet is through

I haven't got a penny to my name
It may be a shame but it's a foolish game
To keep up a castle for black feathered rascals
Like You - oh what can I do?

Chorus: Live up to your name, its more than the shame

What about honour and pride?

Don't be a rascal don't sell off your castle

A ghost finds it most hard to change.

DUKE: Times they are changing you have to admit

Aristocrats and phantoms are losing our grip
The ship of state is sinking, England's in the pits

There's nothing I can do, swallow the pill
Tomorrow I will sell off Canterville. (Crows squawk and attack Duke - he fights them off, drawing the sword from the wall).

DUKE: Let the black birds of Canterville die and England slip into the sea. If England taxes me to ruin, why should I care for England or you! (Thunder, howl). Or ghosts!

(Lighting strikes DUKE, he is knocked out and the CROWS race off. **LX BLACKOUT.**

Dawn, birdsong. Duke still there - prone).

MOM: Wakey wakey! (**LX Lights change DAY**). Mornin'!

KIDS: (Enter) We sleep eight hours with windows wide

Leap outta bed and git outside

We chop our wood like frontier folk

Breakfast fries and the campfire smokes! Yee hoo!

(Ma holds cornflake box and 'pours' as they hold out bowls).

MOM: Breakfast! (All fall to knees). For what we are about to digest may the good Lord make us our bowels truly regular: God bless Mr Kellogg! Who has shown us the way to start the day.

ALL: Amen!

MOM: (passing tubes on) Chocolate sauce, mayonnaise, thousand island dressing, ketchup, mustard and maple syrup. Mmm!

VIRGINIA: Time to play.

MOM: Time to clean and wax!

(Ma polishes and erects the TV ariel, whilst WASHINGTON and VIRGINIA run off and reappear as with a red Indian head dress and a medieval lady's hat respectively).

WASHINGTON Ooooooh! (Cod Indian chant - he has a bow and arrow).

VIRGINIA: Washington, don't you know your history? In English castles there weren't no Indians?

WASHINGTON Who did they kill then?

VIRGINIA: They didn't kill no one! They was all happy. They was all Robin Hoods and Maid Marions and they only shot deer and had barbecues in the woods, with dancing and singing and did polite things with Ladies. (She takes off his head dress and swops it for Robin Hood hat).

WASHINGTON Gee, Sis, you know's so much. Wot we do now?

VIRGINIA: We go huntin', then we do polite things. (Charge off).

MOM: (Polishing ariel) This is what it must of been like in the Medieval times. Oh I am so excited by our castle! I'm almost historical!

WASHINGTON: There's a crow, kill it!

VIRGINIA: Be polite! (Runs after him).

DUKE: (Waking from daze) I've got to get away! Mrs Otis! I want to do it now!

MOM: Goodness, frontier manners!

DUKE: I want to do it quickly! Please, sign the cheque now, (Mom disappointed) before it gets dark again, before IT comes out of its grave again, before the clock strikes midnight, before the living dead rise from the grave, before I am dragged screaming to a fate worse than death!! Oh for pity's sake, sign the contract now, give me the money! (On his knees).

MOM: Well, the business of America is business!

DUKE: Ah, look, the stain, the stain! (Blood drips down the walls **LX RED SPECIAL**).

MOM: What stain? (Then sees that blood has begun to ooze from the walls of the castle.) Oh Lordey - Virginia, have you bin spillin' ketchup ag'in?!!

VIRGINIA: No Ma, must be Washington with his crow huntin'.

WASHINGTON: Was not!

VIRGINIA: Was.

WASHINGTON: Was not. (Etc they fight and roll off the stage).

MOM: My kids! (Proud).

DUKE: The walls, the walls! O, the stain!

MOM: What you hollerin' about, Duke! These are my walls, now, let me worry about keeping 'em clean! Washington - in future keep the top on the ketchup when you shake it!

DUKE: That is not tomato ketchup! That is the blood of Lady Eleanor de Canterville, murdered on this very spot by her husband, Sir Simon de Canterville in 1575! The blood stain is a curse upon my family that can never be removed.

MOM: Bunkum and nonsense. Pinkerton's Champion Stain remover will clean it off in no time! (Produces bottle and furiously rubs stage. **LX RED OUT**) There - all gone!

DUKE: Impossible! Those stains last for hundreds of years!

MOM: As Mr Kellog cleans our insides so Mr Pinkerton cleans our outside. Here try some crispy cornflakes

DUKE: (Thunder, **LX lights flash & RED back in**). What is that!

MOM: (Still offering bowl, takes out a single flake) Why it's a single golden kernel of corn, crisp dried and sealed with flavour! (A howl).

DUKE: Spare me, Sir Simon!(A terrible wind, rain noise).

MOM: What a monstrous climate! It's such a little island and with so many people I suppose they don't have enough good weather to go round. The English should emigrate.

DUKE: Take me away from here!

MOM: Have you thought of Boston?

DUKE: (Hiding) Behind this mossy rock will do. Now will you sign the contract!

MOM: My oh my that stain has come back! (Where MOM has just wiped more blood has now started to ooze from the walls.)

DUKE: Its the blood! The blood! The guilty will suffer. We'll all suffer! I can't sell, I can't!

MOM: (Worried about her past:) Guilty of what?

Voice on megaphone: You are guilty, Duke of Canterville! Guilty! Guilty! I killed only my wife, but you - you murder England, centuries of history, destiny is murdered! Murdered! Curse you! Canterville! Curse you!

MOM: What was that?

DUKE: It is the ghost! Do you believe me now? Shall I tear up the contract. See, see the blood stain, hear him! Yes! Tear up the contract, tear it up, go home and leave me to ruin, despair and the tax authorities! (A terrible scream from offstage).

