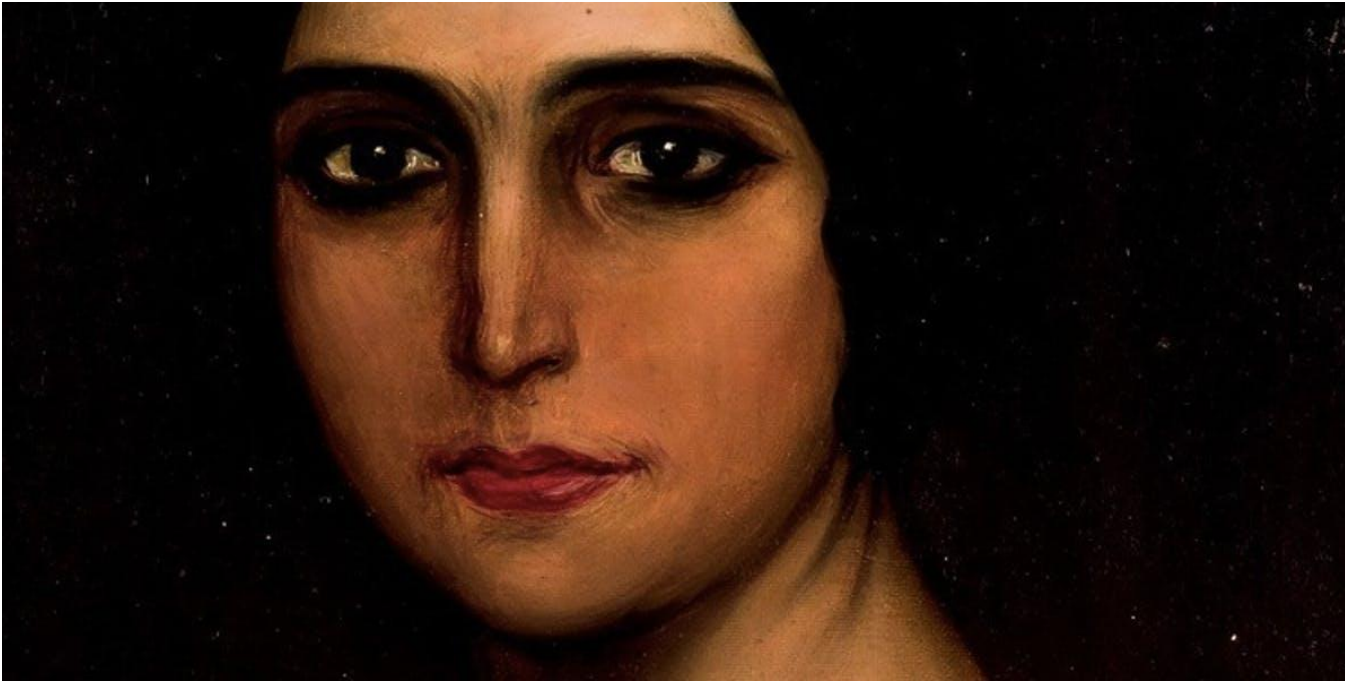


Murdering Mafalda

A comedy thriller



By Elizabeth King

Cast of Characters

1830's

Mafalda Gonzales

Retired ballerina

Boris Petipa

Narcissist and Entrepreneur

Carlotta

Professional Ballerina

Dolores

Old friend of Petipa family

1920's

Winifred Petipa

Daughter of Boris and Carlotta

Edgar Petipa

Boris's grandson

Harriet Petipa

Edgar's sister

Anfisa Selyavina

Bolshoi Ballerina from Moscow

Chester

Winifred's adopted nephew

Salvatore

Butler

Honey

House Keeper

The Immortals

Amalia Amoralis

A mischievous Mother of Nature

Elka

Amalia's first in Command

Beshlie

Amalia's new apprentice

Sid Livid

Satan

The Central upstage and downstage area is an outdoor terrace split into upper and ground level surfaces - upstage and downstage respectively. Up SR is a marquee tent entrance bordering the SR terrace perimeter. A long buffet table is set vertically on upper level terrace SR. Bushes and the hidden back entrance to the Petipa's Mansion house are far mid/down SL

A throne style chair is set on the upper terrace off centre towards upstage left and flanked by a chair stage left and a couple of simple stools both left and right. A bench is horizontally set upstage on the upper level terrace between the buffet table and the seating beside the throne. DSR on the ground level terrace is another round garden table and chair.

Prologue

1920's Madrid

Mafalda's offspring are Marius and Francesca. Their biological father fled and left Mafalda alone with her children. She remarried Boris Petipa who stood in as great husband, patriarch and saviour.

Mafalda has a permanent limp. Her days of dancing are over due to a serious ankle injury. Had Boris not dissuaded her she would have moved to Moscow to study Stanislavsky. Now, she desperately seeks work as a tragic actress.

Boris and Mafalda are throwing a party at their beautiful mansion house. Upbeat Spanish guitar music wafts from a warmly lit marquee tent where Boris has been taking far too much of an interest in Carlotta - a young ballerina with a promising dance career.

Within the tent and not visible to the audience, Boris and Carlotta are discussing a new production project : 'La Bayadere' - with Boris as Director and Carlotta in the leading role.

Mafalda lurks low, weeping behind the bushes SL, trying to regain composure. She rises up to look in the direction of the Marquee entrance. A Party bubbles audibly from within.

Mafalda suddenly ducks back down as Boris appears from the Mansion back entrance far SL, champagne bottles in hand. He is overly high spirited and beams with satisfaction. He crosses the terrace and big cheers erupt as he re enters the tent.

Mafalda stumbles out of the bushes with head in hands. She is beside herself. Slowly and unintentionally she builds to an agonised and deafening scream of frustration. The party dumbs down immediately.

Heads quickly appear at the tent entrance. Boris pushes past them. Undecided, he stops and hesitates upstage of Mafalda.

Staring at Mafalda he addresses the guests

Boris Settle down. It's fine .. show's over people, show's over. Relax everyone. All under control

The guests reluctantly withdraw. Party noise picks up again and low level guitar music resumes. Boris darts a look behind him at the remaining party members who quickly withdraw.

Mafalda stumbles to a chair near a garden table on the lower level terrace downstage right. She starts fitting and pulls at her hair, moaning at the table as if possessed. She is clearly mentally unstable.

Boris Mafalda ..

Maf *(heavy Spanish accent) No ! (she whispers and mumbles in Latin)*

Boris *(sinister low tones)* Witchcraft ...

Maf How *dare* you ..

He changes to a bizarrely brighter party persona

Boris *Masha* my dear ! Is this some kind of performance or is that Chekhovian garbage you're wearing just another one of your dark and twisted ideas ?

