

Series: Inner Sanctum Mysteries
Show: The Horla
Date: May 09 1941

This Inner Sanctum Mystery, "The Horla" was broadcast on May 9, 1941. The script was located in a contemporary book of radio plays, scanned and transcribed. It included only Raymond's opening paragraph, with no advertisements or closing.

Lipton's Tea was actually a sponsor of "Inner Sanctum" four years after this broadcast (Carter's Little Liver Pills was the show's original sponsor) but we felt that Lipton's commercials we had in the library were some of the cleverest and most unusual of their day, and deserved a hearing.

MUSIC:

THEME

SOUND:

SQUEAKING DOOR

Raymond:

This is Raymond with a word of warning. If, during tonight's broadcast, you look up and find a little spook sitting on the arm of your chair, don't be surprised. All little spooks listen to our program to keep up with the latest techniques in haunting. Isn't that true, Mary?

Mary:

Indeed it is, Mr. Raymond

Raymond:

And the thoughtful listener might fix TWO glasses of Lipton Tea- one for himself and one for any spectral visitors that might drop in during the show. It's so refreshing, it could bring the dead back to life!

Mary:

Oh Dear,! Mr. Raymond, Lipton Tea isn't used to revive people. At least not in the way you mean it. Of course, lots of people DO find that Lipton's make their day seem brighter. Yes, it sort of helps them through their housework to sit down now and then between meals as well as at dinner and supper, and enjoy a cup of brisk Lipton Tea. And the reason why Lipton's is so satisfying is because of that one little word. . . brisk! B - R - I - S - K. Tea experts say that Lipton's has a brisk flavor which means that it always tastes tangy and bracing. It's never flat or wishy-washy. So, folks, ask for Lipton's Tea at your grocer's. You just don't know how good tea can be until you've tried Lipton's

Raymond:

Yes, and when you leave the grocer, step into the music shop next door, and ask him if he's heard the tale about what happened to that world-famous pianist, Martin Karily. Or better yet, turn the lights down low. . . now . . and let ME tell you. Gather 'round, and let's listen to Paul Lukas in the role of Martin Karily.

It is a stormy night in March. In his Connecticut home, Martin Karily, world-famous concert pianist, lies in his bed, tossing.

(Slight pause)

SOUND:

TINKLING GLASS, WEIRD NIGHTMARE EFFECT

MUSIC:

LONG,SUSTAINED HIGH-NOTE CRESCENDO

Martin:

I can feel him . . . there again . . .

Helen:

(Filter, like an echo) Again . . .

Martin:

That voice . . .

Horla:

Voice . . .

Martin:

(Pause) Am I asleep or awake?

Horla:

Awake . . .

Martin:

Why can't I move my arms?

Horla:

Arms . . .

Martin:

I want to move them, but I can't.

Horla:

Can't . . .

Martin:

Why?

Horla:

Why?

Martin:

(Pause) Who are you?

Horla:

You?

Martin:

Why don't you leave me alone?

Horla:

Alone?

Martin:

Why do you torture me?

Horla:

Me?

Martin:

(Pause) He's at my throat now, sucking my blood!

Horla:

Blood . . .

Martin:

Making me weak and helpless ...

Horla:

Helpless

Martin:

Let me go, I tell you! Let me go!

Martin:

I Must get UP! I must! I must!

SOUND:

TABLE CRASH

Martin:

Oh, he's gone now. I must be awake.

SOUND:

DOOR KNOCK RAPIDLY

Helen:

(Off) Martin! Martin, open the door. It's Helen.

SOUND:

DOOR KNOCK AGAIN-DOOR OPEN

Helen:

Martin, are you all right?

Martin:

Of course, Helen.

Helen:

Your face is white.

Martin:

(Angry) I'm all right, I tell you.

Helen:

Martin!

Martin:

(Pause) I'm sorry. I didn't mean to shout

Helen:

You knocked over your night table.

Martin:

I tossed in my sleep. The crash startled me ... That's why I cried out.

Helen:

Martin... You haven't been the same ever since you returned from your South American tour. Why don't you tell me what's wrong?

Martin:

Please, Helen, Go back to your room. Don't worry about me.

Helen:

But Martin...

