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PILKINGTON, EDWARD L. Arthur L. Kopit and Oh Dad, Poor Dad, Mama's Hung You in the Closet and I'm Feelin' So Sad. (1970) Directed by Dr. David Batcheller.

pp. 133

The purpose of this thesis was to study the script, produce the play, and evaluate the production of Arthur L. Kopit's, Oh Dad, Poor Dad, Mama's Hung You in the Closet and I'm Feelin' So Sad.

The preliminary part includes the following: (1) historical and stylistic analyses of the play, (2) character descriptions and analyses, (3) a discussion of the function and mood of the set, and (4) justification for the director's choice of the script for production.

The second part includes the director's prompt book of the production, performed on November 20, 21, 22 and 24, 1969, in Mooney Theatre, Elon College, North Carolina. Types of notations included are (1) movement, composition and picturization, (2) rhythm and tempo notes, and (3) stage business, and (4) sound notes. Floor plans and production photographs implement this record.

Part III contains the director's critical evaluation of his work with the production. Discussed in this chapter are: (1) goals and aims of interpretation, (2) use and success of composition, (3) actor-director relationships during the rehearsal period, and (4) audience reaction to the production.

The appendix of this thesis includes a program as
an actual record of the performances.

ARTHUR L. KOPIT AND OH DAD, POOR DAD, MAMA'S HUNG YOU IN

THE CLOSET AND I'M FEELIN' SO SAD

by

Edward L. Pilkington

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the Faculty of the Graduate School at
The University of North Carolina at Greensboro
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Approved by

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APPROVAL SHEET

This thesis has been approved by the following committee of the Faculty of the Graduate School at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro.

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PART I

PART I

THE PLAYWRIGHT AND THE PLAY

THE PRELUDE

Gaynor F. Bradish in his introduction to Arthur L. Kopit's play, Oh Dad, Poor Dad, Mama's Hung You in the Closet and I'm Feelin' So Sad, mentions Kopit's careful memory. On October 14, 1964, this director met Arthur Kopit at the Mermaid Theatre in New York while auditioning for his play, The Day the Whores Came Out to Play Tennis. This director was not aware that two years later, he would retire from professional theatre and certainly could not foresee that he might be directing one of Arthur Kopit's plays for a Master of Fine Arts Thesis. At this point, the director has had to reach back into the artist's card catalogue of the mind and extract the pertinent data from that meeting. At that meeting Kopit seemed painfully aware of life and possessed the uncanny ability to recall names, faces, places and situations. He referred occasionally to the eyes of man as being "mind windows".

Arthur Kopit's mind windows have looked upon a generous helping of varied topics. Kopit studied "engineering and applied physics" in Europe, and actually wrote Oh Dad while on a Shaw Traveling Fellowship awarded him by Harvard University. He graduated from Harvard in 1959

and seven of his plays were performed there in a three year period. According to Bradish, during those three years Kopit strove to "attain scope for language and suggestions of the tragic", and to "blast apart stubborn structure of prose realism and claim the theatre once again as the domain of 'imaginary forces'".¹

Arthur L. Kopit called his play a "Pseudo-classical Tragifarce in a Bastard French Tradition". This director will use this description as the basis for any historical considerations, and as the statement of the director's production style. The acting edition of Kopit's play excludes this subtitle, but the director, after having met and talked with the author, feels the subtitle to be vital to an historical and stylistic understanding of the play.

While talking to Kopit, this director discussed several points of interest in Whores, and then answered questions about Oh Dad. The director recalls some statement concerning the aforementioned subtitle that sounded as if Kopit was concerned about the impression of the subtitle. Essentially, the discussion seemed to mean that the author viewed the history of slavish theatrical

¹Arthur L. Kopit, Oh Dad, Poor Dad, Mamma's Hung You in the Closet and I'm Feelin' So Sad, with a foreword by Gaynor F. Bradish, (New York: Hill and Wang, 1960), p. 2.

obedience to Aristotle as absurd, thus the use of "pseudo-classical", and "bastard french tradition" in a subtitle statement. Apparently, he did not intend for the play to be viewed as a caricature, but rather as a grotesquely absurd probe into the history of tragedy in general, and the classical tragedy in particular. The author mentioned this in relation to the hypothesis set forth by Shaw, Beckett, Ionesco, Genet, and Durrenmatt: "that the tragicomic play with its comic framework, provides the necessary distance for tragic insights and allows art freedom from the literal".²

How is it that we lost the necessary distance in theatre presentation? Through the "mind windows" of Arthur Kopit we see that by 1750 the "classical tragedy" with its intense tragic mood, unity of time and place, and use of verse, had been well received by the general public. But from 1750 on, the sociological and geographical structure of man began to change. Ever more crowded, larger cities were exposed to great and immediate pain through direct involvement. Wars began to engulf continents, and new technological developments brought the suffering of others into an interpersonal relationship. The modern playwright's decision to evoke in realistic terms, in fact, demanded the audience to accept the horror of tragedy as being a

²Martin Esslin, The Theatre of the Absurd (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday and Company, Inc., 1961), p. 227.

constant companion. The dramatists left the world precious little room in which to stand back and observe tragedy with that special detachment which might allow identification with the tragic moment without immediate fear of one's self in that situation. As Bradish says:

The modern world has seen too much pain to view pain with the detachment that tragedy, if it were otherwise possible, would require, and actual disaster has been too familiar for the suspension of disbelief that its representation in art must assume.

3

Arthur Kopit sees this modern world as a plethora of greed and sexual madness. He finds mankind unable to cope with his new environment: the environment of human beings. The change from rural America to urban America has been too fast for a major adjustment in human relationships. Man might be able to cope with the elements of Wordsworthian nature, but the crowding of Freudian nature has evolved a vicious, cannibalistic environment. Man feeds upon man. The unsuspecting innocent suffer day by day, hour by hour, minute by minute, and man is always there when it happens.

THE PLAN

Oh Dad, Poor Dad, in its simplest form tells of a boy's cruel domination by his Mother to the point of destroying his identity. By using grotesque imagination,

³Arthur L. Kopit, Oh Dad, Poor Dad, Mama's Hung You in the Closet and I'm Feelin' So Sad, p. 3.

Kopit is able to serve us the entire front page of the daily newspaper and make it pleasantly digestible. He chose to deal with this dark situation in a manner which he felt would deepen the actor-audience relationship. His use of the contrasting elements of horror and the ridiculous reinforce the cruelty of the relationships and yet afford the audience the exquisite comfort of aesthetic distance. The director would call this technique illusory-
imagination. Kopit bases his work on the illusion of reality, but surrounds it with a uniquely imaginative and presentational environment.

The structure of Oh Dad is unusual in that the entire play is made up of three scenes without an act break. This director will, however, have one act break between scene two and scene three. The intermission is simply a rest stop before the bizarre third scene.

The play begins disarmingly enough. Madame Rosepettle decides to stay over a few days with her son Jonathan in Port Royal. Historically Port Royal was a Caribbean Island destroyed by volcanic eruptions. Madame Rosepettle says she is in mourning for her late husband. She finds out that Commodore Roseabove is the richest man in the Caribbean Islands, and she arranges a meeting with a girl, Rosalie, for her son in the hopes that he will be able to see what young girls are really like. All of this

takes place in scene one.

In scene two, however, Jonathan falls in love with Rosalie. There is a tender exploratory love scene and "Mama" is forced to reveal Rosalie as a harlot, and therefore unfit for her son.