He starts to applaud her

Maf Shut up Boris.. Shut UP ! I *am* in mourning for my life and you know it

Boris Black Mafalda ? This is supposed to be a warm and joyous affair. Could any such dysfunctional egocentricity necessitate the determination to stand out and be pitied at a party celebration actually being hosted by oneself ?

Maf Fool

Boris is amused and saunters to the long table on the upper terrace for nibbles

Maf These past six months you've become disgusting. Puffed out like some contemptible peacock. Bigger better, the best !

Weakening in despair

God help me and what am I now ? Compared to who I was ? Young.. ambitious I was heading for the Imperial Ballet ..

Boris tamps her down with a huge guffaw

Maf And you couldn't stand it !

Boris Oh please ! The Little Humpbacked Horse? That puddle of a ballet meant nothing ..

Maf *(jumping in)* What about *Jocko the Ape of Brazil* ? A small mountain of crap ! I didn't have the heart to communicate any real response for fear of shattering those delicate rosy pink spectacles.

Boris struggles to feign amusement

Maf *La Jolie Bordelaise* ! Pah ! How come that ballet had the same choreography as *Grizette de Bordeaux* ? Heh ? You tell me ! It was not *your* work. It was the artistry of the dancers ... and then you just kept on boring the audiences to tears; churning out the same old *plagiarised* routines

Mafalda has touched a nerve

Boris I'm warning you Mafalda

She finds her footing

Maf So ! You come here. But ! Montessu is still praised as the best dancer in the city of Madrid

She quotes a renowned critique

“Montessu ! .. accomplishing what Petipa lacks in Classical dance .. Monsieur Petipa's dancing is rather weak - it is true. But his bearing is good. He mimes and gestures well”

She laughs in mirthlessly

You wouldn't last one minute in a Bull fight. The great toreador clown with two left feet

Boris moves towards her by way of a threat. Mafalda is not intimidated ...

You overwork the dancers just as you overworked me. It is exploitation. Making

them feel so perilously close to a personal sense of failure. Choreographer ? You are an impresario ! You know nothing of art or passion. You move from one thing to the next with no concern for anyone but *yourself* !

Mafalda's uncharacteristic barking causes her to choke.

Boris (*seriously losing patience*) What's ails you Mafalda ? Could it be the harmless interactions between myself and the comparatively feminine and gracious Carlotta who had the decency to support our social gathering this evening ?

Maf Decency and support ?!

She spits at his feet

Making merry in that fantasy candle lit tent with a young ballerina half your age .. who is quite prepared to drop everything for a man in possession of less than *half* her talent ! *La Bayadere* ? How long have you two lunatics been planning this ballet erotica nonsense ?

Her despair returns

I was going to Moscow for actor training. And *you* .. you were afraid

Boris Oh ! See how the actress lives out her fantasy tragedy ! What are you going to do next *Medea* ? Kill your children ?

Mafalda launches herself at Boris. They fight. Boris covers Mafalda's mouth and gradually amidst the struggle he gains physical dominance and control. Slowly by degrees Mafalda begins to suffocate which Boris sees through to her death. He lowers her back into the throne. Reality inevitably dawns and recognising the deed he flees towards the house.

Carlotta emerges from the tent, calling for Boris. She sees Mafalda askew in the chair and approaches. She feels her forehead.. Others appear amidst her

exclamation of horror and hysteria erupts. An elderly friend of Boris's family runs towards the house screaming for Boris !

Stage action is suspended. All exit.

Mafalda exits Upstage Left

Scene 1

One hundred years later in early 1920's Madrid

Boris and Carlotta's widowed daughter - Winifred, has inherited Boris and Mafalda's mansion from her Great Aunt (Boris's sister). Winifred lives with her son and daughter - Edgar and Harriet and her nephew Chester. The terrace, a yellowing marquee tent and garden furniture remain as they were in Boris and Mafalda's day

Elka and Beshlie are dormant and wound around trees that neighbour the seated audience.

Actors should walk in neutral from behind the audience and take up their positions for the following frozen tableaux :

Salvatore behind the long buffet table pouring from a ladle.

Honey is busying herself with plates of food.

Anfisa and Harriet are upstage R having emerged from the party tent. Harriet is holding Anfisa's hand who shyly trails behind her.

Winifred is on the throne and looking round expectantly at Harriet.

Chester is fetching wine at the buffet and looks over his shoulder at Winifred.

Edgar is standing in front of his chair (SL of the throne) having quickly risen to greet Anfisa.

1920's jazz music wafts from the mouth of the tent

Win Well greetings and welcome my dear girl ! Salva ? Open the Chianti 1917

Winifred moves over to Harriet. Harriet makes space for her mother to greet Anfisa.

Harriet sits on the end of the bench. Chester joins Harriet but remains standing

Win : *(to Anfisa)* Come and take a seat my dear. Harriet has told us all so much about you

Anfisa opens her mouth to speak

Oh Petal ! You must be exhausted my dear. When did you arrive from Moscow ? It must feel decidedly warmer here. We're sitting out on the terrace for a while. It gets so hot in the marquee

Anfisa tries to speak for a second time

Chester ! Do fetch Anfisa a glass of wine ! You must be exhausted my dear...

Edg *(joking to dispel embarrassment)* Mother ! You are repeating yourself ..

Win Oh am I ?

Feeble laughter. Winnie sits Anfisa in the throne and Edgar sits. Winnie goes to get the wine from Chester. She fusses disapprovingly over a dirty glass and Salva provides another for a refill. Honey is stressed

Edgar and Anfisa sit awkwardly.

Win Anfisa my dear - it is, without exception, our greatest pleasure to provide you with accommodation for this leg of your tour. I can assure you most sincerely of the highly cultured audiences here in Madrid. Intelligent *appreciative* people who - moreover, are receptive to the style, skill and performance precision of your standard and calibre.

Hat Anfisa has recently enjoyed exceptional newspaper reviews for dancing at the Bolshoi ballet .. You know, I wouldn't mind having some ballet lessons myself

Win Oh Harriet ! Darling ... you're far too gangly for the elegant and gracious corporeal craft befitting the ballet ! There are limits as to what a classical training can do for the overly ambitious amateur ..are there not Anfisa ?

Anf (*feeling Harriet's pain*) Ah well .. That is something I feel I still know so very little about ...

Edg Oh I find that hard to believe

Feeble laughter ensues. Winifred sweeps over the terrace and literally lands Anfisa's wine into her hand. Anfisa appears to be strained

Win Honey Bee ! Are those cheeky little nibbles ready ?

Hon Fresh out the oven Miss

Winifred waddles back over to the buffet so as to give Edgar a moment's opportunity with Anfisa

Chester sidles over from the bench to the little stool beside Anfisa. Envy begins to rise in Harriet

Ches Anfisa my dearest ! Do tell us about some of your experiences in Moscow. We all love the theatre don't we Winnie darling !

Win Chester loves to write ! He is a true poet. Quite the tragic kind. He's inches away from a groundbreaking debut !

