

(LYNCROFT releases FRANK and the room fills with strobing lights. The screams grow louder. When the strobe effect is over, lights return to normal and LYNCROFT is gone.)

FRANK: Jesus Christ.

(Lights fade.)

Scene 3

FRANK: (V O) And so I went back to my office. Truth is, I ran there. Don't get me wrong; it's hard to rattle my cage, but everything about Lyncroft was designed for rattling. The fact that Bernie didn't have any dirt on him...it shoulda made Lyncroft seem more innocent. I don't know why, but it just made me more worried about him. So yeah, back in the office. I lit me up the last of Desiree's cigarettes and started going through the black book. I felt kind funny in my head, so I closed my eyes for a second. I did not like what I saw when I opened 'em.

(FRANK awakens in his chair, staring at at WALTER dressed as the Cloak.)

FRANK: Ah, for Christ's sake. What're you...? (He gets up, then immediately starts to wobble.) Oh...oh god...

WALTER: Feeling poorly?

FRANK: ...what'd you...do to me...?

WALTER: This.

(WALTER grabs him and empties a vial into his mouth. He closes FRANK's mouth. FRANK struggles, then swallows it.)

FRANK: What the hell was that?

WALTER: Anti-toxin.

FRANK: What the what?

WALTER: An antidote.

FRANK: I was poisoned?

WALTER: Yes.

FRANK: The hell you say. I...I...uh-oh...

(FRANK rushes to the bathroom and vomits.)

WALTER: Don't fight it, Mr Ellery. Your body is purging itself of a very rare and deadly venom.

FRANK: Wonderful. (He vomits again.)

WALTER: It may take a while.

FRANK: I hate you. (He vomits again.)

WALTER: I got here perhaps half an hour ago. You were barely breathing, and your lips had turned blue. What do you remember?

(FRANK walks out of the bathroom.)

FRANK: I was visiting Rayburn at the hospital. I got back and...actually, I was feeling kinda funny before I fell asleep.

WALTER: Based on your symptoms and the odd citric scent on your mouth, I believe you were dosed with aconite.

FRANK: Wait. How close were you to my mouth?

WALTER: Also known as The Queen of Poisons or Devil's Helmet, it is an Asian flower of extreme toxicity. Had I not administered the remedy when I did, you would most likely be dead now.

FRANK: What the hell are you talking about?

WALTER: Isn't it obvious? Someone tried to kill you. Have you ingested anything strange in the last few hours?

FRANK: No. I've been runnin' on cheap scotch and cigarettes for... (Beat. He goes to the ashtray.) Desiree.

WALTER: St Clair?

FRANK: No, the Queen of Sweden. She left her cigarettes here. I smoked one right before I passed out.

WALTER: What was the Queen of Sweden doing here?

FRANK: Desiree St Clair, you moron!

WALTER: Oh. That makes more sense.

FRANK: We got in a fight.

WALTER: Hardly a reason to poison someone.

FRANK: I think she knows I'm close.

(WALTER removes the cigarette butt.)

WALTER: ...not much here. I'll have to examine it at my lab...

FRANK: This proves it. I got the answers now. I just gotta put 'em in the right order.

WALTER: You know who killed Mr Wolcott?

FRANK: Not yet, but soon. It's all in the little black book. *(Beat)* Where's the book?

WALTER: Bernie's book? You have Bernie's book?

FRANK: It was right there when I went to sleep.

WALTER: Dammit! She must have crept in after the aconite had taken effect and stolen the book! She could be anywhere by now! Damn you, Desiree St Clair! You win this round, but don't get comfortable. The Cloak doesn't call off the hunt that easily!

(Beat)

FRANK: Gimme the book, Walter.

WALTER: I don't have the book. And I'm not Walter!

FRANK: I know you think you're protecting yourself, but I already read it. Hiding it is just gonna make it harder for me to put this all together.

WALTER: Then...then you know my dread secret.

FRANK: Yep.

WALTER: You know that The Cloak is in all reality... *(He removes his cloak.)* ...Walter Kingston-Smith.

(Beat)

FRANK: But how?

WALTER: That question has kept the police of this city up at night. By day, I'm a wealthy man about town. But when the sun sets, I prowl the streets providing justice for those who need it most.

FRANK: And Bernie was using this to queer the deal with C B S, wasn't he?

WALTER: Yes. Somehow he was able to see through my disguise.

FRANK: Mm-hmm.

WALTER: He threatened to expose my double-life if I didn't cut him in on the radio-show profits. Seventy-five percent for him, thirty-five percent for me.

FRANK: That's some deal.

WALTER: Yes. The fiend had me by the shorthairs and he knew it! *(Beat)* But that doesn't mean I killed him.

FRANK: Here's what I'm wondering. What if you came in here, gave me some ipecac and tried to get me to think I was poisoned? You know, to point the blame at someone else.

WALTER: I would never do that.

FRANK: Most people wouldn't run around in a cape, but here you are.

WALTER: Believe what you want to, detective. I'm the one who saved your life.

FRANK: Yeah? Why?

WALTER: I hated Bernard Wolcott, I admit. But I hate crime even more. Whatever sins he committed, they were for a court to decide, not some common murderer. *(Beat)* I've been following you, Mr Ellery, because I believe I cannot solve this case on my own. Do you think you can?

FRANK: I'm getting there.

WALTER: The longer you take, the colder the trail goes. If we work together...

FRANK: Nope.

WALTER: ...we can...will you let me finish?

FRANK: I don't have partners.

WALTER: Let me put it this way. I have access to a great deal of wealth. And a pretty keen crime lab. You have... *(He gestures to the office.)*

FRANK: It's a lot nicer when it's clean.

WALTER: I'm certain. *(He tosses him the book.)* You're onto something with this. Keep it. Learn what you can from it.

FRANK: What're you gonna do?

WALTER: I have informants. I'm going to keep tabs on the other suspects. *(He offers his hand.)*

FRANK: I still think you coulda done it.

WALTER: I'm going to prove you wrong.

(FRANK shakes WALTER's hand.)

WALTER: And here I thought you might spit in it. *(He dons his cloak and runs to the window. He throws it open.)*

FRANK: What are you doing? The door is right...

WALTER: The night calls to me! *(He jumps out the window.)*

FRANK: ...there. *(Beat)* Moron.