In scene three, Madame Rosepettle arranges a dinner with Commodore Roseabove in her hotel room. Jonathan overhears the Commodore's futile attempts to seduce his mother. Madame Rosepettle ridicules the Commodore, and strips his soul bare, to reveal in a long monologue what has brought about her hatred of the "sex-driven, dirt-washed" world. The Commodore crawls away accompanied by Madame Rosepettle's laughter. Madame Rosepettle leaves in her beach attire. Jonathan then attempts to free himself by first killing the Venus flytraps and Pirahna fish. Rosalie enters and tries to persuade Jonathan to run away with her, to marry her. Jonathan is not that free yet. She enters Madame Rosepettle's sacred bedroom, and convinces Jonathan to enter as well. Rosalie almost succeeds in seducing Jonathan, but the Father interrupts by falling out of the closet and landing on top of the lovers. Jonathan kills Rosalie. The Mother returns from the beach where she has been delightfully engaged in kicking sand in couple's faces. Madame Rosepettle confronts Jonathan with the dead plants, fish, girl, and husband and asks, "What is the meaning of

this?" It appears Jonathan is trapped, or is he?

Madame Rosepettle is undoubtedly one of the most challenging female roles in this century. She stands astride the world like a colussus. For her, all men are weak and impotent, and all women are whores and sluts. She is not altogether an unattractive widow in her mid forties. She is Victorian to the point of being ludicrous. The "sins of the father" will not visit the son, because they cannot get by the mother. She so delights in showing the world how vile, and self-deluded it really is. She is the heroine Sarah Bernhardt in disguise. Her mission in life is to expose the hypocrisy of mankind. With the zeal of St. Joan, Madame Rosepettle strips bare the soul of the Commodore and Rosalie. As the evangelist, Madame Rosepettle is critical, cynical, satirical and sardonic. The son whom she seeks to protect is less important than the idea of non-involvement which she seeks to promote.

Jonathan is a sheltered young man who has been denied the opportunity to develop fully. He is at once a child, boy, and man; a person of many names, none of which is all Jonathan. He is inarticulate at age twenty-four. He is all men in a mother's world of "protection". Madame Rosepettle says that above all else, "he is suceptible", and therefore she must keep him indoors.

The character of Rosalie is salvation for Jonathan

and damnation for Madame Rosepettle. She has tasted of the world at twenty-two and longs for comfort and security. Marriage to Jonathan offers some measure of that shelter. She would be an honest woman. Rosalie hides behind the guise of innocence.

The Commodore is an opulent man, driven by lust. Kopit would have us see affluent man as a being whose brain is in his genitals. Forever susceptible to sexual failure, The Commodore pursues without reason. His age is fifty-two. He is vulnerable.

The bellboys are those inferior persons who are motivated by greed. They would sell anything--their souls, their bodies for money.

The Venus flytraps and Pirahna fish represent the paradox in nature, and as the author intends it--the deceptively beautiful yet deadly in "human" nature. They are symbolic watchdogs planted in the mind of Jonathan.

Dad is the past that will not leave Jonathan alone. He reinforces Madame Rosepettle's attitudes and even in death will not allow Jonathan to leave his environment.

Environment is a key word in this play. The Broadway Production of Oh Dad, Poor Dad played the environment as realistic. Kopit's own feelings about the particular use of reality was that the play should be anchored in reality or illusion, but that it should also be a somewhat

less naturalistic setting than the one used in New York. It seemed to force the credulity of his flights of fancy into hell. The director interprets Kopit's remarks to mean that the environment or "scenery" for this production of Oh Dad should be theatricalized and intensified symbolically. To this end the director has asked for a design that will incorporate wall panels that revolve and doors that slide up and down. The wish here is that the environment should reflect the absurdity of the situation, and that even the physical setting manipulates and conspires to trap Jonathan. The bellboys will make some of their entrances and exits through the revolving walls as they become a part of his environment.

In the third scene, the action shifts from the living room to Madame Rosepettle's bedroom. At that point the walls come to life. They undulate, and swallow up the furniture leaving the impression of having walked with Jonathan's mind into the forbidden room. This effect will be reinforced by the use of an opaque projector with colored oil and water. The director chose this manner of shifting the scene because of the limited space at Elon College. The theatre is actually a small room, and since the script calls for a scene change, this seems to be the most logically motivated way to change from the living room to the bedroom. Again the environment acts upon the

mind, and here we see the mind seeing the environment as it acts.

Initial entrance into the environment is unique. The audience will have to walk first through the jungle and hear jungle sounds, then into and through the actual set accompanied by waltz music, and finally sit amidst carnival sounds and fireworks. Because the theatre is so small, and since the hypothesis is that the tragi-comic play with its comic framework provides the necessary distance for tragic insights and allows art freedom from the literal, the director wishes to establish an audience-environment rapport immediately. Everything is turned around. The audience walks through the house and sits on the stage. The lights are exposed. The immediate impression is one of reversal of the order of things.

Color plays an important part in the environment of Oh Dad. Borrowing from Eisenstein's color psychology,⁴ the wall frames will be a dirty rose pink and the panels a light pastel pink. These panels later change to a bloody purple in scene three. Although these colors connote soiled innocence and perverted regality, the general mood of the play, however, the environment of the play turns

⁴Sergei Eisenstein, Film Form and Film Sense (New York: Meridian Books, 1942), p. 132.

tragic in texture and mood intermittently pierced by flashes of the grotesque.

The Rose symbol will be carried beyond the name implications, i. e. Roseabove, Rosepettle, Rosalinda, and Rosalie. Madame Rosepettle in the opening scene enters with two pictures of a rose under her arm and places them on the walls. In the third scene the dining tables will be decorated with one wilting rose. Madame Rosepettle it would appear, carries her environment with her. In fact, Madame Rosepettle is Jonathan's environment, but Jonathan in turn becomes her environment. Wherever they go she arranges, rearranges and influences the surroundings to fit into her mold of the universe, a mold which began to solidify and ultimately was forced upon her by her husband, and Jonathan's father, Edward Albert Robinson Rosepettle, The Third. Kopit views the rose from the "rotting underside of life."⁵

The director feels that this unusual play, and presentation will expose the Elon College Community and surrounding communities to an important modern American playwright. The director also feels that his statement of presentation, i.e. "Pseudo-classical Tragifarce", will

⁵George E. Wellwarth, The Theatre of Protest and Paradox (Washington Square, N.Y.: New York University Press, 1964), p. 291.