Martin:

Please do as I ask.

Helen:

(Sob) Very well.

Martin:

Helen... try to understand. I don't mean to be angry with you.

Helen:

That's not what hurt me, Martin. It's that you don't want to tell me what's troubling you.

Martin:

There's nothing troubling me. My nerves are on edge. Good night, Helen.

Helen:

(Pause, almost sob) Good night.

SOUND:

DOOR CLOSE

Martin:

I wanted to tell her, but how could I? How could I tell anyone about this thing that is sucking the life blood out of me while I sleep? This Being that is running my talent as a musician, whose voice I hear when I sleep! This Invisible Being that I feel is possessing me, urging me to destroy instead of create, urging me to kill!

MUSIC:

SCREAM CHORD AND OUT

SOUND:

WIND

MUSIC:

PIANO BEETHOVEN FADE IN

Helen:

(Fade in) Good evening, Martin.

Martin:

Oh, Helen ...

Helen:

Please don't stop. You're playing so beautifully this evening.

Martin:

Am I?

Helen:

Yes. You're playing as you used to.

MUSIC:

SHARP DISCORD AND OUT

Martin:

So. You noticed it too!

Helen:

What do you mean?

Martin:

You heard how badly I played. You knew I was losing my ability!

Helen:

Martin. I never said ...

Martin:

Of course you didn't say it. No one ever says it. But I can tell what they think by the way they look at me.

Helen:

Martin ...

Martin:

It's true, isn't it? Isn't it?

Helen:

No, Martin. I never doubted your ability. Not even for a moment.

Martin:

Then why did you say I'm playing as I used to?

Helen:

Well, Martin, you haven't been yourself lately. I didn't mean anything by that remark, except that you appear better this evening.

Martin:

And my music sounds better?

Helen:

I never lied to you, Martin. Yes. it does.

Martin:

Of course. He hasn't come to me for two nights.

Helen:

He? Who do you mean, Martin?

Martin:

Nothing. Yes, Helen. You're right. I was playing better. I could hear it myself.

Helen:

Why don't you go on playing, Martin.

Martin:

I will-

MUSIC:

PIANO BEETHOVEN

Martin:

You hear that, Helen? That's the way Beethoven meant his music to be played . . . (Laugh nervous . . . happy)

MUSIC:

UP

Martin:

And listen to this. One of the greatest passages in all Beethoven's music. It speaks of the strange terror and mystery of life.

MUSIC:

BUILDS DRAMATICALLY INTO CRASHING DISCORD AND OUT

Martin:

What's the matter with me? I never had trouble with that passage before!

MUSIC:

PASSAGE AGAIN TO DISCORD

Martin:

(Pause) I . . . I can't play it.

Helen:

But you've played that passage a thousand times. . .

Martin:

I know. But now I can't!

MUSIC:

BANG PIANO KEYS THREE TIMES WITH FIST SYNCHRONIZED

Martin:

I can't! I can't! I can't! (Sob)

Helen:

(Very sympathetic) Martin . . .

Martin:

I was playing so well only a moment ago . . . Then suddenly, I can't play at all . . .

Helen:

You haven't been practicing lately. You've hardly touched the piano since you returned.

Martin:

No. That's not why I couldn't play it. He . . . He must be near.

Helen:

He? That's the second time this evening you spoke of . . .

Martin:

Helen, there's something I must tell you. I . . . I must tell someone or I'll go mad, (Quietly) I don't know. Perhaps I am mad. Sometimes I think I am . . .

Helen:

(Frightened) Martin!

Martin:

Do you remember the cable I sent you from Rio de Janeiro?

Helen:

Yes. You said the concert did not go well.

Martin:

I gave one of the worst performances of my career. It was late that same night that I first noticed it.

Helen:

Noticed what?

Martin:

(Pause) The presence of another being, close to me.

Helen:

Another being?

Martin:

Yes. An Invisible Being. It was He who made me play so badly that night. He's been near me ever since.

Helen:

An invisible being . . . ?

Martin:

I know it sounds strange ... fantastic ... but it's real, Helen. This thing seeks to dominate, to possess me. It came first in my sleep, but lately I have begun to feel its presence even in my waking hours. It controls my actions like a hypnotist controls his subject.