WASHINGTON: (Off) Mommy! Mommy!

VIRGINIA: (off) Help! Help! Mom!

MOM: The kids, the kids! (Draws a revolver and marches off in direction of the scream - the Duke is still hiding. The Kids run in laughing).

WASHINGTON & VIRGINIA: Haha! Fooled Mom!

WASHINGTON: She reckons we is murdered! Hey, look, Kellogg's! (Grabs two bowls and runs off, throwing down his Robin Hood hat).

VIRGINIA: (Shouting after him) Hey, Robin Hood did not eat cornflakes! Oh my brother is hopeless at history! (Stamps with rage and treads on Duke's hand who is still cowering).

DUKE: Ow! Spare me!

VIRGINIA: Hey, Mr Duke, wot you doin' down dere?

DUKE: Hiding.

VIRGINIA: You playin' hide an seek?

DUKE: This is no game, young lady,....

VIRGINIA: Ooooo! Lady!

DUKE: We are all in danger! The Ghost is quite capable of murder! He watches us now.

VIRGINIA: Creepy! Great!

DUKE: It's not great! See! The blood flows - it glows, see, see!

VIRGINIA: That's just a bit of traditional English dirt. **(LX RED OFF)** Come on, Mr

Duke, you gotta get happy! You gotta have a nice day! Why don't you come and play with me?

DUKE: Gentlemen don't play.

VIRGINIA: I'll teach you. You'll be real good at it! Because you is a real Englishman! You can be Robin Hood. He's my hero! (Raises him to his feet and puts hat on him). There. My kid brother ain't got no idea of history so you can have his hat. All Washington ever wants to do is shootin' and killin'. But I know that history wasn't like that here. I know everyone was a prince or princess an' they sang and danced in the castle and did polite things. With each other.

DUKE: My dear Maid Marion, I am enchanted by your vision of our noble past. (Bows).

VIRGINIA: Oh it was like that, wasn't it Mr Duke? Tell me it was! All chivalry and politeness! Knights and romance and....oh, my lill' heart flutters!

DUKE: (Wearily) Yes, my dear, child.

VIRGINIA: Shucks, I ain't no child, Sir Duke. I'm a maiden now! I'm a Maiden Marion! Why don't you teach me how to dance politely? (He tries to do a formal dance with her whilst she keeps breaking into an enthusiastic Charleston).

DUKE: (Pulling away) Oh this is impossible!

VIRGINIA: I know! I can hardly believe it's happening to me! I feel like a Princess in my fairy castle!

DUKE: This is not a....look, within these walls the most awful....this castle was the scene of many dreadful....I really think you should understand history because.... - by the way, how old are you?

VIRGINIA: I'm sixteen.

DUKE: Jolly good.

VIRGINIA: Why?

DUKE: O, er, well, sixteen? It's a good age - all your life ahead of you! Marvellous! Marvellous age. Everything before you. Muffins, everything.

VIRGINIA: Muffins?

DUKE: I don't know why I suddenly thought of muffins. You are not a child at all, are you, my young Guinevere.

VIRGINIA: Guine-who?

DUKE: King Arthur's Queen and Sir Lancelot's..... (Coughs)...friend.

VIRGINIA: Oh it sounds so polite! Do you think we could, well, if you don't feel too, if you're not too busy...do you fancy...

DUKE: What, in heaven's name?

VIRGINIA: A game of hide and seek! I'll run off and when you catch me I'll give you a big surprise! Boo! (Runs off).

DUKE: Gosh! What an enchanting creature. Hide and seek, eh? What ho! It might not be such a terrible self-sacrifice to win back my castle! I can be noble and - "have nice day!" ..forever!

Its a hip hop happy nice day
Toodle oodle oodle oodle -ay,

Oh my, I'm so... (Music goes haywire, thunder, darkness, **LX NIGHT -low - and Vertical GHOST LIGHT**. DUKE is thrown to the ground and the light beam traps him). Sir Simon, no, Sir Simon. I have not betrayed you. No, no. Listen I beg you. Give me ten seconds to explain! It's a plan! It's a plan! I've thought up a wizard plan! (Light moves away). Thank you. (He stands.) Listen. (He looks about to check no one is looking.) I know you don't approve of Americans, but - listen! If I can marry Virginia think what it means! I will inherit the Otis's money, I can pay off the tax bill and we can both stay in Canterville Castle! (Light shakes with pleasure.) I will be heir to my own castle and you'll be safe! All you have to do is one small thing - murder little Washington. What about it, old sport? Is it a deal? (Big laugh **LX DAY in and night and Ghost light out**).

(Howls, MOM enters with WASH is playing dead in her arms)

MOM: Why, my poor little boy! We should never have left America!

DUKE: (Aside) By Hamlet, Sir Simon, that was quick!!

WASHINGTON: Boo! Ha ha, just kiddin! (MOM draws back her hands to smack the child but instead caresses his cheeks).

MOM: That's my little boy! A regular Tom Sawyer!

DUKE: He's alive????? - oh ono! No, no nobody hurt! Isn't it wonderful! Little Washington alive! (Aside) But not for long!

MOM: So what is it to be, Mr Duke? Do we cancel the contract? Shall I start up the car, and you keep your castle, ghost and tax bill? (Walking to car.)

DUKE: No, no!! I'm sorry! I had a wobble back there, but now I am firm. I have decided! I WILL sell Canterville Castle. (Pause intake of breath, Duke ducks - nothing happens - exhale of breath). Phew. Here are the deeds. (Hands over fading scroll).

MOM: (Taking out cheque book) Ten thousand dollars. Payable to de Duke of Canterville.

DUKE: To the tax authority. Sadly.