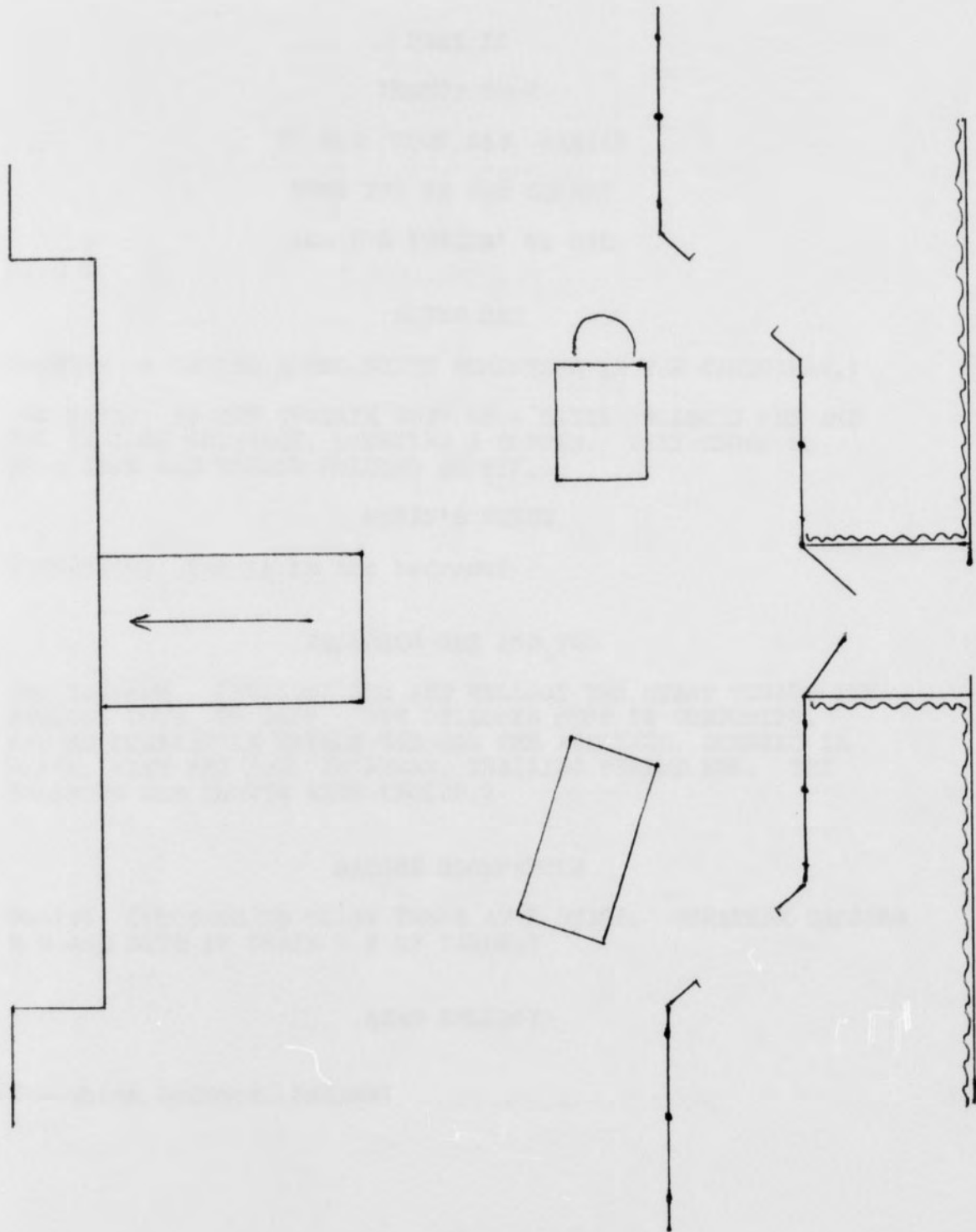
grant the necessary comfort of distance in order that the play's content may be highly enjoyable and thought provoking. As a theory it is possible that Kopit is trying to tell us that tragedy can no longer sing, purge, and sleep. Is he saying that it might instead do better to laugh, and lie awake thinking?

PART II

FIGURE 1

(GROUND PLAN)

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PART II

PROMPT BOOK

OH DAD, POOR DAD, MAMA'S

HUNG YOU IN THE CLOSET

AND I'M FEELIN' SO SAD

SCENE ONE

(SCENE: A LAVISH HOTEL SUITE SOMEWHERE IN THE CARIBBEAN.)

(AT RISE: AS THE CURTAIN GOES UP - ENTER BELLBOYS ONE AND TWO THROUGH AUDIENCE, CARRYING A COFFIN. THEY CROSS TO DOWN LEFT AND REMAIN HOLDING COFFIN.)

WOMAN'S VOICE

(OFFSTAGE) Put it in the bedroom!

BELLBOYS ONE AND TWO

The bedroom. (BELLBOY ONE AND BELLBOY TWO START TOWARD THE BEDROOM DOOR, UP LEFT. THE BELLBOYS STOP IN CONFUSION. MADAME ROSEPETTLER ENTERS THROUGH THE AUDIENCE, DRESSED IN BLACK, WITH HER SON, JONATHAN, TRAILING BEHIND HER. THE BELLBOYS ARE FROZEN WITH TERROR.)

MADAME ROSEPETTLER

Fools! (CROSSES TO BELOW TABLE AT R STAGE. JONATHAN CROSSES R S AND SITS IN CHAIR U R OF TABLE.)

HEAD BELLBOY

Uh--which bedroom, Madame?

MADAME ROSEPETTLE

Which bedroom? Why the master bedroom, of course. Which bedroom did you think? (THE BELLBOYS BOW, PICK UP THE COFFIN AND CROSS U L TOWARD THE MASTER BEDROOM.) Gently! (THE BEDROOM DOORS OPEN.) People have no respect for coffins nowadays. (CROSSES TO WINDOWS U C.) They think nothing of the dead. I wonder what the dead think of them? (SHORT PAUSE.) Agh! (CROSSES TO U L OF TABLE.) The world is growing dismal.

BELLBOY ONE

Uh-- begging madame's pardon.

BELLBOY TWO

Sorry we must interrupt.

MADAME ROSEPETTLE

Speak up! Speak up!

BELLBOY ONE

Well--you see--

BELLBOY TWO

Yes, you see--

BELLBOY ONE

We were curious.

BELLBOY ONE

Uh--just where in madame's bedroom would she like it to be put?

MADAME ROSEPETTLE

Next to the bed, of course!

BELLBOYS ONE AND TWO

Of course. (THEY EXIT WITH COFFIN INTO MASTER BEDROOM U L.)

MADAME ROSEPETTLE

(CROSSES U R C.) Morons! -- Imbeciles. (ENTER TWO OTHER BELLBOYS THROUGH THE AUDIENCE CARRYING TWO LARGE PLANTS.) Ah, my plants! (THE BELLBOYS CROSS U C TO THE WINDOWS AND SET THE PLANTS DOWN.) Uh--not so close together. They fight. (THE BELLBOYS MOVE THE PLANTS APART AND EXIT THROUGH THE AUDIENCE D C.)

(THE HEAD BELLBOY ENTERS THROUGH AUDIENCE CARRYING A DICTAPHONE AND BLACK DRAPES UNDER HIS ARM. HE STOPS D C.)

HEAD BELLBOY

The dictaphone, madame.

MADAME ROSEPETTLE

Ah, splendid. (CROSSES U R BEHIND JONATHAN.)

HEAD BELLBOY

Where would madame like it to be placed?

MADAME ROSEPETTLE

Oh, great gods, are you all the same? The table, naturally. One never dictates one's memoirs from anywhere but the center of a room. Any nincompoop knows that.

HEAD BELLBOY

It must have slipped my mind. (CROSSES TO U L OF TABLE AND PLACES DICTAPHONE ON TABLE.)

MADAME ROSEPETTLE

You flatter yourself.

HEAD BELLBOY

(CROSSES TO C.) Will there be something else?

MADAME ROSEPETTLE

Will there be something else, he asks? (CROSSES TO L OF BELLBOY.) Will there be something else? Of course there'll be something else. There's always something else. That's one of the troubles with Life.

HEAD BELLBOY

Sorry, madame.

MADAME ROSEPETTLE

Yes, so am I. (TURNS FROM BELLBOY AND FACES D R.) Oh, this talk is getting us nowhere. Words are precious. On bellboys they're a waste. And so far you have thoroughly wasted my time. Now to begin:--

HEAD BELLBOY

Madame, I'm afraid this must end.

MADAME ROSEPETTLE

(TURNING.) I--beg your pardon?

HEAD BELLBOY

I said this must end! I am not a common bellboy, madame-- I'm a lieutenant. (PLACES HIS FOOT ON COUCH.) Notice the stripes, if you will. I am a lieutenant, madame. And being a lieutenant I'm in charge of other bellboys and therefore entitled, I think, to a little more respect from you.

MADAME ROSEPETTLE

Well--you may consider yourself a lieutenant, lieutenant, but I consider you a bore! If you're going to insist upon pulling rank, however, I'll have you know that I am a Tourist.