Chester looks round at Winifred in astonishment

Anf Oh really ? How wonderful. I do love the weight and beauty of tragedy. One's repertoire as the tragic actress is so thoroughly tested .. Her vocal range .. an intonation and physicality that combine to channel the embodiment of a worn and withered soul

Ches Oh Good Lord !

Win Edgar ! Tell Anfisa all about *your* ambitions darling

Anf Oh Edgar - Yes ! Harriet tells me you also like to dance? Is your training heavily laid by way of a view towards conserving classical tradition ?

Edg Err ..

Ches Edgar's always doubting himself Anfisa. He needs a bit of a boosting from time to time, *if* you know what I mean ?

Win Chester !

Chester springs out of his chair and returns to sit by Harriet on the bench

Elka enters from upstage Left. Her striking supernatural appearance clearly separates her from the sphere of human reality. She sneaks onto the terrace into the space inhabited by Winifred

Anf Oh it's alright .. *(she looks affectionately at Edgar)* As a young woman with strong maternal instincts, I find such caution and vulnerability unquestionably endearing in a man

Edg My confidence comes and goes .. It's perfectly dreadful

Anf It is something that all performing artists have to endure.

Edg I just struggle so with the sheer physical graft of the training. It's truly unrelenting

Anfisa swoons

Win He gets it from Boris, Anfisa. My father. The Petipa family are insufferable perfectionists. Edgar's grandfather was the chief exponent in our family.

Edg He *was* the career minded sort of chap apparently

Anf *(struggling for words)* Ahh !

Elka claps her hands twice. The entire company freeze

Elka is next to Winifred at the buffet table. Elka reaches into her throat and produces something resembling a small sweetie

She buzzes at it, tosses it into the air and claps twice to restart the action. She slips away unnoticed

Winifred starts amidst buzzing sounds and frantically swipes at the bee intruder

Edg Mother ! You're making it angry ..

Hat *(narrowing her eyes)* Hmm , I know how it feels

The bee circles over to Anfisa who is wafting in a panic

Drinks fall over and the romantic spell between Edgar and Anfisa is diffused

From far USL, Sid Livid storms in and brings his cane down onto the terrace with an exasperated cry and freezes the action.

Amalia appears from a tree (DSR) near the audience. She is an extraordinary supernatural sight of dignity and composure. Elka reappears from the same previous entrance and Beshlie hovers near Amalia.

Sid (*furious*) What in Hell Fire's name was that ? Some sort of slapstick comedy act ? Getting little Russian dolly dancer in a fluster and a flap over a BEE ? Please enlighten me ! Is our burning hatred of Winifred not mutual ? You are wasting precious time ..

Ama : (*striding onto the terrace*) I don't deny it. Winnie is a pain in the arse. But do you mind if we don't *dive* in head first ?

Elka and Beshlie cover their ears. Clearly this is a regular type of confrontation

Sid A little bee upsetting the drinks ? If anything Edgar looked quite cute throughout the entire event. Blushing .. apologising. Wouldn't surprise me if Anfisa is plump in love with him already ... Mafalda shall be delighted

Ama (*Angry*) Oh don't be so ridiculous ! Mafalda has already intimated that she wants this done in gradual degrees

Sid NOT so. Mafalda has harassed me repeatedly in my office this week. She has wonderful *evil* ideas and this .. *bee* fiasco, doesn't even faintly resemble unpleasantness. It's an embarrassment. The whole incentive here is to ruin Edgar, ruin Winifred and destroy Boris's precious legacy. Why are you so intimidated ? Tell me. I cannot wait to hear. How could Mafalda possibly lack justification in this her most pressing project of death and destruction ?

Sid's screams have temporarily suspended the proceedings with an ice cold silence. Elka and Beshlie are paralysed. Amalia however - is not. She nods to Beshlie who then proceeds to 'risk her life' by putting the wine glass back onto the table and generally straighten things out.

Elka resets Winnie to standing position at the long table just before the bee was introduced. Sid watches through narrowed eyes

Ama *(Hand to head sighing impatiently)* Could we just try something else ?

Sid smoulders in cynical dread and moves to an area behind the audience

Ready girls ?

Elka and Beshlie nod with passionate compliance. They seem to have read

Amalia's mind. The female immortals scatter

A much calmer and tinkly atmosphere of a pleasant evening reactivates and flows

Edg *(as if from a deja vu)* Ooh ..

Anf Are you alright ?

Edg Yes ! Yes *(see's his drink replenished and back in his hand again)*
Absolutely fine

He seems momentarily disoriented and then blames the drink

Strong stuff eh ?!

Anf *(Smiling and enrapt)* It is delicious ...

Animated, high spirited small talk begins to soar via character improv- Anfisa and Edgar continue to enjoy each other's company by whispering in each other's ears. Anfisa rises from her chair to get some nibbles and invites Edgar to sit on the Throne .. Edgar gestures to his knee .. Anfisa teases him

Win Harriet ! Have you told Anfisa about the age and history of the house ?

Hat *(sarcastically)* I'm not sure if it would interest her mother.

Ches Oh go on.. I love it. The Mafalda thing. You start Winnie !

Win Oh Lord have mercy upon us ! The great and powerful Mafalda ...

Winnie laughs by way of undermining Mafalda's memory

Amalia suddenly strides into centre stage and claps her hands ... All party guests gasp and look at Amalia.

They are suspended once again in a frozen Tableaux of facial and gestural incredulity. Winifred is particularly shocked and freezes with a face of utter disbelief that accentuates her already unfortunate appearance

Ama *(calling out to Sid)* Have you no patience ? What is it now ?

Sid storms on from the aisle between the audience. He heads for the throne and motions to Edgar, instructing Elka to remove him

Sid Get him off of here will you .. ? Hurry up !

Through means of hypnosis Elka makes Edgar rise. Beshlie is playfully suggesting that they put Edgar in a feminine position on Chester's lap

Moments later Mafalda appears eerily in the upstage corner, SL.

She looks pained and stone cold - eyes staring straight ahead. Her energy and demeanour are in utter contrast with the frothy comedy generated by the Immortals

Sid sits on the throne, jerkily writhing and making weird head movements in a ridiculous show of interpreting supernatural vibrations

*Amalia, Beshlie and Elka squabble over plans for the next reactivation
Amalia looks baffled. Quick fire dialogue between them ensues*

Elka What if Edgar were to pass wind ?

Ama Oh no ! There's no guarantee Anfisa would notice !

Besh Are you kidding me ? Edgar farts like a fog horn

Ama It's not powerful enough

Besh It'd put me off !

Elka Foul Breath ?

Ama Oh I don't know - that's a step down isn't it ?

Besh What if he mistakenly landed one of his chair legs on Anfisa's toe ?

Elk/Ama *(Encouraged)* Ooooooh !

Sid Shut up you idiots ! I'm getting Mafalda and I can't hear a word !

