

Opening Monologue - Murder
a work for American Ballet Theatre
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Cast of Characters:

Woman in white

Miss Smith, secretary

Smith, butler

Lady Smith

Young Smith-Smith, neighbor

Lord Smith

Smithie, upstairs maid

Isadora Smith

Smith sisters, twins

Sir Smythe, family friend

Dr. Schmidt, German psychiatrist

Smitty, blacksmith

Granny Smith, deaf dowager

Reverend Smith

Mrs. Reverend Smith, blind

Detective Inspector Smith

Murder monologue:

The sword gleams near the still body of the woman in white.

The door opens slowly.

Miss Smith, the temporary secretary of Lord and Lady Smith, shuts the door behind herself, turns and espying the woman in white groans, reels, and falls into a dead faint at her feet.

Smith, the butler, having heard the muffled thud of the fainting falling temporary secretary hurries in.

Surveying the scene he spies the sword and gasping, and going and grasping the cold metal, he tilts toward the two ladies lying motionless before him. Smith stops stock still at the sound of approaching footsteps.

The door opens slowly.

Lady Smith sweeps in, starts at the grizzly spectacle and in a hoarse whisper lisps, "Thmith, what have you done?"

The butler recognizes at once the compromising nature of his position. He is found alone with two dead woman, a weapon and worse, he is afterall a butler.

The sword falls from his clasp with a clatter.

Striving to escape, Smith and Lady Smith collide, and she collapses as he slips away.

Miss Smith sits up, aroused by the brouhaha, struggles to her feet and backing away from the woman in white, stumbles over the supine figure of Lady Smith. Already distraught, a shrill shriek issues from her pale lips as she falters and crumples prostrate into the arms of young Smith-Smith, a neighbor.

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He having heard commotion and seen Smith the butler bolting, suspects foul play. He scoops up Miss Smith and carries her forthwith to the chaise as the door opens slowly.

Lord Smith and his sometimes mistress Smithie the upstairs maid meeting for a short tryst in the sitting room, have eyes only for each other. Young Smith-Smith having arranged Miss Smith on the chaise hides himself behind it. The Lord and Smithie locked in embrace, notice neither the neighbor Smith-Smith nor the nearby stirring Lady Smith. She, rising by fits and starts, starts toward the oblivious couple.

Pulling a pair of gardening shears from her girdle of gardening tools, she stabs Lord Smith, her faithless philandering spouse and faints dead away over his fallen body.

Smithie races for the door, opening it just as Isadora Smith, come for a sudden visit, enters. Smithie slams the door, catching the visitor's scarf, strangling Isadora as the door opens revealing the twin Smith sisters. They, starting serenely into the room, at once sense danger and race to secret themselves behind the chaise displacing young Smith-Smith as Miss Smith sits up and the door is opened by Sir Smythe, a family friend, who spots Lady Smith, (with whom he is secretly in love) and placing his ear to her heart and hearing the beat beat beat that belies her seeming lifelessness lifts her body and bears it to the chaise as Miss Smith come to consciousness races for the door and collapses into the arms of Dr. Schmidt the German psychiatrist.

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Smitty the blacksmith, come after Lady Smith, knocks into Dr. Schmidt hurling Miss Smith into the arms of the rising Lord Smith, not yet quite dead, who falters at the flung dead weight and falls as Dr. Schmidt pivots and punches Smitty who punches back.

The deaf dowager, Granny Smith, enters and is downed and pinned by the knocked down Dr. Schmidt, while Smitty seeing signs of life in Miss Smith, (with whom he is secretly in love) gathers her up into his arms and arrives at the chaise as Lady Smith stirs and stumbles toward the door.

Lord Smith, not yet quite dead, pulls himself to his feet, and terrified by the terrified Lady Smith, who thinks he is his ghost and faints dead away, faints dead away.

Reverend Smith, come to tea, kneels to pray.

The blind Mrs. Reverend Smith not noticing her kneeling spouse spills over him and tumbles in a graceless heap.

Miss Smith, regaining her senses, leaps from the chaise screaming.

Smitty attending her is knocked to the floor.

Lady Smith startled into consciousness starts for help.

Lord Smith, not yet quite dead, dies.

Dr. Schmidt revives and tries to rise.

The blind Mrs. Reverend Smith, trying to right herself, knocks

Dr. Schmidt over as Granny Smith rolls out from under.

Sir Smythe meanwhile has gone for help taking with him for safety's sake, the twin Smith sisters. He arrives with them and Detective Inspector Smith of Scotland Yard as the Reverend Smith helps right old Granny Smith.

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Lady Smith and Miss Smith kneel in prayer as Detective Inspector Smith approaches the woman in white. Lifting the sword he surveys the scene and says: "Who is this woman?"