

**Bleak House – Audition Piece****Lady Dedlock / Hortense (1)**

HORTENSE:               Something is wrong, my lady?

LADY DEDLOCK:       Nothing is wrong. Don't creep up on me like that.

*Pause. Hortense waits, hesitates.*

                                  Did you want something, Hortense?

HORTENSE:               When do we go to Paris?

LADY DEDLOCK:       When I and Sir Leicester wish to, Hortense.

HORTENSE:               Always it was planned for this week.

LADY DEDLOCK:       And now the plans have changed.

HORTENSE:               My father, 'e is sick. 'E need me.

LADY DEDLOCK:       Sir Leicester and I do not fashion our plans around the family problems of our servants. You would do well to remember that.

*Another pause. Hortense bites her lip*

HORTENSE:               Very well, my lady.

**Lady Dedlock / Hortense (2)**

HORTENSE:               My lady?

LADY DEDLOCK:       I told you to return to the house.

HORTENSE:               When do we go to Paris?

LADY DEDLOCK:       What is this insolence? Return to the house at once.

HORTENSE:               I don't take your orders no more. I leave your service today.

LADY DEDLOCK:       As you wish. Remember you will get no reference from me.

IHORTENSE:            I don't need your references. I have someone of power to speak for me.

LADY DEDLOCK:       Then there is nothing more to be said.

HORTENSE: Oh you might think you are so high and mighty, but let me tell you, my lady, the time is coming soon when you will be lower than I by far. You will be like the mud in the streets.

LADY DEDLOCK: You may go, Hortense.

HORTENSE: You cannot stop me being here, this is a public garden. If you don't want to hear me, you must go yourself.

LADY DEDLOCK: You have been very foolish, Hortense. I fear that you will answer for it in the future.

*She exits. Hortense stands and laughs*

HORTENSE: Ha! Her high and mighty ladyship retreats from the humble maidservant, Hortense! Not so high now, I think.