MOM: (writing cheque) "Tax au - thor - ity." What'll you live on, Duke?

DUKE: My dignity.

MOM: You'd better have another one of my muffins. (Holds out muffin)

DUKE: Why thank - (Washington dives and grabs the muffin).

MOM: What a cute little boy!!

DUKE: (To WASH.) You're dead - (Corrects himself)funny. Isn't he! What a cute little boy! Good bye.

MOM: Bye Duke.

DUKE: And give my - best muffins to your lovely daughter. (Exits).

WASHINGTON Yee hoo! We got our own castle!

MOM & WASHINGTON Go Go Otis, family Go!

A wiggle to the left and a wiggle to the right
We're gonna go go go we're gonna fight fight fight!

Go, go go Otis family go Otis,

We're pushin like a quarterback

We're fightin like a champ

Wagon trains away, break up the camp

Whoa whoa whoa Otis Family go!

We're gonna gonna get it, what money can buy

We're flappin like a flag on the fourth of July!

MOM: Otis castle, yeah! (Exit)

LX NIGHT

VIRGINIA: (Enters) Where are you Mr Duke? I'm still hiding. I tell you what, I'll hide somewhere real easy. (Crouches down behind rock with hat sticking out and continues to count Crows caw, wolves howl. Music a WOMAN GHOST- played by the Mom actress - the Washington actor plays the Sir Simon GHOST. The Woman Ghost in an ancient night-gown runs in and in a panic. A tall man in tights, night-shirt, ruff runs onstage and murders the Woman Ghost - their actions are repeated three times).

VIRGINIA: (From hiding place) Uh, just a ghost! (Pause) Another ghost!

WOMAN GHOST: Have mercy! Have pity!

GHOST: Pity! On you! You are a whore, a witch and terrible cook! Die! (He strikes her and she falls to her death. Then she is up again and he chases her round the stage. Repeats the exact phrases and stabs her to death. Then a third time he chases her, up to the door again and then strangles her. She gets up and the chase starts again. They are interrupted just as the knife is about to fall).

WOMAN GHOST: Murder, murder, murder!

VIRGINIA: (Emerging hands over eyes) Ten thousand eight hundred and twenty three, ten thousand eight hundred and twenty four - Can you two please be quiet - I am trying to play hide and seek with a wonderful man who is...a little late - or else just very ..lost.

WOMAN GHOST: Sorry!

GHOST: Who the devil are you! (But VIRGINIA slaps him and he reels back in surprise).

VIRGINIA: Now you go wash your mouth out with bleach and water! And do it quietly, or you'll wake my li'll brother and he'll kill yer!

GHOST: I'm already dead, you stupid little girl!

VIRGINIA: I am not stupid, I am not little, and I am not a girl (Punches Ghost). I's a Princess!

GHOST: Ah! Ah!

VIRGINIA: And if you gotta go about murdering people in future, then you use a pillow or a rope! Awright! It's much quieter. Good night. Oh Dukey, where are you? I bet you're hiding, or maybe you've gone to sleep or maybe - (tearful) you just don't...don't..Oh I don't know! (Exits).

(GHOST howls with frustration and wolf like rage. Mom storms on and shoots the Ghost who brushes off the bullet as if it were a fly).

MOM: Ah, you must be the Canterville Ghost! Please to meet you. But if you gonna haunt my castle can you do it more quiet like?

GHOST: Don't you know what ghost does for a living? Madame, a ghost must haunt.

It is my doom and duty to wander these turrets and walls howling to the night and acting out the murder to which I am forever chained by my guilt. It is my destiny and my definition, defy me if you dare! (Whines) Oh please leave me alone!

MOM: Shucks! Alright you can haunt and creep about but do it quiet. I think you're kind of cute when you're quiet. Now shh. (Waves him off).

LX HOUSELIGHTS

(The DUKE appears in the audience he goes up to someone with two glasses of wine).

DUKE: Oh Hello, I say! There you are I was looking everywhere for you. What was your name again, its slipped my mind....Of course of course we met at Baron Rothschild's. How could I forget? How is the bishop? Good, good. Come here have a glass of wine. Chateaux bottled of course (Lures audience member to steps up to stage) Come into the light where I can have a good look at you. A vision! Cheers. I need some advice and as we are almost related, well on my mother's side through the Saxe Coburg line, of course, I thought we could have a cosy, confidential tete a tete, a little chat? I need a few tips on the....er....manners of the opposite sex, so to speak! The question is, what I need to know is - and please ignore all the other people here - this is just between you and me - have you ever been in love? You have, wonderful. Was it good, is it good? Marvellous that's just the encouragement I need. Now this person, I won't ask his name or even her name, who knows we live in modern times and the aristocracy were never one to worry over scandal. Oh no! So, does the person you love know that you are in love with them?

1) They do not know! Are you going to tell them? How, a letter, a telephone call, a message through a trusted friend?

2) They do. Marvellous, you are so lucky, so wise. How did you tell them?Oh I see.

Isn't it wonderful the way that aristocrats like you and I can understand and help one another. These common people over here, proletarians and oiks, they can have no idea of the responsibilities we superior people have. You see, it is necessary for me to be in love, it is my duty and if my love is accepted I will win back Canterville Castle. Of course, I might have to murder that little bastard Washington, but it never stopped my family in the past. Oh I shouldn't have told you that! But I can trust you....we aristocrats know how to keep a secret, hu hu hu! But I have the problem, how do I let Virginia know that I love her. What do

you think I should do.....Well, I will. I will go to her, but if her mother finds out I'm sure she will murder me. It seems that money matters more to people than breeding nowadays, isn't that so...vulgar! Well, I've really enjoyed this talk. Cheers! The courage of the bottle. I'll go to Virginia instantly, as long as that old Ghost does not - oh to Hell with Ghosts and American mothers! Ssh. Wish me luck! If this doesn't work ...are you doing anything later? Forget I said that! **(LX Houselights out. "Bright" night up.** Otis family emerge, yawning).