(CROSSES TO R OF BELLBOY.) Notice the money, if you will. I am a Tourist, my boy. -- And being a Tourist I'm in charge of you. Remember that and I'll mail you another stripe when I leave. As for "respect", we'll have no time for that around here. We've got too many important things to do. Right, Albert?

JONATHAN

Ra-ra-ra-rrright.

MADAME ROSEPETTLE

Now, to begin: (CROSSES R S TO D L OF TABLE.) You may pick up the drapes which were so ingeniously dropped in a lump on my table, carry them into the master bedroom and tack them over my window panes. I don't wear black in the tropics for my health, my boy. I'm in mourning. And while I'm here in Port Royal, no single speck of sunlight shall enter and brighten the mournful gloom of my heart--at least, not while I'm in my bedroom. Well, go on, lieutenant, go on. Forward to the field of battle, head high. (CROSSES WITH DRAPES TO BELLBOY AND DUMPS THEM IN HIS ARMS.) Tack the drapes across my windows and when my room is black, call me in.

HEAD BELLBOY

(SALUTES.) Yes, madame. (BELLBOY EXITS U L.)

MADAME ROSEPETTLE

In Buenos Aires the lieutenant clicked his heels when leaving. That's the trouble with these revolutionaries. No regard for the duties of rank. (CROSSES U R TO ABOVE JONATHAN.) Remind me, Edward, to have this man fired, first thing in the morning. He'll never do.

(JONATHAN TAKES A PAD OUT OF HIS POCKET AND WRITES IN IT. BELLBOYS ONE AND FIVE ENTER THROUGH AUDIENCE CARRYING MINIATURE TREASURE CHESTS. THEY STOP D C.)

BELLBOY FIVE

The stamp collection, madame.

MADAME ROSEPETTLE

Ah, Robinson! Your fantastic stamp collection. Look!
It's arrived.

BELLBOY ONE

Where would you like it put, madame?

MADAME ROSEPETTLE

Where would you like it put, my love?

JONATHAN

Uh--uh--uh--

MADAME ROSEPETTLE

Now--now, let's not start stammering again. You know what
I think of it.

JONATHAN

Ummmm--

MADAME ROSEPETTLE

My dear, what is wrong with your tongue?

JONATHAN

Uhhhh--

MADAME ROSEPETTLE

But they're only bellboys.

JONATHAN

Ummmm--

(BELLBOY TWO ENTERS ALSO THROUGH AUDIENCE WITH A MINIATURE TREASURE CHEST. HE STOPS D C WITH OTHER BELLBOYS.)

BELLBOY TWO

The coin collection, madame. Where would you like it put?

MADAME ROSEPETTLE

(HOVERS OVER JONATHAN.) Edward, your fabulous collection of coins has just arrived as well. Now--where would you like it put?

JONATHAN

Ummmm--

MADAME ROSEPETTLE

Oh, great gods! Can't you for once talk like a normal human being without showering the room with you inarticulate spit!?

JONATHAN

I-I-I-I-I--da--da--

MADAME ROSEPETTLE

Oh, very well, Very well-- If you can't muster the nerve to answer--stick out your paw and point.

(JONATHAN JUMPS TO HIS KNEES IN THE CHAIR. HE THRUSTS OUT HIS TREMBLING HAND AND POINTS OFF TOWARD U R BEDROOM.)

JONATHAN

If--if--they would--be so kind. (BELLBOYS EXIT OFF U R.)

MADAME ROSEPETTLE

Of course they would! They're bellboys. Remember that.

It's your first Lesson in Life for the day. (CROSSES U R TO DOOR.) No! Don't get the stamps in with the coins. They stick!

HEAD BELLBOY

(RE-ENTERS FROM THE MASTER BEDROOM U L AND CROSSES DOWN TO ABOVE COUCH.) I'm terribly sorry to disturb you, madame, but I find that--I don't seem to have a--uh--

MADAME ROSEPETTLE

I wondered when you'd ask. (CROSSES TO BELLBOY AND OFFERS HIM A HAMMER FROM HER PURSE.)

HEAD BELLBOY

Thank-you--madame. (TURNS AND START TO EXIT U L.)

MADAME ROSEPETTLE

Bellboy? (HE STOPS AT U L DOOR.) The nails.

HEAD BELLBOY

Yes, of course. (CROSSES TO MADAME ROSEPETTLE.) How foolish of me.

MADAME ROSEPETTLE

(HANDS BELLBOY THE NAILS FROM HER PURSE.) Keep the extras. (HE EXITS U L INTO MASTER BEDROOM.) In Buenos Aires the Lieutenant came equipped with a pneumatic drill. That's what I call service. (CROSSES TO L OF JONATHAN.) Robinson darling, remind me to have this man barred from all hotels, everywhere. Everywhere.

(THREE BELLBOYS RE-ENTER FROM U R. THEY CROSS TO C AND STAND IN A LINE RUNNING C TO D C AND FACE AUDIENCE.) Here, for your trouble: a little something. (CROSSES TO R OF BELLBOY ONE AT C.) It's a Turkish piaster--1876. Good year for piasters. (CROSSES TO BELLBOY TWO.) And for you a--a 1739 Danzig gulden. Worth a fortune, my boy. A small fortune, I will admit, but nevertheless a fortune.

(CROSSES TO BELLBOY THREE AT D C.) And for you we have a--a--1962 DIME!! Edward--what is the dime doing in here? Eegh! (SHE DROPS THE DIME AND CROSSES D R. THE BELLBOYS LEAP TO GET IT. THEY STRUGGLE ON HANDS AND KNEES D C.)

JONATHAN

Some--some--someday--it will be--as rare as the others.

MADAME ROSEPETTLE

Some day! Some day! That's the trouble with you, Robinson. Always an optimist. I trust you have no more such currency contaminating your fabulous collection. H'm, Albert? Do I assume correctly? H'm? Do I? H'm? Do I? H'm? Do I?

JONATHAN

Ya--yes.

MADAME ROSEPETTLE

Splendid. Then I'll give you your surprise for the day.

JONATHAN

Na--now?

MADAME ROSEPETTLE

Yes, now.

JONATHAN

IN--in--front of--them? (BELLBOYS SCREECH AND STAND FIGHTING FOR THE COIN.)

MADAME ROSEPETTLE

Turn your backs, bellboys. (THEY CROSS U L AND FACE OFF STAGE.) Here, Edward, my sweet. The rarest of all coins for your rarest of all collections. (CROSSES TO JONATHAN.) A 1572 Javanese Yen-Sen.

JONATHAN

How--how many--were---were minted?

MADAME ROSEPETTLE

None.

JONATHAN

Na--none?

MADAME ROSEPETTLE

I made it myself. So glad you like it. (TO THE BELLBOYS.)
You may turn around now. (THE SOUND OF A HAMMER IS HEARD
OFF LEFT.) If you must bang like that, my boy, then please
bang with some sort of rhythm. (BELLBOYS CLAP IN RHYTHM.)
Oh, the Lieutenant in Buenos Aires, remember him, Robinson?
How he shook when he drilled. I fairly danced that day. (SHE
BEGINS TO DANCE TOWARD D L. THE BELLBOYS EXIT D C CLAPPING
IN RHYTHM.) That's enough. (SHE STOPS AT C.)

BELLBOY FOUR

(BELLBOYS ONE AND FOUR ENTER CARRYING A HUGE TREASURE CHEST.
MADAME ROSEPETTLE CROSSES TO U R. BELLBOYS CROSS TO C.)
The, uh--book collection, madame.

