

# TACKLETON MONOLOGUE

You're getting married

[REDACTED]

Not a million

[REDACTED]

You must be in love

[REDACTED]

TACKLETON

Oh That condition

*He has not been looking at her, because his roving eye has been casting all over the room, the people and things in it, finally resting on the fourth wall. Just like the house door did not constrain him from entering, the fourth wall does not constrain him, either. To the audience:*

Tackleton the toy merchant, generally known as Gruff and Tackleton – even though Gruff had retired ages ago, leaving his name and its dictionary meaning to his junior partner. If only Tackleton's parents had made him a moneylender, or an attorney, or a broker, he might have expressed himself in ill-natured transactions and turned out amiable enough in his private life, if only for the sake of variety. But, cramped and chafing in the peaceable pursuit of toy-making, he was, reliably, an ogre, who dined on children. He despised all toys; wouldn't have bought one for the world; and the toys he sold were grim. Appalling masks; hideous, hairy, red-eyed jacks-in-boxes; vampirical kites; demoniacal dolls that made children cry – they were his only relief and safety-valve. His ponies suggested nightmares. When he sold magic lanterns, the slides were full of goblins, depicted as a sort of supernatural shellfish with faces. One glance was certain to destroy the peace of mind of any young person between the ages of six and eleven, for the whole Christmas vacation. But, overall, an honest man – in that his appearance was true to his nature, with a twist in his dry face, and a screw in his body, and his hat jerked over the bridge of his nose, and his hands tucked into the bottoms of his pockets, and his whole sarcastic ill-conditioned self peering out of one little corner of one little eye, like the concentrated essence of any number of ravens.

[REDACTED]

Yes, I'm getting married. Hard to believe.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

TACKLETON

*Glances at her. Turns away.*

Evening, Careb.

[REDACTED]

And returning to your room, sir?

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

TACKLETON

Your name.