MOM: Good night my dears have you washed behind your ears?

WASHINGTON & VIRGINIA: We've done as we're told we's as good as gold

MOM: Have you brushed your teeth, did you say your prayers?

KIDS: Yeah we thanked the Lord God as loud as we dared.

MOM: Then off you ride to the land o' sleep An' don't let your Ma hear a peep

WASHINGTON: Oh Momma will you save us from the frightening ghost

MOM: You know I think he's frightened of you the most!

All: A-men. (Exit).

MOM: If I catch that there phantom makin' howls and hauntin' tonight why I'll break every bone in his body and grind 'em up for snuff! (Sings)

Oh husband Hiram high up in heaven
Look down upon your cowgirl now
A Yankee aristocrat highbrow!

GHOST:

I'll kill the little boy I'll murder him with fright
His hair will stand on end he'll never survive the night

The Yanks they have no history no honour and no pride

God knew what he was doing when he made the sea so wide,

The Atlantic wide oh great divide God knew to make it thick.

Americans in Britain the thought just makes me sick

DUKE:

I tremble and I tiptoe and I slither through the door

Like a thief I steal with muffled tread along MY corridor

My heart it pounds at every sound

Will I be caught by Mom or ghost?

That terrible mother American she frightens me the most!

KIDS:

We've tricks to play, no treats from us in games we cut up rough

The gloves are off, the chips are down, us kids are kinda tough

Don't mess with us, we'll mess with you

Yes, Sir, that's wot we're gonna do!

We've cowboy blood and railroad guts, six shooters and lassoo!

(A circle goes round the castle screen, first one way then it reverses. This is also a joke on quick changes with the audience uncertain who is playing the Ghost- the Kids with VIRGINIA on WASHINGTON 's shoulders with a sheet over them and a scythe - it all goes wrong for the GHOST when he and the Duke reverse directions so that they bump bottoms, this frightens both of them, then the Ghosts runs round in a circle fast and meets the Kid's ghost who howls. The GHOST turns to flee and bumps into WASHINGTON who bursts out of his sheet and fires at the GHOST with his pea shooter. Virginia spots the Duke who is having to dodge Mom and waves to him. Meanwhile WASHINGTON chases the GHOST out and puts on the GHOST costume, so essentially chasing himself in and collapses in an exhausted heap. The Duke actor is then free to go back stage and tip toe on for the next scene).

MOM: What's all this shrekin' and hollerin in the middle of the night?

Git to bid you varmint! An you shakin quiverin lump o' jelly. (To the Ghost). Ssh. (Ghost nods and agrees to be silent. VIRGINIA, still in ghost costume uses it to convince MOM that she has gone to bed and is "only" the ghost. Then seeing her opportunity she creeps up on the Duke in his hiding place behind the rock).

DUKE: EEK! Ssh! (Not turning) Is that you, Sir Simon?

VIRGINIA: (False deep voice) I am the ghost of Canterville! The most terrible ghost in England!

DUKE: O no! Don't hurt me!

VIRGINIA: (Still as ghost:) I won't hurt you.

DUKE: You're going to do something to me! I know! But it's not my fault! I had to come back! I have to see Virginia. I know in my heart this is what I have to! I know you are not very taken with the Ladies, you old bloody woman-murderer, but if you could help me. You've got powers! How can I tell her? How can I take her hand? She's still a girl, but she's not a girl! How do I speak to a girl who is no longer a girl. How do I approach her, touch her, hold her?

VIRGINIA: (Still with deep voice:) Here, take her hand. (Virginia puts her hand in his).

DUKE: Oh you trickster, this hand is just like hers, but.....ah! It's a ghostly hand. (She puts her arms around his neck) Oh how those ghostly arms feel like her arms. They are as lovely and slender as her young arms! But they are as spectral and empty as the dead arms of a ghost! O, agony! O, get off me! O, Ghost, you torture me! Stop! Stop! Tell me, Ghost, you have powers, will I ever hold her?

VIRGINIA: (Turning him around) O, yes. You can hold her now.

DUKE: Oh Sir Simon your old spook, you look just like Virginia.

VIRGINIA: I am Virginia.

DUKE: (Admiring her.) You've got everything perfectly! Even the voice! And

those lips, those eyes, those...You've got everything right except for one thing, Sir Simon! Virginia isn't a woman yet. She would not know how to kiss!

Virginia: Oh she would, she would! Let me show you how this Virginia kisses!

DUKE: I am not kissing a five hundred year old corpse!

Virginia: I am not a dead body! I am Virginia! (Getting hysterical).

DUKE: If you are Virginia! Then I am King Arthur!

Virginia: My hero! (She jumps on him and kisses him on the lips. He pushes her away).

DUKE: Sir Simon! Uuuurr! Disgusting! Yuck! You disgusting dirty old ghost!

(Sir Simon- played by Washington actor - suddenly appears with a howl, threateningly, angrily. Duke stares at him in amazement. Then looks at Virginia).

DUKE: Golly gosh! But? O? O! My! Well, blow me down! Then if you're not... ..then you must...and I am and I just and you just and we...o my, but I, I, I, I, I really want to say - that... I can't think of what I want to say!

VIRGINIA: Don't say anything, Duke. Don't blush. Don't be an awkward outlaw. Be bold, my King. Kiss me, dearest Robin. Help me. (He hesitates. They both edge forward and then both hesitate They are both embarrassed and awkward). Oh shucks! I don't know how to do...this.

