

THE THING

A Dramatic Reading

by
Percival Wilde



Wetmore Declamation Bureau

**Box 2695
Sioux City, IA 51106**

**www.wetmoredeclamation.com
Email: speeches@wetmoredeclamation.com**

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The setting for this drama is an ancient, dusty chemical laboratory which has apparently not been opened in a long time.

It is night, and the room is almost dark. There is the rattle of a key at the door. It opens, and a man backs in, looking outward into the moonlit night with every evidence of terror.

As he closes and bolts the door, a lamp on the table lights, disclosing a Thing sitting next to it, staring fixedly at him.

THE MAN: (Dismayed) How did you get here? But it's no use asking you that, is it? You never answer that question. (Strides nearer) Feeling better?

THE THING: No.

THE MAN: Tired?

THE THING: Very

MAN: (Happily; eagerly) Feeling worse? Feeling worse?

THING: Yes.

MAN: (Filling a glass from a bottle) Here: drink this!

THING: What is it?

MAN: Poison.

The Thing takes the glass, holds it to the light speculatively; then tosses it off at a gulp.

MAN: (Watching eagerly) How do you feel now?

THING: About the same.

MAN: (With suppressed emotion) I poured into that glass—I poured into that glass—enough to kill ten men!

THING: Evidently it wasn't enough. (Extends glass) Fill it again.

MAN: (Doing so; afraid) I warn you—it takes effect—quickly!

THING: Give it to me.

MAN: Once—once—I saw a man drink that same draft. He was dead before his body struck the floor.

THING: What a pity you weren't that man! (Drinks as if toasting) To his memory!

MAN: (Starting) What do you know about him?

THING: What should I know?

MAN: Nothing!

THING: Good. (Pauses) I am interested in only one subject.

MAN: (Sneering) And what's that?

THING: You.

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