MADAME ROSEPETTLE

Albert, look. Albert! Look! Your unbelievable collection
of books. It's arrived.

JONATHAN

Ca--ca--could they--open it--I--I-I wonder?

MADAME ROSEPETTLE

You want to see them, eh Albert? You really want to see
them again? That badly? You really want to see them again,
that badly?

JONATHAN

Yyyyyyesssssss.

MADAME ROSEPETTLE

Then let the trunk be opened.

(THEY OPEN THE TRUNK. THE BOOKS FALL ONTO THE FLOOR.
JONATHAN CROSSES TO BOOKS AND LEAPS ON THEM. BELLBOYS
EXIT D C.)

JONATHAN

Tra-Tra-Trallope---Ha-Haggard--Daudlet--Ga-Ga-Gautier--
ma-mmmmy old--fffriends. La--lllook at them all. Sh-Sh-
Sholokhov--Alain-Fournier--Alightieri--Turturturgenev.
My--old friends.

MADAME ROSEPETTLE

All right, Albert, that's enough.

JONATHAN

But--

MADAME ROSEPETTLE

That's enough--Get up, get up--Come, off your knees.
(CROSSES TO D S OF TABLE.) Rise from your books and sing
of love.

JONATHAN

But I--I can't sing.

MADAME ROSEPETTLE

Well, stand up anyway. (JONATHAN CROSSES L TO COUCH AND
SITS.) All right, now where's Rosalinda?!

BELLBOYS

(FROM THE AUDIENCE.) Who?

MADAME ROSEPETTLE

My fish. (CROSSES D C AND FACES AUDIENCE.) I want my fish. Who has my fish?

A VOICE

I have it, madame.

(BELLBOY TWO ENTERS THROUGH AUDIENCE CARRYING AN OBJECT COVERED BY A BLACK CLOTH. HE STOPS D C.)

MADAME ROSEPETTLE

Ah, splendid. Bring it here. (CROSSES U R OF TABLE.) Put it here, by the dictaphone. Near my memoirs. Bring it here, bellboy. But set it gently, if you will. (BELLBOY CROSSES TO TABLE AND SET IT DOWN.) Now. The black shawl of mourning, bellboy. Remove it, if you will. But gently. Gently. Gently as she goes. (BELLBOY LIFTS OFF THE SHAWL. REVEALED IS A FISH BOWL WITH A FISH AND A CAT'S SKELETON INSIDE.) Ah, I see you fed it today. Siamese, I presume.

BELLBOY TWO

No, madame. Alley.

MADAME ROSEPETTLE

WHAT!? A common alley cat? Just who do you think I am? (ADVANCES.) What kind of fish do you think I have? Alley cat? Alley cat? Indeed. (PUSHES BELLBOY TO D C.) In Buenos Aires, I'll have you know, Rosalinda was fed nothing but Siamese kittens, which are even more tender than Siamese cats. That's what I call consideration! Edward, make note: we will dismiss this creature from the bellboy squad first thing in the morning!

BELLBOY TWO

(KNEELS D C.) Madame, please, there were no Siamese cats.

MADAME ROSEPETTLE

There are always Siamese cats!

BELLBOY TWO

Not in Port Royale.

MADAME ROSEPETTLE

Then you should have flown to Buenos Aires, I would have paid the way. Give me back your Turkish plaster. No. Never mind. Keep it. It's not worth a thing except in Istanbul, and hardly a soul uses anything but Traveller's Cheque's there anyhow! Shows you should never trust me.

BELLBOY TWO

Madame, please. I have a wife.

MADAME ROSEPETTLE

And I have a fish. I dare say there are half a million men in Port Royale with wives. (BELLBOY EXITS SLOWLY THROUGH AUDIENCE. SHE CALLS OFF AFTER HIM.) But show me one person with a silver Piranha fish and then you'll be showing me something. Your marital status does not impress me, sir. You are common, do you hear? Common! While my Piranha fish is rare.

ROSALINDA THE FISH

Glump.

MADAME ROSEPETTLE

Oh, dear thing. (CROSSES TO U L OF TABLE.) You can just tell she's not feeling up to snuff. Someone will pay for this!

HEAD BELLBOY

(RE-ENTERS FROM U L BEDROOM.) Well, I'm finished.

MADAME ROSEPETTLE

You certainly are.

HEAD BELLBOY

(STOPS ABOVE COUCH.) I beg your pardon?

MADAME ROSEPETTLE

Edward, make note. (CROSSES U R.) First thing in the morning we speak to the chef. Subject: Siamese cats-- kittens if possible, though I seriously doubt it here. And make a further note Albert, my darling. Let's see if we can't get our cats on the American plan, while we're at it.

HEAD BELLBOY

Madame, is there something I can--

MADAME ROSEPETTLE

QUIET! And put that hammer down. (CROSSES U L C. BELLBOY PUTS HAMMER DOWN ON COUCH.) You have all behaved rudely. (CROSSES TO U C WINDOWS.) If the sunset over Guanabacoa Bay were not so full of magenta and wisteria blue I'd leave this place tonight. But the sunset is full of magenta and wisteria blue, and so I think I'll stay. Therefore, beware. Madame Rosepettle will have much to do. She won't have time for hiring and firing people like you. Right, Robinson? I said, right, Robinson? RIGHT, ROBINSON!?? (JONATHAN NODS HEAD QUICKLY.) There's your answer. Now get out and leave us alone. (BELLBOY STARTS TO EXIT D C.) No. Wait. (BELLBOY STOPS D C ON RAMP.) A question before you go. That yacht in the harbor.

HEAD BELLBOY

Which yacht in the harbor?

MADAME ROSEPETTLE

The pink one, of course--187 feet long, I'd judge. Who owns it?

HEAD BELLBOY

Why, Commodore Roseabove, madame. It's a pretty sloop.

MADAME ROSEPETTLE

Roseabove. Roseabove--I like that name.

HEAD BELLBOY

Madame realizes, of course, it's the largest yacht on the island.

MADAME ROSEPETTLE

(CROSSES TO C.) It's also the largest yacht in Haiti, Puerto Rico, Bermuda, the Dominican Republic and West Palm Beach. I haven't checked the Virgin Islands yet. I thought I'd leave them till last. I doubt if I'll find a larger one there. I take great pleasure, you see, in measuring yachts. My hobby, you might say. (HEAD BELLBOY EXITS THROUGH THE AUDIENCE D C.) Edward, make note. First thing in the morning we restaff this hotel. (CROSSES TO WINDOWS U C.) Roseabove. I like that name.

ROSALINDA THE FISH

Gleep.

MADAME ROSEPETTLE

Ah, listen. My lovely little fish. (CROSSES R ABOVE TO TABLE.) She, too, is feeling better already. She, too.

You can tell--you can tell. (PICKS UP MOUTHPIECE OF
DICTAPHONE.) My Memoirs. Port Royale--Part One--The
Arrival. (JONATHAN CRAWLS BEHIND COUCH TO FRENCH WINDOWS
AT U C. HE STANDS ON PORCH. FLYTRAPS GROWL AND REACH
FOR HIM. SEE FIGURE 2.) Sorry to say, once again, nothing
unusual to report.

BLACKOUT

CURTAIN

FIGURE 2

32



SCENE TWO

(THE PLACE IS THE SAME. THE TIME, TWO WEEKS LATER.
ROSALIE IS STANDING U C BY THE FRENCH WINDOWS. JONATHAN
SITS ON THE COUCH L C.)

ROSALIE

But if you've been here two weeks, why haven't I seen you?

JONATHAN

I've---I've been in my room.

ROSALIE

All the time?

JONATHAN

Yes--all the time.