DUKE: We have so much in common.

VIRGINIA: We do?

DUKE: I have never kissed a woman before and.....have you ever kissed a man?

VIRGINIA: What, like this? (She kisses him on the lips.) Never.

DUKE: (Formal madrigal) Virginia, Virginia named after England's virgin Queen

We are two sides of an Anglo-Saxon coin

VIRGINIA: (Rock beat) Virginia's sassy from the US of A

But we speak the same language whatever you say!

DUKE: (Bravely experimenting with rock music).

The Canterville family we're not so smart or bold

Started out as sheep stealers or so I'm told

VIRGINIA: The Otis clan man for man were hard and bad

Dancin' gals and drunken fools not countin' my dead Dad!

DUKE: The Cantervilles were villains who stole this land

Terrorised the peasants and crushed them in their hand

VIRGINIA: While we shot up the Injuns and drove em off their land

Opened saloons and railroads with dollars in our hand

Both: (romantically) Please, colonise my land And take me in hand

O, colonise my land

I'll be jelly in your hand.

BOTH:
When things got tough and the going got rough
The Otis and the Canterville's they'd never
enough!
We know how to live, we know we've got
style
The Otis and the Cantervilles - top of the pile!
DUKE: I
VIRGINIA: Think
DUKE: I
VIRGINIA: Love.
Both: You.
VIRGINIA: Take me, Prince Robin.
DUKE: Where?
VIRGINIA: Oh, you know!
DUKE: No, where? O there! You mean...
VIRGINIA: O yes, please! You will be polite,
won't you?
DUKE: Oh no, I couldn't! Not in your
mother's castle! O dear! I can't! Not without
your mother's approvalI mean - your
mother! What would she say! If she found out!
That would be the end of everything! And I
want - (points to Virginia and the castle but
can't say either) everything! Forever. I will call
on you tomorrow.
VIRGINIA: Will you come and win my hand?
Like a knight of old?
DUKE: I will! (He crosses his fingers.) I will
come to joust with your affections and you will
tie your favour to my lance!
VIRGINIA: O, it sounds wonderful!
DUKE: Until tomorrow, then, darling maid!
VIRGINIA: Until tomorrow, my Robin.
DUKE: My Maid in heaven - Maid Marion!
(He salutes her - she sighs and leaves and as
the DUKE is going he is pounced on by Mom).
MOM: Mr Duke, it's you! What in the name of
Nebraska are you doin' in my castle at this
time of night?
DUKE: There's no point in lying. Widow Otis.
Mabelene, if I may be so bold. I came here,
tonight, to plight my troth to a member of the
Otis family.
MOM: To what! Talk plain American!
DUKE: I'm too embarrassed to say it straight
out. Within my bosom, Mrs Otis, has grown
a great love for....a member of the Otis clan;
rough, charming, oh what a union of the great
British and the Americans. Oh! I refer to a
divine American woman, scarcely more than a
girl!
MOM: Why, Mr Duke, you old flatterer you!
(Burllesque dance routine). Then it's true what
they say in Boston about the English
gentlemen! O, dear, am I going all red and
bashful? If only you had seen me in my prime
at the Silver Dollar Saloon!
DUKE: I so want! I need! I need!
MOM: O, Yes!
DUKE: I have to!
MOM: Yes! Yes!
DUKE: I must marry your daughter!
MOM: (Screams) What!!!! (Draws revolver).
DUKE: I must marry Virginia Otis!
MOM: What you talking 'bout, boy?

DUKE: What did you think I wanted?
MOM: Jumping Jehosaphat! Why would
Virginia marry you, you dirty down at heel,
beggar boy, stinkin' overbred skunk! Giddout.
(Aiming the gun at Duke) Ooh, I was nearly
fooled by you, but like the US Cavalry
common sense came ridin' to the rescue! This
is my castle. Gid off my land! (MOM fires at
Duke's feet and he runs off). Imagine, my lill'
Virginia marryin' a man.....with no money!
(Faints, then rises and staggers off) Oh sweet
Virginia. Let us give thanks for our
deliverance..Muffins, flagpoles, bagels,
shooting star spangled banner!
**LX Blackout then fade up to day. (Interval
here if necessary).**
(Washington enters with a garden spray, as in
drifts Virginia in a haze of emotional
confusion).
WASHINGTON: Hey lill' sis', look what I got
here, let's go ghost huntin' - I's a gonna squirt
that ghost!
VIRGINIA: Go away, Washington, I don't
wanna play.
WASHINGTON: (Whining) You gotta wanna
play, you's my sister.
VIRGINIA: I never want to play with you
again!
WASHINGTON: What!
VIRGINIA: Now go and do something you
can do on your own! Go and take a running
jump off the Grand Canyon!
WASHINGTON: I ain't thought of that!
Thanks! (Exits).
VIRGINIA: Stoopid! Stoopid! Stoopid!
(Stamps foot) Aw shucks! If mommas and
poppas can git rid of each other why can't a
sister divorce her brother? I don't want to play
anymore.
(Ghost enters and watches)
VIRGINIA: (Sings) I'm sick of bein' a kid
becos I's just sixteen
I'm sick of bein' a little girl if you know what I
mean?
I'm sick bein' a playthin', I'm sick of little toys
I'm sick of kid brothers and yappin' little boys.
I wanna be a woman, wanna live out my
dreams
Teen, teen, teens why I know wot it means!
I wanna be a woman, hear me, heaven above!
Lordey, Lordey, Lordey, wanna fall in love!
GHOST: O, the agony of young love! This
curse upon the human race! Take my advice,
young woman, forget this love business. It
starts with love, moves on to marriage,
progresses through unhappiness and ends in
murder. (Strangles himself and stabs himself
in the eye).
VIRGINIA: Bullshit! Jus' because you are
ridiculously old you think you must know
everything! But you are wrong, wrong, wrong!
Everyone's wrong in this house but me! My
brother's wrong to git on my nerves, my Ma's
wrong for bein' a pain in the butt, a pain in the
brain and a hypocrite into the bargain and
you're wrong to kill your lady every night!