Helen:

Go on, Martin.

Martin:

It doesn't speak to me directly, merely echoes my words. But it makes its will felt, and I fight to resist, and I . . . I can't. It hasn't gained complete control of me yet, but I'm afraid it will, and I'll . . . (Pause) I don't know exactly what I'll do.

Helen:

Martin, were you despondent after that concert in Rio?

Martin:

Despondent? I know what you're thinking, Helen. That my mind became unbalanced by the failure of

my concert. Yes, I thought of that too.

Helen:

Did you?

Martin:

I thought of every possible explanation. I don't know. Perhaps it's a hallucination, but I feel sure I can prove it's real. I feel . . .

MUSIC:

ORGAN EFFECT

Martin:

Wait a moment. I was right. He's near us now!

Helen:

Near us?

Martin:

Yes! Can't you feel his presence?

SOUND:

WIND

Martin:

Look there! Didn't you see the curtains move? He's in here, Helen. In here!

Helen:

The wind blew those curtains . . .

Martin:

No. It's him, Helen. The Invisible Being! He came in through the window . . .

SOUND:

NEWSPAPER RUSTLE

Martin:

Look. He touched the newspaper.

Helen:

It's nothing but the wind.

Martin:

No. It's him. Helen . . . I . . . (Gasp)

Helen:

Martini What's wrong? What's the matter?

Martin:

(As though hypnotized) I can feel him close . . . taking possession . . .

Helen:

Martini (Pause) Why do you look at me like that? (in fear) Why don't you answer me? (Pause) Why are you holding out your hands as though . . . ? No, Martin! Don't touch me! For heaven's sake, don't! You're not yourself, Martin! Wake up! Wake up!

MUSIC:

PIANO POUND OUT BEETHOVEN

Helen:

(hysterical) Martin . . . Listen to the music! Listen to me play the music you know and love! You must come out of it! Take your hands away from my throat. . . I . . .

MUSIC:

TREMENDOUS DISCORD PIANO

Helen:

(scream) Martin . . . !

MUSIC:

ORGAN EFFECT A SECOND THEN OUT

BUSINESS:

PAUSE

SOUND:

WIND

Martin:

(Quietly) He's no longer here. He's gone now, Helen.

Helen:

(Sob) Martin.

Martin:

(Pleading) Don't draw away from me, Helen. I won't harm you

Helen:

(fade sob)

Martin:

Helen. . . Come Back. . .

SOUND:

DOOR CLOSE

Martin:

I should never have told her. That thing, that Invisible Being urged me to kill her and I almost did. That Thing? Is there such a thing or am I mad? But I saw him touch that newspaper --

SOUND:

NEWSPAPER RUSTLE

Martin:

Here! What's this?

Voice:

(reads) Rio de Janeiro, March fifth: An epidemic of madness, similar to the contagious madness which attacked Europe in the Middle Ages, is at this moment raging in the province of San Paulo, Brazil. The terrified inhabitants are leaving their houses, saying that they are pursued, possessed, dominated by invisible beings. They say that these creatures, a species of vampire, feed on their blood while they are asleep.

Martin:

My dream! That's what always happened in my dream!

Voice:

Victims say that these invisible creatures have been known to drink milk. Public health authorities are investigating.

Martin:

Then it is real! Others have fallen under its spell just as I have! Madness they call it! If they only knew . . . Or could it be? There is a way to test the reality of this thing now! And I will make the test tonight!

MUSIC

Raymond:

A test. . . Tonight. There will be a test tonight at the end of our program - if any of you still have your wits about you, then, eh?

MARY:

There's not much time left for Mr. Karily, is there, Mr. Raymond?

Raymond:

Not much time, Mary. And you know what they say - Time Wounds All Heels.

Mary:

Heavens. Seriously, I do have something to say about a time-SAVER, Mr. Raymond. I'm thinking about Lipton's Tea, You know, Lipton's Tea is such a handy beverage. It takes so little time to prepare. And it's always so welcome, Yes, its famous brisk flavor makes it enjoyable not just at your own mealtimes, but between meals and whenever folks drop in for a visit. That's why its a good idea to buy Lipton's in the larger, more-economical size packages. That's right! the larger packages are much thriftier. So, you see it's wise to keep on hand a really good supply of brick-flavored Lipton's Tea.