Elk Oh !

Elka and Beshlie hurry over to Sid. Mafalda's head turns slowly and demonically in the direction of Satan

Sid *(going into ecstasy)* Mmm Aha ? Mmmm ... !

He starts squirming with delight

Elk *(darting a look at Amalia)* Annoying

Ama Oh it's all an act. Don't be fooled

Amalia notices all the frozen party members still staring at her in shock

Oh sort this out Beshlie please

Elka rubs her hands over each head enabling Beshlie to avert their heads away from Amalia. Winifred's head is particularly stiff

Sid suddenly becomes very still and calm and looks at Amalia - his eyes burning

Ama Well ?

Sid Praise the flames of Hell fire Mafalda is mad. Full of it .. Possessed

Ama Yes ! And so, you don't need to encourage her Sid. I'm trying to sort this out with minimum collateral damage. Two deaths do not make a right

Besh It's two wrongs ..

All breathe in deeply for sustenance

Elka goes over to help Beshlie with Winifred's head

Elk *(indicating Winifred)* She's starting to calcify

Ama They're seizing up ! We've gone way over the two minute mark ... Come on. Make up your mind Sid !

Sid *(In Amalia's face)* Calcification is good ! It raises the toxins and brings out the worst in our game board pieces

Amalia looks at Sid with increasing frustration

Sid *(desperate contemplation)* So. Harriet idolises Chester. Chester is all out attracted to Anfisa and Edgar's on a winning streak. Anfisa's getting baggy at the seams. Chester is a blithering idiot and Edgar is monstrously overrated

Besh *(heightened confusion)* Who's Edgar ?

Sid *(Sid takes in Beshlie for one astonished moment and then blows a fuse)* I can't work like this

Ama Beshlie ! Edgar is Boris Petipa's grandchild and Mafalda despises him

Besh Why ?

Sid Oh for crying out loud

Ama Beshlie ? Can you not recall anything of what I relayed to you before we took on this project ?

Beshlie looks completely baffled

Ama *Boriss* Beshlie. The brute who drank three bottles of champagne and strangled his unsuspecting wife to death ?

Besh Ah ! Mafalda ?

Sid's hands cover his face. He watches Beshlie through his fingers as if they were prison bars

Elka And ... It is Anfisa's arrival and her burgeoning ballet career that has provoked Mafalda's recent campaign. Let's be real

Amalia gestures to Elka as if to say ... 'Don't confuse Beshlie further !'

Elka smells Winifred and her hands in disgust. She looks mystified ..

Elka Cheap perfume ?! She doesn't smell anything anywhere near as good as you

Ama Wood Sage and Sea Salt ..

Sid explodes back into action

Sid Enough ! It's my round so don't interfere. I'm going Mafalda's way This is your call Beshlie. You'll fall in with it soon enough

Ama (*suspicious*). Now take it easy Sid. (*gently*) Beshlie ? Do you know what you're doing ?

Beshlie (*defensively*) Of course I do !

Sid (*mimicking Beshlie's voice*) Of course I do ! Stand by Beshlie 3- 2- 1

Sid points at Beshlie who is developing a noticeably renewed determination. Sid slopes off with increasing confidence.

The scene kicks in at the previous point of it's arrest

Win Oh Lord have mercy upon us ! The great and powerful Mafalda ...

Chester and Edgar burst out with a great Ahhh ! as they realise each others' compromised position. Edgar moves from Chester's lap and scrambles back to his original spot

Ches (*feigning composure*) I heard that Marius was spotted recently in Moscow

Hat Oh ! Is that where Francesca lives now ?

Win No darling. She died

Anf And who are these people ?

Hat Mafalda's children ...*(To her mother)* How ? Why did she die ?

Edg Hat ! Francesca contracted Tuberculosis

Hat Did she die in the hospital ?

Anfisa begins to look alarmed

Anf Is this the daughter of the Mafalda who died here in this house ?

Hat Yes ! And Mafalda died in that very chair ! She was murdered

Chester and Hat unite in giggles

Win Harriet ! How dare you ?! Anfisa. Ignore Harriet and her fantasies. It is unfortunate that such a morbid and myopic ignorance should trespass upon the fine history and reputation of the Petipa family

She glares at Harriet

Win *(to Anfisa)* My father and Mafalda were having a terrible argument. It is now commonly known and understood that Boris - out of sheer frustration, shook Mafalda rather too aggressively one evening during a party - and she simply couldn't withstand it

Edg She was terribly weak apparently

Anf Shook her ?

Win Oh briefly ! She refused to eat ! White as a sheet and the bitterest pill. Constantly berating and bemoaning everything Boris tried to do to secure a normal happy married life

Anf Oh I see .. But still

Win Seven long years we had to wait before we could move into the old mansion .. Isn't she lovely ?

Anf Indeed

Win We inherited the grounds of this fine castle when my Great Aunt - Boris's sister, finally passed away. We weren't able to move into the property until she was gone. She was a bit of a grumpy old crow

Hat She used to complain of scary unexplainable occurrences and chilling sightings of ghosts

Beshlie rushes on and claps twice

Ama *(from offside)* I'm warning you Sid !

Sid's laughter can be heard from behind the bushes

Beshlie anoints Winifred's drink with some lethal substance She claps twice again

Winifred downs the entire drink. She becomes instantly drunk, and starts to snort. She pushes Anfisa with way too much force

Win Do you want to hear a joke .. ?

Edg *(horrified)* **Mother !**

Chester *(increasing concern)* Winnie dearest .. ! What about those ghost stories ?!

Winifred leans into Anfisa's face

Win What do you get ...

Edg Mother !

Win *(like an old fishwife)* Shuddup ! What do you get ? If you cross a little ballerina in a snow white tutu ... peering over the edge of a filthy old, foul smelling, disease ridden, pig sty .. *(she hiccoughs)*

Edg *(despairing)* MOTHER ! Oh

Win Approximately 20 metres deep in ...

Edg *(helplessly)* .. Shit !

Win *(elated surprise)* Yes !

Edg Mother ! You're drunk !

Win The Dance of the Dirty Piglet !

Winifred is beside herself with laughter and barely able to form her words

Or ... Or ...

Edg Stop it Mother !

Win Shitsy Tits in the Oink Oink Overture

Winifred collapses .. Edgar is in shock. Anfisa grabs hold of him

Anf Don't worry Edgar, really ! My father was a *screaming* alcoholic. He would say the direst of things !

Edg *(smiling with irrepressible relief)* Oh ! Really ?

Together they try to raise Winifred back into her seat

Sid *(enraged)* **What ?!!**

Edgar and Anfisa look towards the back of the theatre startled. They are frozen by Sid who storms on to the terrace

Sid Cancel ! Erase.. ! *(He takes a moment)* Hells Bells we'll have to start this evening again .. tomorrow

Ama *(satisfied at his failure)* Just remember Sid. Every time we erase, human spirits and passion erode. We need to strike while the iron is hot

Sid It was perfectly hot my dear and YOU flipping missed it entirely !