You're all bad, bad, bad! An' that there poor
Duke, why, he ain't even got a home, and no
one so much as thinks about him, or sheds a
tear for him, (She begins to weep.) ...poor
homeless man, and him with a real aristocratic
heart of gold and his chivalry is really
enormous! You know, he kissed me and then
he was a gentleman and did not want to take
advantage of me before he had my Ma's
blessing, so he didn't..... oh shucks! (She is
crying, the Ghost is crying). What's the matter
with YOU?
GHOST: I want to die. I want to die! To feel
no more. I want to lie in the brown earth with
the grasses waving over my head! I want to
forget today and yesterday and have no
tomorrow! (Both howling).
VIRGINIA: I want to die too! What's the point
of living if you can't love?
GHOST: Let us die! Let us die!
BOTH: We want to die! We want to die! Let
us die!
(He is beginning to lead them away. The
CROWS appear at the edges of the set.)
VIRGINIA: (Breaking from the Ghost:) Stop,
stop this is too much! This is darn stoopid! I
don't wanna die, I wanna live! I wanna live in
the arms of my beloved Duke! (The CROWS
retreat and disappear.) And you, silly ghost,
how can you wanna die? Aren't you already
dead?
GHOST: I cannot die! I'm condemned to this
living death forever! And now I don't even
frighten anyone! Could I frighten you for a
minute? Please!
VIRGINIA: Nope, only a life without love
would frighten me.
GHOST: O, what can I do?
VIRGINIA: You could emigrate? My Mom
could git you on board a ship. There's a heavy
duty on spirits in New York but I's sure we
could slip you by the customs.
GHOST: I don't think I should like America.
VIRGINIA: America is the home of
opportunity!
GHOST: (Can't restrain himself. Brightly:)
Yes, and murder!
VIRGINIA: The freedom to carry a gun is
enshrined in our constitution. So there! What
folks do with their gun is up to them. That's
freedom of choice! Folk have a constitutional
right to bear arms and fall in love. It's what we
call the pursuit of happiness, Mr Ghost. That's
what it is! And I demand to have my
constitutional rights! - but my Ma won't let
me!
GHOST: You demand love and I demand
death. We ask for too much.
VIRGINIA: No! It can't be! I can't bear the
pain, the thirst! There must be summat!
GHOST: All right, all right! Maybe, there is an
ancient way to lay a ghost and have what you
desire.....but no! You wouldn't dare! Never.
VIRGINIA: What, how? Tell me! I will!
GHOST: But it's dangerous!
VIRGINIA: I don't care! I want to love!

GHOST: And you are willing to take any risk!
VIRGINIA: Otherwise I'll never know what I didn't have!

GHOST: Then I call on the curse of Canterville to be renounced! I call on the spirits of this castle! I call on all the timeless spectres and urges! I call on all the history of romance! Come down! Come down! Come down you spirits! Come down you wants and desires! Death and love! Come down! Come down!

(Lights, thunder and lightning, rumbles and roars . Smoke and mist. **LX Vertical ghost light and Day out.** VIRGINIA is left holding an ancient parchment.)

VIRGINIA: What's this?

GHOST Voice OFF: Read it. (**LX either low night plus microphone special or just Night**)

VIRGINIA: (Reads:) "When a golden girl can win

Prayer from out the lips of sin

When the ghost gives up his fears

And a little girl gives away her tears

Then shall all the house be still,

A young tree blossoms will

And love shall come to Canterville."

What does it mean?

GHOST: It means that if we are willing to share our terrible thirsts I can make you into a woman and you can make me into a corpse.

(Sings) There is a garden far away

The grass grows long and deep

And there a spirit might lie down

And fall in infinite sleep

VIRGINIA: (Sings:) There is garden far away

Through a forbidden door

And there a girl might lie down

And rise a girl no more.

(Ghost taking Virginia's head in his hands and kisses her neck then takes her off through the wall. **LX Day lights** The DUKE enters disguised inside a statue.)

DUKE/CLOCK: What's the matter, it's an antique isn't it! It's time I did something to win Virginia's hand and other bits - away naughty thoughts. Love is not of the body, it is of the mind! I must keep my mind pure to win my Virgin- ia. Ia - ears, throat, lips, ooh. One chaste kiss would send me to heaven!

MOM: (Off) Virginia! Washington! Wakey wakey! Breakfast!

DUKE: Or will I go to Hell!

MOM: (Entering with feather duster) Why where are those kids? My muffins are getting cold! Everything in this country is cold, old and dirty. I gotta clean it up! And dust, dust everywhere! (Starts to clean the pillar). Why this country is so old it's not decent! (Duke sneezes) Bless you! (Steps away, then turns back) Just a minute! Statues don't sneeze! Is that you again, Ghost?

DUKE: (Panicked:) No, no, I'm not the Ghost!

MOM: That's OK then. (Exits shouting) Virginia, Washington, where are you?

(Washington enters with wet pillow case on head and tied hands).

WASHINGTON: (With squirter) Ghosty, Ghosty, ghosty! (He hides by the statue and nearly discovers the Duke who tries to hit him with a hammer and eventually succeeds, MOM returns and finds Washington prone and believes he is tricking her, kicks him).