Raymond:

How true! It'll come in handy to warm up the chill you get from these Inner Sanctum Mysteries. And brother, you're going to shiver plenty as we return to Paul Lukas as Martin Karily as our story continues. . .

MUSIC:

THEME AND STING

SOUND:

CLOCK STRIKE THREE. WIND

Martin:

Three o'clock. The door is locked. I left a window open. How that wind howls tonight! And there is the glass of milk on the table. Well, we shad see. I dread going to sleep, but I must. He . . . it . . . Heaven knows what its name is, usually comes to me when I sleep. There now, I must close my eyes (sleepy) That's better. Yes. (Very sleepy) Much better. I wonder. (pause)

SOUND:

GLASS EFFECT AS BEFORE

MUSIC:

HIGH MUSICAL NOTE

Martin:

I can feel him now . . . close to me. He's come. He's come again.

Horla:

(Filter) Again

Martin:

Can you hear me?

Horla:

Me?

Martin:

Why do you echo my words?

Horla:

Words . . .

Martin:

Why do you torment me? Why don't you ever let me sleep?

Horla:

sleep?

Martin:

Or am I sleeping? Am I dreaming this mad thing? I must wake up! I must open my eyes! I must . . .

SOUND:

GLASS CRASH

Martin:

Oh! Where . . . where's the light?

SOUND:

CHAIN CLICK

Martin:

There now, we will see. Oh, the glass is gone! I heard a crash ... I must have knocked it over. Yes, there it is on the floor, broken into a hundred pieces and ... (Pause) Oh, Merciful Heaven! The glass was empty when it fell! There's not a single drop on the table or on the floor!

MUSIC

Martin:

There is no doubt about it now. I must find a way to destroy this thing. I must kill it before

SOUND:

ORGAN EFFECT

Martin:

He is still near!

Horla:

(Filter) Near ...

Martin:

So..... you came back again.

Horla:

Again.....

Martin:

I never heard your voice before while I was awake.

Horla:

Awake . . .

Martin:

Who are you?

Horla:

You . . .

Martin:

Tell me your name. (Pause) What is your name?

Horla:

(Pause) Horla.

Martin:

Horla.

Horla:

Horla.

Martin:

Then you do understand when I speak to you.

Horla:

Yes.

Martin:

Why have you never spoken to me before?

Horla:

I did not choose to.

Martin:

What do you want with me?

Horla:

I thought. . . you knew.

Martin:

No. I imagined all sorts of things, but I never knew..What do you want with me?

Horla:

If I tell you, you will resist, And it will only be worse if on resist.

Martin:

What do you mean?

Horla:

Don't be a fool. Don't you understand yet?

Martin:

No.

Horla:

I will tell you this. To resist me is impossible. I will come to you when you sleep, when you are helpless. After each visit you will be more and more under my power, until finally you will become my complete slave, to do with as I will.

Martin:

Your slave ...

Horla:

Yes.

Martin:

Where are you now?

Horla:

Sitting here, in the chair near your bed, waiting for you to go to sleep again.

Martin:

I will not go to sleep.

Horla:

You must sleep some time. That is the great weakness of your race of humans. I will sit here and wait.

Martin:

I'll remain awake until you leave!

Horla:

You are a fool. I could force you to sleep, force you to wake, if I choose.

Martin:

Why don't you?

Horla:

It would be too much of a struggle now. You will fight against me. I prefer to wait until you are under my power completely. Then I can command you with ease.

Martin:

When will that be?

Horla:

Tomorrow, after you awake from sleep.

Martin:

So I have only one more night.

Horla:

Yes. Only one more. I tested my strength with you earlier this evening, and almost succeeded in what I desired. I'll need only one more night.

Martin:

I'll never go to sleep again as long as I live.

Horla:

We shall see. I have great patience. (Pause) What are you doing?

Martin:

I'm going to light a cigarette.

Horla:

Put that match down!

Martin:

(Quietly) The match? Why?

Horla:

Put it down, I tell you!

SOUND:

MATCH STRIKE

Martin:

No! I lit it.

Horla:

Put it out!