ROSALIE

Well, you must get out sometimes. I mean, sometimes you
simply must get out. (CROSSES TO R OF COUCH.) You just
couldn't stay inside all the time--could you?

JONATHAN

Yyyes.

ROSALIE

You never get out at all? I mean, never at all?

JONATHAN

Some-sometimes, I do go out on the porch. M-Ma-Mother has some--Venus-flytraps which she bra-brought here from the rain forests of Va-Va-Va-Venezuela. They're va-very rrrrare and need a-a lot of sunshine. Well, sir, she ka-keeps them on the porch and I--I feed them. Twice a day, too.

ROSALIE

Oh. (SITS BY JONATHAN.)

JONATHAN

Ma-Ma-Mother says everyone must have a vocation in life. I ga-guess that's--my job.

ROSALIE

I don't think I've ever met anyone before who's fed--uh--Venus-flytraps.

JONATHAN

Ma-Ma-Mother says I'm va-very good at it. I--don't know--if--I am, but--that's--what she says so I guess--I am.

ROSALIE

Well, uh, what do you--feed them? You see, I've never met anyone who's fed Venus-Flytraps so--that's why I don't know what--you're supposed to feed them.

JONATHAN

Oh, I fa-feed them--l-l-lots of things. Ga-ga-green peas, chicken feathers, rubber bands. They're not very fussy.

They're--nice, that way. Ma-Ma-Mother says it it it ga-gives me a feeling of a--co-co-complishment. (CROSSES TO U C.) Ifffff you would--like to to see them I--could show them to you. It's--almost fa-feeding time. It is, and--and I could show them to you.

ROSALIE

No. That's all right. Well, how about later?

JONATHAN

(CROSSES TO ROSALIE.) Do-do-do you ra-really wwwwwwant to see them? (SITS R OF ROSALIE.)

ROSALIE

Yes, yes, I really think I would like to see them--later. If you'll show them to me then, I'd really like that. I still don't understand why you never go out. How can you just sit--in?

JONATHAN

SometimeswhenI'montheporchIdoootherthings.

ROSALIE

What?

JONATHAN

Sa-Sa-Sometimes, when I'm on the porch, you know, when I'm on the porch? Ssssssssome-times I--do other things, too.

ROSALIE

What do you do? What sort of things? What sort of things do you do?

JONATHAN

Other things.

ROSALIE

What do you mean, "Other things?"

JONATHAN

Other things besides feeding my mother's plants. Other things besides that. That's what I mean. Other things besides that.

ROSALIE

(EDGES CLOSER TO JONATHAN ON THE COUCH.) What kind of things--in particular?

JONATHAN

Oh, watching.

ROSALIE

Watching?

JONATHAN

Yes. Like--watching.

ROSALIE

Watching what? (LEANS TOWARD HIM.) Watching what?

JONATHAN

You.

(ROSALIE INCHES CLOSER TO JONATHAN ON THE COUCH.)

ROSALIE

What do you mean--watching me?

JONATHAN

I--watch you from the porch. That's what I mean. I watch you from the porch. I watch you a lot, too. Every-day, too. It's--it's the truth. I--I swear it--is. I watch you ev'ry day. Do you believe me?

ROSALIE

Of course I believe you, Albert. Why--

JONATHAN

Jonathan! (TURNS AWAY.)

ROSALIE

What?

JONATHAN

Jonathan. Ca-ca-call me Ja-Jonathan. That's my name.

ROSALIE

But your mother called you --

JONATHAN

Nooooo! Call--me Jonathan. Pa-pa-please?

ROSALIE

All right--Jonathan.

JONATHAN

You do believe me! (RISES AND CROSSES U C.) You rrreally do believe me. I-I can tell!

ROSALIE

Of course I believe you. Why shouldn't--?

JONATHAN

You want me to tell you how I watch you? (CROSSES TO U R C.) You want me to tell you? I'll bet you'll na-never guess.

ROSALIE

How?

JONATHAN

Guess.

ROSALIE

Through a telescope?

JONATHAN

How did you guess?

ROSALIE

I--I don't know. I was just joking. I didn't really think that was--

JONATHAN

I'll bet everyone watches you through a telescope.
(CROSSES TO R END OF COUCH AND KNEELS.) I'll bet everyone you go out with watches you through a telescope.
That's what I'll bet.

ROSALIE

No. Not at all.

JONATHAN

Well, that's how I watch you. (SITS R OF ROSALIE.)
Through a telescope.

ROSALIE

I never would have guessed that--

JONATHAN

I thought you were--going to say I--I watch you with--
with love in my eyes or some--thing like that. I didn't
think you were going to guess that I--watch you through
a telescope. I didn't think you were going to guess that
I wa-watch you through a telescope on the fa-first guess,
anyway. Not on the first guess.

ROSALIE

Well, it was just a guess.

JONATHAN

Do you watch me through a telescope?

ROSALIE

I never knew where your room was.

JONATHAN

Now you know. (CROSSES TO WINDOWS U C.) Now will you watch me?

ROSALIE

Well, I--don't have a telescope.

JONATHAN

You can make one. That's how I got mine. I made it. Out of lenses and tubing. That's all you need. Lenses and tubing. (CROSSES ON STEP TOWARD ROSALIE.) Do you have any lenses?

ROSALIE

No.

JONATHAN

Do you have any tubing? (CROSSES ANOTHER STEP TOWARD ROSALIE.)

ROSALIE

No.

JONATHAN

Oh. (CROSSES TO ABOVE ROSALIE.) Well, would you like me to tell you how I made mine in case you find some lenses and tubing? Would you like that?

ROSALIE

Sure, Jonathan. I think that would be nice.

JONATHAN

(CROSSES SLOWLY TO C.) Well, I made it out of lenses and tubing. The lenses I had because Ma-Ma-Mother gave me a set of lenses so I could see my stamps better. I have a fabulous collection of stamps, as well as a fantastic collection of coins and a simply unbelievable collection of books. Well, sir, Ma-Ma-Mother gave me these lenses so I could see my stamps better. She suspected that some were fake so she gave me the lenses so I might be--able to see. You see? Well, sir, I happen to have nearly a billion sta-stamps. So far I've looked closely at 1,352, 769. I've discovered three actual fakes! Number 1,352, 767 was fake. Number 1,352,768 was a fake, and number 1,352,769 was a fake. They were stuck together. Mother made me feed them immediately to her fly-traps. Well--(CROSSES U C.) one day, when Mother wasn't looking--that is, when she was out, I heard an airplane flying. An airplane--somewhere--far away. It wasn't very loud, but still it could be heard. An airplane. Flying--somewhere, far away. I ran outside to the porch so that I might see what it looked like. The airplane. With hundreds of people inside it. And if, I thought to myself, I could just see--if I could just see what they looked like, the people, sitting at their windows, looking out--and flying. If I could see--just once--if I could just once see what they looked like--then I might--know what I--what I... So--I built a telescope in case the plane ever--came back again. The tubing came from an old blowgun. (EXITS U R.)

Mother brought it back from her last hunting trip to Zanzibar. (RE-ENTERS WITH TELESCOPE AND CROSSES TO FRENCH WINDOWS U C.) The lenses were the lenses she had given me for my stamps. So I built it. My telescope. A telescope so that I might be able to see. And--(CROSSES ONTO THE PORCH.) and--and I could see! I could! I COULD! I really could. For miles and miles I could see. For miles and miles and miles! (LIFTS TELESCOPE ALMOST TO EYE AND THEN STOPS.) Only . . . (ROSALIE CROSSES TO JONATHAN, TAKES TELESCOPE AND SCANS THE HORIZON. JONATHAN CROSSES TO COUCH L AND SITS.)

ROSALIE

There's nothing to see out there.