MOM: Washington! What is you a-doin' down there? Now giddup! You can't fool me twice, I may be a Republican but I ain't that dumb! Come on and giddup! You are named after Washington, the capital of the US of A and I will not have you lying face down before a collection of English antiques! You gotta help me! Sweet Virginia has gone, her bed is empty!

DUKE: (Having scuttled back as statue on pillar) What! Gone?

WASHINGTON: What?

MOM: I told you! (hits him) Listen!

WASHINGTON: When?

MOM: Just now.

WASHINGTON: What did you tell me?

DUKE/Statue: Virginia! Gone!

MOM: Exactly.

WASH: What?

MOM: What are you talkin' about? (Hits him). She's gone.

DUKE/Statue: Where?

MOM: How should I know? That's what you gotta tell me! (Shaking WASH) Has she been kidnapped, has she bin attacked! Has she? Has she!

DUKE/Statue: Oh God!

MOM: (Hits WASH) Do not take the Lord's name in vain!

WASH: I did not!

MOM: Yes you did. Lyin' makes it worse!

WASHINGTON: I did not lie!

MOM: What would George Washington say now! (She beats him).

DUKE: O please stop hitting him and ask about Virginia! Oh damn.

(The Otis's look at the DUKE).

MOM: Mr Duke!

DUKE: What happened to Virginia?

MOM: What's that got to do with you? And what are you doing on my plinth?

DUKE: I've come to save Virginia.

MOM: From what?

DUKE: I don't know!

WASHINGTON: I know!

MOM& DUKE: What, boy, what?

WASHINGTON: OK OK, I'll tell you everythin', Ma, oh, Ma, it was terrible!

(WASH begins to enjoy this attention.) Well, it's like this: I don't think we is ever gonna see sweet Virginia ag'in....

MOM & DUKE: What!

WASHINGTON: At least... (He pauses for effect)...

MOM & DUKE: Yes?

WASHINGTON: Not alive!

MOM& DUKE: Oooooh!

WASHINGTON: (Topping them:) Waaaaah! I ain't got no big sister no more! Waaaaah!

MOM: Tell us, tell us!

DUKE: Tell us what happened!

WASHINGTON: Er er The gypsies have stolen Virginia!

BOTH: Oh Lord, Lord save us from the gypsies save us all from heathen folk!

DUKE: I know these gypsies, they have a camp not four miles away. They steal our salmon and poach our eggs! These were Romany's yes?

WASHINGTON: (Suddenly confused because he has invented everything) Er What? Yeh. And Julia Caesar were leadin' them!

DUKE: Romanies! Not Romans! Did they have caravans, violins and madly dancing girls?

WASHINGTON: Yeh, that's them!

MOM: Devil worshippers, I'll kill 'em! (Brandishing revolver.)

DUKE and MA: To the camp, to the camp!

DUKE: I'll kill them after you! (Snatching sword and/or axe from wall).

DUKE & MOM: Kill em!

DUKE: United! Despite all our differences!

MOM: Mr Duke, it's mighty fine to see an Englishman with his blood up saving my daughter.

DUKE: And it's "mighty fine" to be saving her with you - her American Mom!

MOM: Well, we's both white folk, ain't we! Let's git them injuns - (coughs) I mean - gypsies!

DUKE & MA: What's the difference! Yee hoo! (Exit)

MOM: (Dashing briefly back) Washington you stay here and guard the castle. And don't get too excited - I's not forgot the Duke's got nuthin' but his name. Aw shucks. Wait for me! Wait for me! Duke you gotta save Virginia from the Injuns and then I gotta her save her from you! (MOM exits wielding weapon).

WASHINGTON: Ma, Ma - I - (Shouts after her) there weren't no gypsies, there weren't no Indians. (To audience:) I come from the City. I ain't never seen no Indian. (Sings).

It's hard bein' a boy, It's hard bein' a boy

There's no one to fight it simply ain't right

You pick up a gun but shootin' crows ain't fun

When your rifle is just a toy

Oh what a joy to be a cowboy

To bully and battle all day but -

It's hard bein' a boy, It's soft bein' a boy

Where are the injuns, where are the bad uns?

To murder and slaughter and kill with no quarter

If boys ain't allowed enemies who are evil and strong

Please can you tell me whatever is wrong

With smashing and bashing and turning the screw

On those who are different and weaker than you?

(Speaks) There were no gypsies... Maybe I'm in deep buffalo shit \ heap big trouble! (Exits).

(DUKE and MOM enter, and attack the audience, MOM firing blanks into the audience

and DUKE waving the axe/sword over their heads. **LX Houselights up.**

DUKE and MOM: (Armed attack audience) Hands up! Come on, hands up! Everybody, get your hands up! (Audience forced to put hands up).

MOM: Just look at them, disgustin'. They ain't been using no underarm deodorant! What type of clothes is that? They got LONG HAIR! You gonna get cattle tics and sheep worm in that, boy!

DUKE: They are all foreigners, foreigners, every one of them. Gypsies! Nomads! Rootless, wandering folk, pilfering their way through the land!

DUKE & MA: (To each other) He may not be British/American but he speaks English!

DUKE: You, you. Do you speak English. (Talks to the audience member. To MA:) It's a version of English. Good, now ragged gypsy, if you would be so kind to tell us, where is Virginia?

MOM: Yeah, where's my daughter. Speak or I'll blow you brains out! (Start blindfolding members of the audience and threatening them with the revolver.)

MOM: Speak, speak!

BOTH: What have you done with MY Virginia??!!

(They stop, look suspiciously at each other and turn their weapons on each other).

BOTH: Did you say "my" Virginia? (Pause) I did. (Each whispers in each other's ear, square up to each other then the Duke flees in fear).

MOM: Come back you finger lickin' chicken!

