

# The Master of Life and Death

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*The Master is a retired toxicologist working previously at a university in England. The years of working with deadly toxins have left his mind somewhat damaged and he suffers from a form of schizophrenia. He recently stopped taking his prescribed medications without warning*

ACT I, SCENE I

[The MASTER is staring out a window with binoculars. A knock comes from the door downstairs and the MASTER exits to answer.]

[Re-enter the MASTER with a pill bottle]

MASTER

Yes! Thank you Mr. Wilcox! Oh yes! Yes, see you next week! Take Care!

Take two tablets three times daily with food..

[Empty pill bottle into trash]

I'm not crazy Mr. Thomas, you know that. Those foolish doctors wouldn't know sanity if it came up and slapped them in the face. Oh absolutely. It's so nice to be able to talk to someone with

some intelligence for once. My fellow toxicologists at the University weren't nearly as brilliant as you or I. I was very

MASTER (cont'd)

much alone Mr. Thomas. They didn't understand my vision like you do.

Look there Mr. Thomas, that poor young lady across the street has been beaten by that barbarian of a lover since she moved in two months ago. Poor thing... Her lip is bleeding now Mr. Thomas. I wish I could-

hmm? Oh someone really should dispose of that bru-

Yes but-

Okay... wait now mr.-

But I could never... I'd wind up in prison!

A pin you say?

My, my, Mr. Thomas... You're a genius. Oh, it's so nice to have someone as brilliant as you around Mr. Thomas.

[Exit MASTER]

## ACT I, SCENE II

[The MASTER is working at a chemistry lab table with various vials, chemicals, some castor beans, and a broach]

MASTER

So Mr. Thomas, since no one else is going to help that poor woman, and lord knows she can't help herself, we shall have to do it. Let's run over the plan again then shall we?

We fix this broach with a retractable pin with an eye hole in it and dip it in poison. Correct? Yes and-

Oh I was thinking I'd use Ricin. A mere 20 micrograms is lethal for the normal man, and I'm sure we can get plenty in that little pin and I can make it out of these castor beans. It's such an easy poison Mr. Thomas; I'm surprised you didn't think of it.

So we attach the broach to my over coat and I casually *bump into* that... *barbarian* and casually excuse myself. Who would suspect that a poor old man like me would have tipped this old family heirloom with poison!

Oh it's the perfect crime Mr. Thomas! He'll walk away quite unhappy that he just got pricked deeply by my broach and think

MASTER (cont'd)

nothing of it, while secretly the poison is working its way through his veins slowly killing him in a matter of hours!

Oh don't give me that Mr. Thomas! You know as well as I do that this crime is wicked but absolutely necessary for that beautiful young lady's well being. Sometimes one must kill to save.

The Poison is finished and all I need to do is clip the broach here, there. Now, dip the tip in the vial...voila!

[The MASTER glances toward a time piece]

He should be on his way to the general store for his whiskey. I'd best hurry Mr. Thomas if we wish to catch him today.

[Exit MASTER with Overcoat]

ACT I, SCENE III

[The MASTER enters excitedly with his coat and resumes window watching]

MASTER

I did it Mr. Thomas! Oh you should have been there! There I was, casually walking down the cold street with last night's snow crunching under my feet and I pretended to warm my hands with my

MASTER (cont'd)

breath so I wasn't watching where I was going, and then I bumped right into him! The needle pierced his out of season coat with ease! Oh he was livid! I apologized carefully, and walked away with a wicked little grin. Oh you should have seen me Mr.

Thomas! Look! There he is! He's coming out of her house!

Look at the poor bastard, he can barely stand! Look! He fell!

The poison is taking over!

[Muffled Scream of a Woman Within]

Oh Mr. Thomas we did it! We set that beautiful young woman free!

GET DOWN! Get away from the window Mr. Thomas!

I think she saw us...She did! She knows Mr. Thomas! Look at her now, you can tell! That ungrateful *harlot!* She knows of our wicked deed! She'll surely tell the police! Oh that awful woman! What are we going to do Mr. Thomas! She Knows, she knows...Oh what are we going to do? They'll lock us away for good!

Yes! Your right! She's not worthy of our salvation! We *must* dispose of her! The poison! We can lace flowers with the powder! Yes! I'll address them from her mother or Mrs. Barton, her employer! "*I'm so sorry for your loss*" and she'll inhale it and never wake up again! Oh it's marvelous! That

MASTER (cont'd)

lewd hag will never whore herself out again!