JONATHAN

I know. That's the trouble. You take the time to build a telescope able to see for miles, then there's nothing out there to see. Ma-Mother says it's a Lesson in Life. (ROSALIE DROPS TELESCOPE AND CROSSES TO COUCH AND SITS L OF JONATHAN.) But I'm not sorry I built my telescope. And you know why? Because I saw you. Even if I didn't see anything else, I did see you. And-- and I'm--very glad. I--I remember, you were standing across the way in your penthouse garden playing blind man's buff with ten little children. Are--are they by any chance--yours?

ROSALIE

Oh, I'm not married.

JONATHAN

(SLIDES TO R END OF COUCH.) Oh!

ROSALIE

I'm a baby sitter.

JONATHAN

(SLIDES BACK TO PREVIOUS POSITION.) Oh.

ROSALIE

I work for the people who own the penthouse.

JONATHAN

I've never seen them around.

ROSALIE

I've never seen them, either. They're never home. They just mail me a check every week and tell me to make sure I keep the children's names straight.

JONATHAN

If you could tell me which way they went I could find them with my telescope. (CROSSES U L C AND PICKS UP TELESCOPE.) It can see for miles.

ROSALIE

They must love children very much, to have so many, I mean. What a remarkable woman she must be. (PAUSE.) There's going to be another one, too! Another child is coming! I got a night letter last night.

JONATHAN

By airplane? (CROSSES TO ABOVE ROSALIE, PLACES TELESCOPE BEHIND COUCH AND LEANS TOWARD L OF ROSALIE.)

JONATHAN

(SLIDES BACK TO PREVIOUS POSITION.) Oh.

ROSALIE

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JONATHAN

I've never seen them around.

ROSALIE

I've never seen them, either. They're never home. They just mail me a check every week and tell me to make sure I keep the children's names straight.

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ROSALIE

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JONATHAN

By airplane? (CROSSES TO ABOVE ROSALIE, PLACES TELESCOPE BEHIND COUCH AND LEANS TOWARD L OF ROSALIE.)

ROSALIE

I don't know.

JONATHAN

I bet it was. I can't see at night. Ma-Mother can but I can't. (CROSSES TO D L END OF COUCH. FACES OFF D L.) I'll bet that's when the planes fly.

ROSALIE

If you like, I'll read you the letter. (JONATHAN TURNS BACK AND KNEELS ON L END OF COUCH.) I have it with me. (SHE UNBUTTONS HER BLOUSE AND TAKES OUT THE LETTER. JONATHAN COVERS EYES. SEE FIGURE 3.) "Have had another child. Sent it yesterday. Will arrive tomorrow. Call it Cynthia." (PLACES LETTER BACK IN BLOUSE. JONATHAN SITS.)

JONATHAN

Will that make eleven? That's an awful lot of children to take care of. I'll bet it must be wonderful.

ROSALIE

Well, they do pay very well.

JONATHAN

They pay you?

ROSALIE

Of course--what did you think? (PAUSE) Jonathan? (SNUGGLES UP TO JONATHAN.)



JONATHAN

Yyyyyyes?

ROSALIE

It gets very lonesome over there. The children go to sleep early and the parents are never home so I'm always alone. Perhaps--well, Jonathan, I thought that perhaps you might--visit.

JONATHAN

Well--well--well, you--you see--I--I--

ROSALIE

We could spend the evenings together--at my place. (PLAYS WITH HIS HAIR.) It gets so lonesome there, you know what I mean? I mean, I don't know what to do. I get too lonesome there.

JONATHAN

Ma-ma-ma-maybe you--you can--come over--here? Maybe you you can do--that.

ROSALIE

Why are you trembling so?

JONATHAN

I'm--I'm--I'm--I'm--

ROSALIE

Are you afraid?

JONATHAN

Nnnnnnnnnnnnnnnno. Whaaaaaaa-why--should I--be--afraid?

ROSALIE

Then why won't you come visit me?

JONATHAN

I--I--I--I

ROSALIE

I don't think you're allowed to go out. That's what I think.

JONATHAN

Nnnn-o. I--I--can-can--can--

ROSALIE

Why can't you go out, Jonathan? I want to know.

JONATHAN

Nnnnnnnnnn--

ROSALIE

Tell me, Jonathan!

ROSALIE

Are you afraid?

JONATHAN

Nnnnnnnnnnnnnnnno. Whaaaaaaa-why--should I--be--afraid?

ROSALIE

Then why won't you come visit me?

JONATHAN

I--I--I--I

ROSALIE

I don't think you're allowed to go out. That's what I think.

JONATHAN

Nnnn-o. I--I--can-can--can--

ROSALIE

Why can't you go out, Jonathan? I want to know.

JONATHAN

Nnnnnnnnnnn--

ROSALIE

Tell me, Jonathan!

JONATHAN

I--I--

ROSALIE

I said I want to know! Tell me.

JONATHAN

I--I don't know. (RISES AND CROSSES D L C.) I don't know why. I mean. I've---nnnnnnnever really thought--about going out. I guess--it's just natural for me to--stay inside. You see--I've got so much to do. I mean, all my ssssstamps and--ca-coins and books. (CROSSES U C.) The pa-pa-plane might ffffly overhead while I was going downstairs. And then thhhere are--the plants ta-to feeeed. And I enjoy vvvery much wa- watching you and all yyyyour chil-dren. I've really got so ma-many things--to--do. Like--like my future, for instance. (CROSSES SLOWLY TO R OF TABLE AND FACES OFF D R.) Ma-Mother says I'm going to be great. I ssswear. Of course, she doesn't know ex-actly what I'm--going to be great in--so she sits every afternoon for--for two hours and thinks about it. Na-na-naturally I've--got to be here when she's thinking in case she--thinks of the answer. Otherwise she might forget and I'd never know--what I'm ga-going to be great in. You--see what I mean? I mean, I've--I've ggggot so many things to do I--just couldn't possibly get anything done if I ever-went--outside. (PAUSES AND LOOKS DOWN.) Besides, Mother locks the front door.

ROSALIE

(RISES.) I thought so.

JONATHAN

No! You-you don't understand. (CROSSES TOWARD ROSALIE A FEW STEPS.) It's not what you think. She doesn't lock the door to ka-ka-keep me in, which would be malicious.

She--locks the door so I can't get out, which is for my own good and therefore--beneficient.

CUCKOO CLOCK

(FROM THE MASTER BEDROOM U L.) Cuckoo! Cuckoo! Cuckoo!

ROSALIE

What's that?

JONATHAN

A warning.

ROSALIE

What do you mean, a warning?

JONATHAN

A warning that you have to go. Your time is up. (CROSSES TO ROSALIE.)

ROSALIE

My time is what?

JONATHAN

Your time is up. You have to go. (PULLS HER TOWARD D C EXIT.) Now. At once. Right away. You can't stay any longer. You've got to go!

ROSALIE

Why?

JONATHAN

I don't really know.

CUCKOO CLOCK

Cuckoo! Cuckoo! Cuckoo! (ROSALIE STOPS AT L C. JONATHAN STOPS AT D C.)

ROSALIE

Why did your mother ask me to come up here?

JONATHAN

So I--I could meet you.

ROSALIE

Then why didn't you ask me yourself? Something's wrong around here, Jonathan. I don't understand why you didn't ask me yourself.

JONATHAN

Ma-Mother's so much better at those things.

CUCKOO CLOCK

CUCKOO! CUCKOO! CUCKOO!!

JONATHAN

You've got to get out of here! That's the third warning.
(STARTS TO PUSH HER TOWARD D C.)

ROSALIE

Will you call me on the phone?

JONATHAN

Please, you've got to go!