Ama Oh *did* I ? Turns out .. the drunken, broken down Winifred is just another reason for Anfisa and Edgar to discover ever more things in common !

Elka *(reenacting Anfisa's voice)* Oh ! My father was a screaming alcoholic too

Amalia and Elka laugh heartily. Beshlie looks lost ..

Sid begins pacing and muttering to himself in increasing frustration

Sid Anfisa ..

He paces some more and then with sudden inspiration ...

Chester

He pauses again

(Regaining his footing) Mafalda tells me that in five years from now Chester is going to screw up everything as a writer and wind up babbling on street corners with a sign around his neck ..

Ama What ? *(failing to see the rationale)* Oh alright then ! Let's pair off Anfisa with Chester ! All good things come to those who

Sid Do *not* talk to me of good things Amalia .. It stops up my creativity

Ama Refresh and Remix !

Music surges and increases in volume. Anfisa and the Petipah family disperse and move in and out of each other robotically .. This is encouraged by the Immortals who weave in and out of them, seeming to enjoy the process enormously

Gradually the bewitched automatons gravitate to their positions from the top of Scene 2. They then sink into states of sleep. The Immortals then fall asleep amongst them

Scene II

Elka wakes first and notices Sid

Sid is talking in his sleep muttering words like "Horrible" intermittently grunting and giggling like a child

Elka looks at the audience. She then dives on Amalia to wake her

No one else stirs - complete stillness surrounds her

Elk ‘Malia ! Amalia darling !

Amalia stirs

Amalia. I overheard Sid last night - I think Mafalda was disturbing his sleep .. He spoke of awful things .. Nasty unspeakable acts ... A sort of a murder mixed with an accident plan ? Or .. wait .. no ... maybe it was just murder

Ama That’s absolutely unacceptable. NO ! Way too extreme. We simply

will *not* be a part of such *filth*

Sid begins to stir

Elk (*to Amalia*) Be in good spirits. Don’t arouse any suspicion

Ama Sid ? Are you with us ? What’s on the agenda my sweet ?!!

Beshlie rouses as well. She is struggling to wake up. Sid is still in a fog

Ama Sid ? Can we get on with this please ? I’m running out of foundation serums for auras and orgasms and I’ve gardening to do

Sid There’s nothing to talk about

Ama Well. At least tell us what you have in mind ?

Sid snaps his fingers without replying to Amalia

Sid (*in mocking spell casting mode*) Dearest darling talented Harriet .. Be a good girl and get into your chariot

Harriet moves smoothly and swiftly to the long buffet table. The sleeping family members move back into their waking positions - Winnie having just fallen down.

Harriet takes up the Cake knife

Ama *(seeing Harriet's actions)* Not on my turf !

Sid Too late

Sid restarts the stage action

Anf (...) My father was a screaming alcoholic. He would say the direst of things !

Edg Oh Really ?

Honey and Salva are seen to be fussing around Winifred who is now entirely sober. She is telling them to leave her alone

Win Chester ? Are there any olive and caviar canapés left ?

Harriet starts to cut the cake and crams a slice of creamy sponge into her mouth. She then moves slowly and swiftly towards Anfisa with the cake knife in her hand. She goes unnoticed

Ches Errr *(Stuffing the last few into his mouth)* .. err .. no ! Honey Bee my dearest ? Is there the faintest chance that you could rustle up some more ?

Harriet raises the knife slowly. Simultaneously Anfisa rises quickly from her chair

Anf Oh Honey ! Bless you ! Let me come to the kitchen and give you a hand. I adore fine cuisine and food preparation .. I'd love to help

Anfisa's sudden action of kindness collides with Sid's spell. Harriet resumes consciousness and drops the knife. She follows Anfisa and Honey into the kitchen

Winifred rejoins the party in the tent, calling Salva to change the record

Chester sinks into the throne and Edgar goes over to the buffet table

Sid and Amalia sweep onto the stage

Amalia freezes the action

Elka and Beshlie are in tow

Chester and Edgar remain motionless

Sid angrily picks up the knife that Harriet has just dropped

He points it at Amalia

Sid Who is doing this ?

Ama Nobody ! We had nothing whatsoever to do with it !

Elka *(punching the air)* Goal !

Ama Anfisa is a good natured girl who wants to help Honey out in the kitchen. *(using football results intonation)* Lucky for Honey - Unlucky for you

Sid *(wailing)* I need to think Goddammit !

He slams the knife down onto the long table

Don't touch this ! I'll be back momentarily

He exits

Amalia shrugs her shoulders

She suddenly becomes intrigued by Edgar and Chester's situation in being alone with one another

She snaps her fingers to activate them and eavesdrop for a short period

Chester smiles, and settles into the throne

His glass is empty. Edgar picks up the bottle from the long table. Both their demeanours are suddenly changed as if facades have been dropped.

Edg Join me ?

Chester grabs his glass

Ches Why not ?

He goes over to Edgar. Edgar passes him the bottle, moves upstage of Chester with his full glass and begins to quaff the wine and toss nuts into his mouth

Chester pours himself a hearty glass

Ches Been down to the Café de Chinitas yet ?

Edg No-one comes to Madrid without visiting that sweet little nest of Spanish beauties

Ches It's a piece of cake Ed. Seriously. I know the guv'nor

Amalia, Elka and Beshlie are now moving eagerly into the space looking incredulous and hanging off every word of Edgar and Chester's secret exchange

Edg How so ?

Ches Those girls are from the hills ... They're wild ..! Completely unpredictable .. and they love the rich bourgeois bohemian .. Winnie's father Boris used to own those bars with the dance nights. Clubs made a fortune. That Mafalda bird thought Boris was training his arse off in a dance studio

They crack up laughing together

Edg Are these girls going to be working their stomping ground tonight ?

Edgar chuckles and nudges Chester

A bit of ... polka dot kitten ? *(mock Spanish accent)* With the sharp little teeth ?

Ches Oh for the Beauuuu - ti - ful Girls !

Edg *(mock Spanish accent)* polka dot dollies

Ches *(repeating the accent)* With the sharp little teeth !!

Edg And the really big ...

Edgar makes a vulgar gesture to indicate large breasts

The two men conjoin wildly in loud recreation

Amalia freezes the action and turns to Elka and Beshlie. They hold one anothers' gaze with burning twinkling eyes and warm knowing smiles.

Sid wanders in. He seems adrift and starts picking at the cake on the buffet. He sees the Edgar and Chester in suspension

Sid *(ignorant)* What's this ?

Ama You goofed on the last call .. Now it's my turn !

Amalia claps again

Ama Set the route and loop the loop !

Edg and Chester continue to repeat the last few lines of their conversation like a broken record on a loop. Their speech delivery and movements are an identical replica of the exact same banter from before

Ches Beauuuu - ti - ful Girls !