We gotta save Virginia! (**LX Big crow lights or Night**)

(They exit through the audience. Thunder, lightning, VIRGINIA enters in semi darkness with a candle, she is dressed in white. The castle turns into a great black crow, she walks towards it and is folded in its vast wings, the white night-dress flies upwards and a bag of bones is dropped).

MOM & DUKE: (Hurtle across the stage and off) Virginia! Virginia! **LX daylight**

WASHINGTON (Off): Virginia? Virginia?

(Sees bones and dress on ground) They have killed her! (VIRGINIA emerges on the battlements, wrapped apparently only in the blanket, holding a casket of jewels, wreathed in flowers, smiling. Flowers begin to bloom all over the castle.

WASHINGTON enters, looking for Virginia, worried about his lies.)

WASHINGTON: Virginia! Virginia! (Sees her.) Hey Sis, wot you doin' here? (She smiles beatifically). Where you bin? (She smiles knowingly). Why, you critter, I should beat you, you made me go and tell Ma and de Duke you bin taken by the gypsies when you just bin hidin' here all the time! It was all your fault!

(VIRGINIA simply sighs in a knowing way and WASHINGTON races away, confused)

WASHINGTON: Ma, Ma! (VIRGINIA vanishes from battlements).

WASHINGTON: Mom, Mom, Virginia's at home. Virginia never were stolen by the gypsies, she's been lyin' agin! It were all a fib and she MADE ME tell it!

MA & DUKE: (Entering) What! (Pause) My darling! Back at the castle!

MOM: Hallelujah!

DUKE: But what about the...gypsies...and these foreign looking er...well...I. we were wrong .er, o dear....sorry!

ALL: Sorry.

MOM: You are very nice people really. (To a man) Especially you! (Kisses him).

WASHINGTON: But Mom! She made me tell a lie! I ain't gonna be George Washington anymore! Mom! (Whines.)

DUKE & MOM: O shut up! Back to the castle! Back home!

(Sing)

Home, where Virginia's waitin'

Back home we're anticipatin'

Back home where the log fires a heatin'

Back home where my true love's/daughter's waitin'

Back home we're anticipatin'
The finest comin' home party that you ever saw

Back home!

(Up tempo repeat as they leave the edge of the stage and the lights go up to reveal VIRGINIA emerges wrapped in a flowery cloth and holding the casket. The Duke falls at her feet and Ma goes to embrace her but all spring back as if hit by electricity. The castle is blooming flowers)

MOM: Why, darlin', you is different! Is this my lill' gal?

DUKE: My Lady, my Duchess!

MOM: My, oh, my, keep your hands off of her! She's my little baby!

DUKE: She is my little lady!

WASHINGTON: Hey she got nuthin' on under that blanket!

ALL: What!

VIRGINIA: (VIRGINIA screams) Unless you all be quiet I shall throw off this blanket and run naked onto the streets out there so that everyone can see me. (All the others put up their hands in surrender and horror). I have been with the ghost. Now he is dead. He has been very wicked but he is sorry for what he has done and he gave me this box of beautiful jewels before he died. Here are his bones! And here I am! Different, but still me! I am the tree that has blossomed for him, just as it was written on the old bit of paper! O, come to me, Cuthbert, Duke of Canterville.

DUKE: Shall I bring you a coat?

VIRGINIA: Hush dearest!

MOM: But -

VIRGINIA: Shuttup, Mom! This is a funeral and a proposal. Over the cold bones of this dead man do you, Cuthbert, Duke Of Canterville, take me, Virginia Otis,...

MOM: But-!

VIRGINIA: to be your lawful wife?

DUKE: I do.

VIRGINIA: Then I Virginia Otis...

MOM: But-!

VIRGINIA: take you, Cuthbert, Duke Of Canterville, to be my lawfully wedded husband!

MOM: He's got no money! What will you live on!! (howling)

VIRGINIA: Look, gold! (Opens casket. A golden light fills the stage.)

ALL: OOOH!

MOM: Well, seems like quite a good idea after all. Hey, folks?

(VIRGINIA pecks MOM on cheek, then grabs DUKE and kisses him).

WASHINGTON: Yuk!

ALL: The bones the bones the blessed bones

Bless my soul bones jump out of their hole

Bones bones blessed bones

Bury the past and do it fast

Break down those doors and chop those fences

Smile at one another and drop your defences

Hold out your hand we're in the Promised

Land

English and American, cowboy and injun,

All aboard, we're on the same steam engine

You can shout you can scream an holler!

It's easy to be friends when you're blessed with dollars!

Bones bones we were blessed by bones.

Bones bones sooner or later we'll all be bones

So never talk bad nor never talk ill

Of any fellow, or even worse still,

Of the gone to rest ghost of Canterville.

(Repeat last two lines then sing gently under last lines of dialogue. Then, as the others quietly sing: "Bones, bones, bones, bones" and manipulate models of crows swooping joyfully around the castle).

DUKE: (Taking VIRGINIA aside.) Virginia, a wife should have no secrets from her husband.

VIRGINIA: So?

DUKE: Tell me what happened when you were locked up with the ghost?

VIRGINIA: Don't ask me, dearest, please! I cannot tell you! I owe the ghost so much! He made me see why Love is stronger than Death.

DUKE: Why is it? How did he make you see?

(VIRGINIA shakes her head.) Well, I'll make you a deal - you can keep your secret as long as I can have your heart!

VIRGINIA: You will always have my heart!

DUKE: But you will tell our children what happened some day, won't you? Won't you? What is it? What?

(VIRGINIA laughs and covers her face, and the crows appear on the battlements and pick up her laugh and their calls turn into rather ribald laughter which echoes through the theatre).

LX BLACKOUT. END.