

THE SNARE
by
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Sir Terence

You are very punctual, sir.

Samoval

I hope I shall never be so discourteous as to keep an opponent waiting. It is a thing of which I have never been guilty. I'm afraid the moon will occasion us some delay. It were perhaps better to wait some five or ten minutes, by when the light in here should have improved.

Sir Terence

We can avoid the delay by stepping out into the open. Indeed it is what I had to suggest in any case. There are inconveniences here which you may have overlooked.

Samoval

We are quite private here, your household being abed, whilst outside one can never be sure even at this hour of avoiding witnesses and interruption. Then, again, the turf is smooth as a table on that patch of lawn, and the ground well known to both of us; that, I can assure you, is a very necessary condition in the dark and one not to be found haphazard in the open.

Sir Terence

But there is yet another consideration, sir. I prefer that we engage on neutral ground, so that the survivor shall not be called upon for explanations that might be demanded if we fought here.

Samoval

You trouble yourself unnecessarily on my account. No one has seen me come, and no one is likely to see me depart.

Sir Terence

You may be sure that no one shall, by God.

Samoval

Shall we to work, then?

Sir Terence

If you're set on dying here, I suppose I must be after humoring you, and make the best of it. As soon as you please, then.

Samoval

In a few minutes the moon will be more obliging, if you prefer to wait—

Sir Terence

I find it light enough.

Samoval

On guard, then!

(Samoval attacks immediately and the fight is on.)

Sir Terence

You murderous villain!

(Samoval is clearly the superior fencer and Sir Terence is in the fight of his life. He defends as best he can, but tires quickly and is driven back time and again. Slowly he is worked toward the rear wall of his house, tiring quickly.)

Just as Samoval is about to deliver the death blow, a window above them is flung open and Sir Terence's wife, seeing the fight below, screams. Samoval's focus is pulled above for an instant and Sir Terence thrusts instinctively and finds his target deep in Samoval's breast.)