Edg Polka dot dollies

Ches With the sharp little teeth !

Edg And the really big ...

Chester and Edgar exclaim together again

This action sequence then instantly replays - over and over.

Sid is temporarily captivated by this looping skill that Amalia has demonstrated. The female immortals watch momentarily in disgust

*Amalia begins to explain the next steps of her plans to Elka and Beshlie
Sid sees this and turns on Amalia.*

Sid Do you dare to suggest that this is the way that we take Edgar down ?
Ooh ! Anfisa catches her fiancée being a naughty boy ! Come on ! Mafalda wants Edgar DEAD not defamed !

Ama No Sid. She does not. You do. Your playful appetite for violence followed by high drama for dessert is finally getting on my nerves ! These titillating homicidal acts ! One hundred years hence and they are none other than the same fate that befell Mafalda herself ! Now get your scrawny satanic behind off of this terrace or stay and watch the show

Suddenly Anfisa and Harriet appear in a stupor, exiting the marquee tent like remote controlled robots

Elka positions Anfisa lolling with a drink in hand on the throne

Beshlie positions Harriet behind the buffet table

Amalia and Sid sit on the bench.

Sid sulks and puts his head in his hands. Both Immortals are beyond Anfisa and Harriet's peripheral view. Beshlie and Elka dart out of sight.

Amalia relaunches the Loop with a clap. It repeats three times in rapid succession

Suddenly Edgar and Chester sense that they have company and stop ...

Warily turning, the men see Satan and Amalia and jump out of their skins

Anfisa gives a little cough

Immediately they jump again on seeing Anfisa and Harriet.

Edgar emits an involuntary cry. Harriet fakes a smile and Anfisa raises her glass to toast

Chester continually looks and re looks at the Immortals hoping he has had too much to drink. Edgar gawps at Anfisa. He is speechless

Anf *(ice cool)* It's amazing how eloquently the genes pass down from one generation to the next isn't it Harriet ?

Hat Quite so, quite so 'Fisa dear. Like grandfather like son ... *(she darts a look at her brother)* One can only presume ..

Anf This sudden and painful disenchantment leads me to the only conclusion I can draw

Edg *(looking completely at a loss)* Anfisa, my darling .. Can I get you a drink ?

Anf *(screaming)* STAY AWAY FROM ME !

Scene III

Sid's Office in a precinct of Hell. Set on the ground level terrace, the round garden table becomes Sid's work desk

A skull and other satanic accessories festoon the table amongst glass decanters of whiskey and ominous poisons

Mafalda and Boris have white faces and dark circles around their eyes.

They are clearly both walking dead and are in striking contrast to Sid's vivid and vibrant appearance

Sid Monsieur Petipa ! What an honour ! How absolutely wonderful to meet you ! Such fine work. The exemplary narcissist. A potency that one could only ever dream of encountering ! My dear Petipa ! What secrets lurk behind this magnificent craft ? Your inexplicable talent .. Eh ?!

Boris Thank you Satan Sir ... I am flattered and speechless.

Sid Oh call me Sid

He pours drinks for the two of them and strategically they survey one another

Sid I cannot sufficiently express my immeasurable joy in the light of this impulsive visit. Your delicious plan to take Winifred out is positively

entrepreneurial! I'd love nothing better than to puncture the overly fat inflated old hen who lives out pathetic fantasies through the inconsequential lives of her offspring ..

Boris Edgar ?! Oh no ! Edgar is multitalented. He just needs motivating. And this little chickie Anfisa, is firing up my grandson beyond all expectation

Sid (*reassuring Boris*) Indeed ! And Mafalda begins to falter. She is on the very verge of decommissioning me and so ... Let us decimate and destroy the old Winifred sack and let the happy couple live happily ever after on Winifred's blissful bags of money !

Sid pours them both a whisky

This ruse is divine I tell you. Exceptional ... It is my Gold .. And *you* are my treasure ...

Boris I really do appreciate your enthusiasm Sid ..

Enter Mafalda from upstage left

Oh look (*knocking his whiskey back*) its the devil's advocate ... trouble is I think she's gone a bit soft Mr Livid

Maf Get out of here now or I swear I will kill you

Boris I'm already dead my dear

Maf Do not presume

Sid and Boris start laughing viciously

Boris Still completely cuckoo aren't you my love ? Maybe I should try and *strangle* some sense into you ?

Maf (*Ignoring Boris*) Livid. I want to rethink my plans. I'm not so entirely enamoured with our recent strategy to wipe out Anfisa. She is a young girl with perfectly good intentions and she deserves better.

Sid : Mafalda ! My dear deceas-ed friend ! Where has all that fire and venom gone ? This is such a disappointment. Besides. I simply cannot work for the both of you. Clearly you are at loggerheads and Boris is comparatively forward thinking. His vision I feel is another diabolical opportunity to sharpen my teeth and add to my suppurating repertoire of foul play. And as you both know - eventually, life is about decisions. I simply *have* to make a choice.

Maf Vision ? Decisions ? I thought the whole thing was going perfectly for you Boris. Edgar seems to be on the home straight as far as I can see. Anfisa's recent madness and fury is a candle in the wind. Nothing that a cuddle and a kiss from Edgar won't cure. What ails you now you insufferable brat ?

Sid Why ! Winifred of course ! There's nothing like sudden death and a windfall for young couples like Edgar and his beautiful new bride. With a little cooperation from his dear, fat and dead Mama, the grand sum of an inheritance will surely make the ultimate wedding gift ?

Maf (*to Boris*) Winifred ?! Winnie ?! Your own daughter ?

Boris Oh .. she's always rubbed me up the wrong way ... you've both driven me mad over the years

Maf You are despicable Boris. Winifred might be a royal pain in the backside but she does not deserve anything as low down, dirty and cowardly as this. (*to Sid*) Anyway. Amalia is smarter than you Mr Livid ... And Anfisa might be smarter than you think ! You *will* fail

1920's Jazz violin music plays a at low level and fades in during Mafalda's last line . Boris and Sid laugh as she sweeps out of the space

Scene IV

During the last moments of Scene III, Scene IV actors move into their frozen tableaux positions on the upper terrace for the card game as follows :

Winnie moves to sit in Mafalda's throne - clearly frustrated by a game of cards that she is not winning

*Chester is to her left .. also frenziedly involved in the game
Honey is also joining in and is apparently doing rather well
Edgar is sat next to Honey looking at his cards surreptitiously*

Anfisa is sat on the bench reading a book. She is angled away from the rest of the company.

Harriet sits at the SL end of the bench. Salva is pouring wine into Harriet's glass

In amongst the frozen tableaux are the immortals who are in motion.