Martin:

So! You can feel fear. You are afraid of the flame!

Horla:

Stand back! Don't come near me!

Martin:

I have found your weakness now! You fear flame. Fire! Now we shall see who is the stronger!

Horla:

Don't come near me!

Martin:

These curtains. I put a match to them and they go up in flames!

SOUND:

FLAMES

Martin:

Ha! See the fire! You cannot escape through the window now! And the door is locked. I ... I have you trapped, you hear? Trapped!

Horla:

You cannot destroy me.

Martin:

Then why are you afraid? (Pause) Why?

Horla:

Let me out of here!

Martin:

NO!!

SOUND:

NEWSPAPER RUSTLE

Martin:

See, I light this newspaper. Now I have a torch, a weapon against you who have so much power, but fear the flames.

Horla:

Don't! Don't touch those sheets]

Martin:

YOU ... you, somewhere in this room! You ... whom I cannot see! You ... who attack men in their sleep and command them to do your horrible bidding! You ... are the living spirit of evil! You seek to have men destroy each other so that you can inhabit the earth!

Horla:

Let me out of here! Let me out!

Martin:

Out! How many men in centuries gone by must have pleaded for mercy from you? Do you think I will show you the slightest mercy now? The long journey from Brazil, where you first found me, will end in

this very room. You, who would destroy and replace man, shall be destroyed here!

SOUND:

DOOR OPEN AND CLOSE ... LOCK

MUSIC

Martin:

Holding a blazing piece of newspaper before me, I back out the door and lock it. The room is already in flames. I put my ear to the door and hear him call ...

Horla:

(Filter ... off) Let me out! Let me out!

Martin:

Yes. He was trapped! But I must take no chances. Quickly I find some old clothes, soak them in kerosene, drop them in front of the door to my room, and put a match to them! I rush to my wife's room. Her door is locked.

SOUND:

DOOR RATTLE. BANGING

Martin:

Helen! Helen, open the door!

Helen:

(Off) What do you want, Martin?

Martin:

Open the door! The house is on fire!

SOUND:

DOOR OPEN

Helen:

Martin!

Martin:

Hurry, will you? The house is filling with smoke. The flames are spreading rapidly.

MUSIC:

UP AND OUT

Martin:

At last we're in the garden. It's safe there, and Helen and I stop to rest.

SOUND:

FIRE OFF

Helen:

Martin.

Martin:

Yes, Helen.

Helen:

Are the servants out?

Martin:

Yes. They're on the other side of the house. They're all safe.

Helen:

Where did the fire start?

Martin:

In my room.

Helen:

Martin ... did you? ...

Martin:

Yes. I had to, Helen.

Helen:

Had to?

Martin:

Yes. He was in there. The Invisible Being. The Horla!

Helen:

(Sob) Martin. (Fade) Oh, Martin ...

Martin:

Helen, try to understand. Helen, come back here. Helen! (Pause) She vanishes into the darkness.

SOUND:

SIRENS OFF ... CRESCENDO

Martin:

Whipped by the winds, the flames dance madly about the house. By this time, it is a blazing furnace, with tongues of fire: red, yellow, orange, blue . . . flames leaping high into the air, lighting the dark night like a huge magnificent torch!

SOUND:

SMALL BUILDING CRASH

MARTIN:

Already parts of the roof begin to crumble in between the walls! A fountain of flames roars toward the sky! Suddenly the whole structure begins to topple, and in a moment it comes crashing to the ground.

SOUND:

BIG CRASH

Martin:

The flames soar upward, leaping toward the sky, and light up the whole countryside! It's a funeral pyre, a monstrous, magnificent, funeral pyre, and in it, He who hated and feared the flame, is burning! He! My prisoner, the Invisible Being, the Horla.

SOUND:

SIRENS AND BELLS UP

MUSIC:

OUT QUICKLY

SOUND:

DOOR KNOCK AND REPEAT

Martin:

Who is it? Who's there?

Helen:

Open the door, Martin! It's Helen.

Martin:

Helen.

SOUND:

DOOR OPEN AND CLOSE

Martin:

(Sob) Helen, I knew you'd come.

Helen:

Martin, why didn't you get in touch with me sooner?

