

CROUP/VANDEMAR 2

Croup: (Into phone) Croup and Vandemar. The Old Firm. Obstacles obliterated, nuisances eradicated, bothersome limbs removed and tutelary dentistry. Oh! Yes, sir. Yes, indeed. Might I say how your telephonic confabulation brightens up and cheers our otherwise dreary day? Of course I'll stop toadying and crawling. Delighted to. An honor. No, we don't know where she is at this precise moment. But we're relatively certain she'll be at the market tonight. We have no intention of violating their market truce. More like waiting till she has left the market and scrobbling her.

(As MR. CROUP listens, MR. VANDEMAR pulls a dead rat from his pocket and munches on it.)

Croup: Sir, I am commencing to have certain conceptual problems with the role of myself and my partner in these shenanigans. Unprofessional? Us? Might I with due respect remind you that Mister Vandemar and myself burned down the City of Troy? We brought the Black Plague to Flanders...

Vandemar: (Mouth full) I liked doing that.

Croup: (Into phone) We have assassinated a dozen kings, five popes, half a hundred heroes and two accredited gods. We are utterly professional. My point? My point is that we are assassins. We are cutthroats. We are not scarecrows. What about the Upworlder, Richard Mayhew? I understand. (He hangs up the phone.) But I don't like it. (He spits.) Scarecrows.

Vandemar: Best way to scare crows, you just creep up behind them and put your hands round their little necks and squeeze until they don't move anymore. Scares the stuffing out of them.

Croup: That was our employer. Seems the other one isn't going to work. Not old enough. It's going to have to be the Door female.

Vandemar: So we aren't allowed to kill her anymore?

Croup: That, Mister Vandemar, would be about the short and the long of it, yes. We can't kill her and we can't kill the Upworlder. We are to scare them. (He spits.) We should butcher the bitch. Annul, cancel, inhume and amortize her. I, for one, have had almost as much as I'm willing to take. Pussyfooting, trifling, lollygagging, shillyshallying... whey-faced toad, I could pop his eyes out with my thumbs.

Vandemar: Not yet, he's our boss. For this job.

Croup: He's a worthless, conniving dunderhead.

Vandemar: After we've been paid, maybe we could have some fun on our own time.

Croup: Now, Mister Vandemar, that's the best idea I've heard all day.