Elka and Beshlie who are sitting DSR on the steps and Amalia who is picking at food on the buffet table. They are waiting for Sid

Elka lets out a groan of frustration

Ama Elky darling stop complaining. Come and have a canape or a stick of celery. He'll be here any minute. We cannot start the thing without him

Besh But I thought we were trying an alternative method

Ama We are darling. Mafalda does not want to see anyone come to any harm anymore.

Besh So why .. ?

Amalia interrupts her

Ama We have to wait for Sid. The initial agreement was that this particular project would be collaborative and I never go back on my word. Anyway .. don't worry. Mafalda assures me that she has everything under control. She simply said that we only have to **be** here. Apparently she can only materialise in the presence of non-evil supernatural forces .. *You* Beshlie being the primary source ..

Besh *(smiling but not understanding)* Oh ...are we going to see Mafalda ?!

Suddenly there is the sound of jubilant and excited singing and and wicked laughter

Elka *(looking up)* Good grief

Sid is dancing his way towards the terrace .. He seems to be on a high

Sid Aha ! The evergreen herbalist harem of dollies with brains full of fennel and fluff ! Good Evening my sweets ! Why so glum ?! We've arrived at the *dazzling* denouement !!

Ama I think it's all rather unfortunate myself. But we are here to serve and avenge Mafalda

Sid Yes .. I only wish I could say the same my dear

Ama *(Rolling her eyes)* God HELP you Sid

Sid bursts into laughter

Sid Oh Satan's Wrath ! I can't believe you actually just said that !

More screams of laughter

Elka Err ...Livid .. don't you think we should be getting on with this ? Last time Winifred stiffened up to a near point of irreversible paralysis

Amalia and Sid face one another

Ama *(Breathing in deeply)* May the best man win

Sid Why thank you Amalia. I appreciate your support

They move to the upstage corners and turn.

They clap together twice and leave via upstage corners

Elka and Beshlie run towards areas beyond the audience and settle behind them

The tableaux reactivates

Harriet is confiding in Salva as to why Anfisa is so downcast

Win Oh damn and blast !

Honey chuckles

Ches I say Honey ! Quite the little Rummy player !

Win It's probably just a case of beginner's luck. Nothing more. She only got to play because Anfisa is *otherwise* disposed ..

Harriet moves over to the buffet table

Salva starts to attend to Anfisa who is now confiding in him. They seem to be forming a closer relationship

Honey lays another card; then Chester; Winnie looks all at sea and fairly helpless. Suddenly ..

Win Oh ! Wait a minute ! Just wait - a - minute !

She slams down a card with huge satisfaction

A pause as Chester searches his cards desperately

Chester immediately slaps a card down on top of it

Honey lays her card, without hesitation

They all exclaim in shock

Honey laughs and collects all the cards. She has clearly won the round

Winnie looks over at Anfisa with frustration and Chester starts squabbling with Honey as to who will reshuffle. He tries to grab the pack of cards from her .. Honey refuses him

Win Anfisa dearest ! Won't you come and play for just a little while !
Edgar's gone all quiet and broody. I hate it when he goes like this ...

Harriet is eating cake and staring vacantly at the card players

Anf (initially hesitating). Oh very well. Just one round. Although, I really haven't the faintest idea how to play

Edgar brightens and offers his stool
Anfisa ignores him and goes to sit by Chester

Winifred notices Harriet eating the cake

Win Harriet darling ! For God's sake stop eating all that cake ! This must be your third helping .. Is it not Salva ?

Salv I really would not care to comment Ms Winnie

Harriet makes a face at Winnie and stuffs in more cake

Win Right ! Come on then ! I'm only just warming up ! You've seen nothing yet ! I can feel a victory stalking me like a wolf in a diamanté collar

Ches Oh ! That's a line from one of my poems !

Chester and Winnie thoroughly enjoy the desperation of trying to recall the poem together

Win Oh ! Err .. Umm..

Harriet moves around the long buffet table and cuts herself a slice of cake

Chester continues to gesture to Winnie excitedly

*Suddenly Winifred and Chester's recollection coincides ..
The two exclaim together in perfect unison*

Win / Ches Canine Jewels of the Black Dog !

Hat (*stuffing in cake*) Oh ... *that* poem .. Total shite as I recall

Winnie and Chester laugh. This laughter seems to catapult Harriet into the stupor that Sid has arranged for a second time

Anfisa motions to Salva for more wine

He goes to her and pours.

He also becomes engrossed in the game

*Cards begin to be slapped down furiously
The players make noises of determination etc*

Again .. Honey wins the round

A huge fountain of sighs explode

Win My go ! My go ! ...

At that moment Mafalda enters from behind the audience but within Winnie's direct line of vision and Harriet moves as if possessed towards Winnie whilst raising the knife in readiness

*Winnie studies her cards and then suddenly her eyes flick up
She fixes the players with her eyes that show intensive relish*

Win Aha !

She pulls the winning card from her hand

Edgar is looking at someone else's cards

Anf (noticing Edgar) Hey ! That's cheating

Winnie looks up

Harriet raises the knife to bring down between Winnie's shoulder blades

Winnie's eyes widen beyond all belief as she catches sight of Mafalda up ahead.

She screams in complete and utter terror

Edg I wasn't cheating mother ! I was looking to see if anyone needed a refill ..

Anf Liar

Everyone else is completely baffled by Winnie's sudden state of distress

Winnie continues to pant and whimper whilst pointing at Mafalda who is only visible to her

Mafalda moves down the aisle between the two halves of the audience. She moves like a ghost without any emotion and stares straight ahead at Winnie

*Harriet looks at the knife and is completely freaked out and bewildered.
Hurriedly she carries it back to the buffet table*

Honey Don't worry Winnie. It's only a game of cards. I'd be lost without you. You taught me how to cook Chilli Con Carne .. remember ?

Harriet is cutting manically at the cake

Harriet Cake anyone ?!!

Winnie screams again

*Mafalda is now standing at the steps, still with her back to the audience
Winnie's eyes are glued to the apparition of Mafalda*

*The others are all focused on Winnie or looking in the direction of Mafalda and
mystified by the fact that nothing seems to be there*

Sid Cancel ! Cancel ! This is NOT happening

The scene is frozen as the Immortals return.

Mafalda of course remains in motion also. Sid however, cannot see her

Amalia and Elka and Beshlie swoop onto the stage

Amalia and the girls are overwhelmed to finally meet Mafalda

Ama Oh ! My Lady Gonzales !

Maf (warmly) Mafalda

Ama I do apologise for this laboured exercise. We did not anticipate quite so much disharmony within the collaboration

Sid What on earth is this ? Who are you talking to ? Amalia ! I order you to explain this precocious and outrageous undermining of my talents ?

Mafalda strokes Elka and Beshlie's heads.. They are ecstatic

Ama I cannot Sid. It is Mafalda

Sid looks around. He cannot see Mafalda and this is disempowering and unpleasant for him

Sid Mafalda ?! You're off your heads the lot of you !