Martin:

I was afraid to. The police are searching for me. Helen, you don't know what I've been through hiding in alleyways, chased like a mad dog. Finally, I took a chance and registered in this hotel; I don't think they recognized me.

Helen:
Martin.

Martin:
Yes?

Helen:
I want you to give yourself up.

Martin:
Give myself up?

Helen:
That's the only way you can be helped,

Martin:
But you saw the papers, Helen. You know what will happen to me if I surrender to them.

Helen:
It's not as bad as you seem to think. You'll receive medical attention and --

Martin:
Medical attention! Then you believe them! You think I'm insane, don't you? (Pause) Don't you?

Helen:
Martin, I love you. Believe me, I wouldn't ask you to give yourself up if I didn't think it best for you.

Martin:
I See --

Helen:
Won't you come with me, Martin?

Martin:

Insane! Yes, there was a time when I thought I was insane, Helen, but NOW I'm certain I'm not. It's a week, a full seven days, since our house burned down, and I haven't felt the Horla near me once. I tell you he was real, Helen. This invisible being was as real as you or I.

Helen:

Perhaps. But if that's the case, then you have nothing to fear. The doctors will examine you and find you normal. Don't YOU see, Martin, you have everything to gain by surrendering?

Martin:

Perhaps you're right. What difference does it make? The only thing that really matters is that the Horla is dead.

MUSIC:

ORGAN THEME OF HORLA

Martin:

Helen.

Helen:

Yes, Martin.

Martin:

Do you feel . . .

Helen:

What is it, Martin?

Martin:

Helen, I'll do as you ask. I'll give myself up. Will you go down to the lobby and wait for me? I'll only be a moment.

Helen:

All right, Martin.

SOUND:

DOOR OPEN AND CLOSE

Martin:

Is . . . is it you?

Horla:

(Filter) Yes.

Martin:

Then you are not dead?

Horla:

No.

Martin:

It was all in vain!

Horla:

All in vain. You cannot destroy me. (Pause) Why do you hesitate? Why don't you go down and join her, and give yourself up?

Martin:

That's what you want me to do, isn't it?

Horla:

That's the only thing you can do.

Martin:

No, it isn't! There is one other alternative! I made up my mind about what I'd do if you lived through that fire.

Horla:

You are going to destroy yourself?

Martin:

Yes! I will not be what you are trying to make me become! I will not be your slave! I'd rather die!

SOUND:

DOOR OPEN

Helen:

(Fade in) Martin, there's something I forgot to ... Martin, put that gun away!

Martin:

(Fade) Don't try to stop me!

SOUND:

DOOR CLOSE OFF. SHOT ... OFF

Helen:

(Scream) Martin!

SOUND:

DOOR OPEN

Helen:

(Sob) Martin!

Martin:

(Groan) (Sotto) Helen ...

Horla:

That's exactly what I wanted you to do.

Martin:

(Sotto) The Horla ... (Dies)

MUSIC

Raymond:

My, what a NOTE to end on, for such a fine musician. Ahh, but at least he's at REST. That's the whole KEY to the thing, you see. Don't you think so, Mary?

Mary:

Indeed I do, Mr. Raymond.

Raymond:

Do you think our listeners are ready for the test I promised them, Mary?

Mary:

I'm sure they are, Mr. Raymond. After all, it's really quite easy. Here's the first question. What beverage saves you time? The second question, what refreshment restores your energy? And here's the final question, what drink saves you money? The answer to all three is - brisk Lipton's Tea. See, I told you this was easy. And it IS easy to think of Lipton when you need a pick-me-up, at meals or during the day. And in the large economy size available at your grocer, Lipton 's actually save's you money. Brisk Lipton's Tea. Be sure to pick some up tomorrow.

Raymond:

Thank you, Mary. I hope tonight's contrapuntal exercise in horror didn't leave you feeling flat. Look sharp there, because that's just a minor problem. We'll have a major new tale of terror for you again next Tuesday night, when Lipton's Tea brings you another Inner Sanctum Mystery, directed by Himan Brown. Until then, good night.

SOUND:

DOOR

Raymond:

Pleasant. . . dreams . . .

ANNOUNCER:

This is N - B - C, the National Broadcasting Company.