[Exit MASTER with flowers laced with a white powder]

ACT I, SCENE IV

[The MASTER is looking out the window again]

They're taking her body away on a stretcher Mr. Thomas. That street walker had it coming you know. I saw the way she'd look at other men, ignoring her darling lover. The mail man, Mr. Thomas! Did you see how she used to eye him? Bloody home wrecker! He was an adulterer he—

Your right. I am. I should kill him. He's a sinner. God would want me too. No one else could do it. No one else is strong enough! They'd be driven mad with the power over life and death! But not I Mr. Thomas! I severed the threads of life for those two monsters. I am the Master of Life and Death! No one can stop

me Mr. Thomas! I chose who lives and who dies and when they do each! No man will die until I say he can die! No mortal is safe from the wrath of the Lord, no, the *God* of Life and Death!

MASTER (cont'd)

Come Mr. Thomas! We have work to do. There are sinners waiting to burn for eternity and the Master is just waiting to help them along!

[Exit MASTER with his coat, a broach and vial of poison]

ACT I SCENE V

[The MASTER is sitting and exits to answer a knock at the door to retrieve the news paper from the new mail man.]

[Re-enter MASTER with News Paper]

MASTER

Yes, thank you mr...

Wilson! Yes, thank you very much sir! It's so nice to see a fresh face. I never really liked the old man who deliver my mail and paper before. Oh you're doing a fine job sir! Take care!



Oh look here Mr. Thomas; we appear to be headline news.

[Reading aloud]

MASTER (cont'd)

*"Mysterious Deaths: The sudden deaths of citizens recently are being declared murder by local police. Police say all victims have been poisoned with a deadly toxin. Sergeant O'Connell says that the killer is believed to be pricking people with needles as he passes by and warns citizens to be on the lookout for any suspicious activity. O'Connell also advises that if you think you may have crossed paths with the North Ridge Killer to seek medical attention immediately.*

*O'Connell outraged by the murders left reports saying that as long as he was on the case, this vile villain would be brought to justice and hanged..."*

What rubbish Mr. Thomas!

"...Vile Villain..."?! I'm a God! These infidels don't realize that what I'm doing is a service to the world. I'm damning the wicked

to make way for the righteous! No one can stop me! I am a benevolent being! Sgt. O'Connell, I decide when death occurs, not you or Scotland Yard! The Lord of Death is displeased by your opposition to his divine will!

MASTER (cont'd)

I shall have to punish him if he becomes a hindrance, won't I Mr. Thomas?

No, I have no need for you anymore. From here I go alone. Your weak, you'll only slow me down in my purification of the world. You are beneath me now Mr. Thomas, I am a god.

[Exit MASTER]

ACT I, SCENE VI

[Enter the MASTER frantically, screaming in fear]

Mr. Thomas! Mr. Thomas! Come quickly! They're coming Mr. Thomas! They're coming! The Police!

Mr. Thomas! I'm sorry Mr. Thomas! I was wrong, I need you!

Mr. Thomas! Oh thank heavens!

What? Oh yes, Well, I was walking the streets and I saw this man stealing a candy bar from the grocery store, so I followed him outside and bumped into him! He must have seen me following him Mr. Thomas, I don't know, but when he felt the deadly sting of death he yelled and made a scene!

"Murderer!" He cried!

MASTER (cont'd)

"Devil!" he said! "Get him! Get Him! Help I've been attacked!"

Oh it was awful Mr. Thomas! The policed gave chase! That awful Sgt. O'Connell led them -

You! You! This is your fault Mr. Thomas! You dragged me into this awful mess! Oh what do I do!

[Banging and muffled shouting from within]

POLICE [From within]

Open up! This is the Police! You're under arrest!

MASTER [shrieking]

Mr. Thomas! They're here! They're at my door! What do I do!

What?! Yes, Go on... Yes, yes! Your right! I'm a God! I am the Master of Life and Death! Why am I cowering? I know no fear! *I* am the Law!

You'll never take me Sgt. O'Connell! I am embodiment the Fates themselves! Only I decide when I die! I hold the "Abhorred Shears"<sup>1</sup> you see?! You have no power here you fool! I decide when we *all* die!

POLICE [From within]

Open up! There's no escape! It's to the gallows with you!

MASTER

[The MASTER drinks a full vial of Poison]

Weren't you listening sir?! I decide not you! You'll never catch the Lord of Death! I will return and rid the rest of the world of the wicked for I am the right hand of the Lord! No! *I am* the Lord and I shall rise agai-

[The MASTER clutched his chest and dies in a violent seizure]

[Fade to Black]

END

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<sup>1</sup> A reference to Atropos; one of the Fates in Greek mythology responsible for cutting the thread of life.