Music rises

Ama Just admit defeat Sid. I'm sure there are many other lives to ruin. Focus on somebody else God help them !

Beshlie Why don't you think about retiring ?

Sid *(intensive frustration)* Have you explained anything about immortality to

this silly little flower ? Or is it your intention to keep her in the dark ??

Amalia and her girls skip off with Sid in tow screaming after them

Mafalda takes a position upstage centre so as to be upstage of Winnie. She slowly turns around to face the audience and raises her arms and makes fists.

She then reactivates the scene as if suddenly scattering magic over all party members

Winnie is trying to calm down etc

Everyone tries to jostle Winnie back into the house

She sees Mafalda again and screams

Mafalda roars with laughter

Lights lower slightly and the violin music can be heard again

Mafalda seems more contented

She looks at her throne, removes her black lace head scarf and drapes it over the back of the chair

Salva and Honey appear.

They bring a number of bottles of wine and glasses to the table. It would seem that the party intends to go on once Winnie has pulled herself together

Mafalda exits wistfully in amongst the audience

Anfisa returns to the terrace alone

She sees the scarf and picks it up and stands thinking

Salva and Honey notice her

Anf Salva ?!

Salva Yes Miss Selyavina

Anf Call me a taxi to the airport will you ?

Salva bows and leaves

Anfisa drapes the scarf over the back of the chair and goes back into the house

Moments later Edgar appears looking distressed

Winifred comes back on with Chester and Harriet

Win What's the matter dear ?

Edg Are you alright mother ?

Win Yes dear. The doctor simply said that I shouldn't mix olives with elderflower.

Hat Oh what *rubbish* ! I wonder which of the two are hallucinogenic ?

Chester and Hat laugh together

Win What's the matter Edgar ? Stop avoiding my question

Edgar heaves a sigh

Edg Anfisa is leaving

Winifred takes her seat again on the throne

Win Oh it doesn't matter at all Edgar.. (*she sees Mafalda's scarf*) there are so many other women ..

Her voice becomes fragile and distant

Who ... are far more beautiful .. and patient than Anfisa

Wini sits there and looks at the scarf realising that she has indeed seen Mafalda

She quickly tries to hide it by concealing the scarf on her person

Everyone sits for another card game. Winnie seems calmer

Win *(to Edgar)* I think it's time to move on don't you darling ?

Sid comes on and Action freezes

Sid What a boring bunch of maudlin over sentimental brain dead block heads

*He knocks back the entire bottle of Elderflower wine to numb his misery
He reactivates the party but remains centre stage to watch*

Win Come on ! Let's all raise a toast to the future !

Chester goes to the wine; the bottle is of course empty. Sid laughs viciously

Ches Oh lord ! Where did it go ? Salva only set it down some five minutes ago

Amalia enters with bottles in her hands

Ama There's always more !

Sid Oh *why* can't you GO AWAY you stupid tatty old butterfly

Mafalda appears at the buffet table downstage

Win Amalia ! Harriet ! This is the lovely lady I met in the Grocer's last week at the Herbalist store

Turning to Amalia

I never thought you'd come my dear

Sid is lurking in the background. Mafalda beckons Sid over with a glass of wine in hand. She puts her arm around him and whispers in his ear

Ama Oh ! I wouldn't miss a party for the world !

Hat Who is THIS mother ?

Winnie A woman after my own heart darling. Full of mischief but ultimately harmless

Ches Then welcome Lady of the Night

Anfisa runs on. She is deliriously joyous and pants with excitement. All turn to look

Anf I'm going to Moscow ! I leave for the city tomorrow ! They have given me the part ! I'm going to play *Masha* at the Moscow Art Theatre !

Sid Oh no ! Not the withered and worn out physicality ..

Mafalda nudges him

Sid She seems far too jolly and effervescent for the role

Mafalda And you know everything about the theatre

Sid (*Mockingly*) The *theatre* !

Win (*handing Anfisa the scarf*) You'd better take this my dear

Sid looks around and groans facetiously with boredom

The music begins to rise to a celebratory pitch

Amalia grabs Sid for a dance

Ana (*exclaiming*) Miss **Amalia** !

Ama Oh it's only just for this once !

Ana laughs and then looks suddenly quiet and inspired.

She watches Sid waltz Amalia off her feet as the music gets louder and vigorously works her like a rag doll around the party terrace in huge dizzying circles, much to everyone's claps of delight.

Seated DSL are Mafalda and Salva who seem to getting on ever so well. Mafalda beckons Anfisa over. She joins them.

Amalia and Winifred are now drinking together and getting more and more inebriated

Honey is busy behind the buffet table. Sid grabs her flirtatiously around her waist and begins administering the wine. Honey begins to load her tray with glasses of wine that Sid is 'preparing'

Elka and Beshlie can see that their Mistress is otherwise engaged and decide to slip away quickly

The music is now at an all time high and the Petipa's are in full swing

Amalia suddenly spies Anfisa, Mafalda and Salva in close conversation and looking extremely intimate and relaxed

The Petipas are getting increasingly drunk and Sid is cuddling Honey

Sid More wine Amalia my dear ?

Amalia has figured out that the situation has gone a rye and leaves in search of Elka and Beshlie.

Lights lower to fade out.

Scene V

Cold morning light

Harriet, Winifred, Chester and Edgar lie strewn around the stage dead in extremely undignified positions. Their eyes are open and rigor mortis has clearly set in.

Anfisa sits all in black - alive, elegant and beautiful in the throne. She wears Mafalda's veil

Salva is opening a bottle of wine. He is dishevelled and somewhat dusty but very much alive as well

Honey comes bustling in. She seems significantly happier

Honey Miss Anfisa , I cannot find Mafalda anywhere

Anfisa laughs wearily

Anf She's probably sleeping somewhere secret .. Thank you Honey. I think your work here is done

Anfisa sinks back into her chair with her empty glass

She glances over at Salva

He crosses the terrace and pours her more wine

Her head tilts back

Anf An outstanding event Salva .. wouldn't you say ?

Salva Everybody loves to party with the devil Miss Anfisa

They exchange smiles. Her eyes remain closed.

She knocks back the drink and goes to the buffet to return her glass

A black cat pads in from in between the bushes

Anf There you are my darling girl. Honey was looking for you !

She picks up Mafalda and heads for the DSL terrace to go back inside

Anf Salva ... did you call the coroner ?

Salva They are collecting the cadavers within the hour Miss Anfisa

She winks at him

Anfisa Jolly good. Just have it ship shape and five star for this evening. Sid is arriving for eight

Salva Miss

Spanish guitar rises as Anfisa leisurely moves towards the Mansion. Salva disappears into the Tent

The music continues

Mafalda suddenly reappears and jumps on to the Throne. She settles.

Lights down slowly.

Cover Illustration :

Painting ‘Mujer morena’ by (Cordouan Painter) *Julio Romero de Torres*