ROSALIE

Instead of your mother telling me to come, will you come
and get me yourself? Will you at least call me? Wave to
me? (STANDS D C ON RAMP.)

JONATHAN

Yes-yes--I'll do that. (CROSSES U C.) Now get out of
here!

ROSALIE

I want you to promise to come and see me again.

JONATHAN

Get out!

ROSALIE

Promise me.

JONATHAN

(BACKS TO L OF TABLE.) GET OUT!

ROSALIE

Why do you keep looking at that door?

JONATHAN

Please.

ROSALIE

Why do you keep looking at that door?

JONATHAN

Please! You've got to go before it's too late!

ROSALIE

There's something very wrong here. I want to see what's behind that door. (STARTS TO CROSS U L. JONATHAN GRABS ROSALIE AROUND THE KNEES AT C.)

JONATHAN

(KNEELING.) I love you.

(ROSALIE STARES DOWN AT JONATHAN.)

ROSALIE

What did you say?

JONATHAN

I-I-I llllove you. I love you, I love you, I love you.
I--(CUCKOO CLOCK SCREAMS. THE BEDROOM DOOR U L OPENS.
MADAME ROSEPETTLE CROSSES IN ONE STEP. SEE FIGURE 4.)
too late.

MADAME ROSEPETTLE

Two warnings are enough for any man. (CROSSES SLOWLY TO
U R C.) Three are enough for any woman. The cuckoo struck
three times and then a fourth and still she's here. (TURNS
AND FACES ROSALIE AND JONATHAN.) May I ask why?

ROSALIE

You've been listening at the keyhole, haven't you?

MADAME ROSEPETTLE

I'm talking to my son, harlot! (CROSSES R AROUND TABLE TO
BELOW TABLE.)

ROSALIE

(CROSSES TO MADAME ROSEPETTLE.) What did you say!

MADAME ROSEPETTLE

Harlot, I called you! (CROSSES BY ROSALIE TO C.) Slut,
scum, sleazy prostitute catching and caressing children and
men. Stroking their hearts. (TURNS BACK TO ROSALIE.)
I've seen you.

ROSALIE

What are you talking about?



MADAME ROSEPETTLE

Blind man's buff with the children in the garden. The redheaded one--fifteen, I think. Behind the bush while the others cover their eyes. Up with the skirt, one-two-three and it's done. Don't try to deny it. (CROSSES ABOVE JONATHAN.) I've seen you in action. I know your kind.

ROSALIE

That's a lie! (CROSSES TO R OF MADAME ROSEPETTLE.)

MADAME ROSEPETTLE

Life is a lie, my sweet. Not words but Life itself. Life in all its ugliness. It builds green trees that tease your eyes and draw you under them. Then when you're there in the shade and you breathe in and say, "Oh God, how beautiful," that's when the bird on the branch lets go his droppings and hits you on the head. Life, my sweet, beware. It isn't what it seems. I've seen what it can do. I've watched you dance.

ROSALIE

What do you mean by that?

MADAME ROSEPETTLE

Last night in the ballroom. I've watched you closely and I know what I see. You danced too near those men and you let them do too much. Don't try to deny it. Words will only make it worse. It would be best for all concerned if you left at once and never came again. Good day. (CROSSES TOWARD BEDROOM U L.)

ROSALIE

Why don't you let Jonathan out of his room?

MADAME ROSEPETTLE

(STOPS U L.) Who?

ROSALIE

Jonathan.

MADAME ROSEPETTLE

Who? (CROSSES BACK TO U R OF JONATHAN WHO IS KNEELING AT C.)

ROSALIE

Your son.

MADAME ROSEPETTLE

You mean Albert? Is that who you mean? Albert?

JONATHAN

Pa-pa-please do-don't.

MADAME ROSEPETTLE

Is that who you mean, slut? H'm? Speak up? Is that who you mean?

ROSALIE

I mean your son.

MADAME ROSEPETTLE

I don't let him out because he is my son. (LEANS OVER JONATHAN.) I don't let him out because his skin is as white as fresh snow and he would burn if the sun struck him. I don't let him out because outside there are trees with birds sitting on their branches waiting for him to walk beneath. I don't let him out because you're there, waiting behind the bushes with your skirt up. I don't let him out because he is susceptible. That's why. Because he is susceptible. Susceptible to trees and to sluts and to sunshine.

ROSALIE

Then why did you come and get me?

MADAME ROSEPETTLE

Because, my dear, my studious, stupid son had been watching you through that stupid telescope he made. (RISES.) Because, in short, he wanted to meet you and I, in short, wanted him to know what you were really like. Now that he's seen, you may go.

ROSALIE

(CROSSES TO JONATHAN.) And if I choose to stay? (MADAME ROSEPETTLE CROSSES BETWEEN THEM AND FORMS TRIANGLE. SEE FIGURE 5.)

MADAME ROSEPETTLE

Can you cook?

ROSALIE

Yes.



MADAME ROSEPETTLE

How well?

ROSALIE

Fairly well.

MADAME ROSEPETTLE

Not good enough! My son is a connoisseur. A connoisseur, do you hear? I cook him the finest foods in the world. Recipes no one knows exist. Food my sweet, is the finest of arts. And since you can't cook you are artless. You nauseate my son's aesthetic taste. (CROSSES D R C.) Do you like cats?

ROSALIE

(COUNTERS TO R C.) Yes.

MADAME ROSEPETTLE

What kind of cats?

ROSALIE

Any kind of cats.

MADAME ROSEPETTLE

Alley cats?

ROSALIE

Especially alley cats.

MADAME ROSEPETTLE

I thought so. (TURNS AND CROSSES TO ROSALIE.) Go, my dear. Find yourself some weeping willow and set yourself beneath it. Cry of your lust for my son and wait, for a mocking bird waits above to deposit his verdict on your whorish head. (ROSALIE CROSSES TO D C EXIT AND STOPS. MADAME ROSEPETTLE STANDS ABOVE HER SON.) My son is as white as fresh snow and you are tainted with sin. You are garnished with garlic and turn our tender stomachs in disgust.

ROSALIE

Why did you come to Port Royale?

MADAME ROSEPETTLE

To find you! (TAKES JONATHAN TO COUCH AT L.)

ROSALIE

(TURNS TO FACE HER.) And now that you've found me--?

MADAME ROSEPETTLE

I throw you out! I toss you in the garbage can! I heard everything, you know. So don't try to call. The phone is in my room--and no one goes into my room but me. (EXITS OFF U L. ROSALIE SLOWLY CROSSES TO JONATHAN. MADAME ROSEPETTLE RE-ENTERS U L AND STANDS IN DOORWAY.) One more thing. If, by some chance, the eleventh child named Cynthia turns out to be a Siamese cat, give it to me. I, too, pay well.

JONATHAN

(REACHES OUT TO ROSALIE.) Come back again. Pa-please--come back again. (ROSALIE BACKS SLOWLY TOWARD D C EXIT. SEE FIGURE 6.)



BLACKOUT

CURTAIN

SCENE THREE

(THE HOTEL ROOM AT NIGHT, ONE WEEK LATER. JONATHAN IS ALONE ON THE COUCH AT L STAGE. A CLOCK TICKS IN THE DISTANCE. LAUGHTER IS HEARD. FIREWORKS EXPLODE, AND ORGIASTIC MUSIC IS HEARD. JONATHAN CROSSES U C AND CLOSES FRENCH WINDOWS. SOUND OUT. JONATHAN CROSSES TO C. WINDOWS FALL. SOUND RETURNS.)

VENUS-FLYTRAPS

Grrrrrr. (THEY REACH OUT FOR JONATHAN.)

ROSALINDA THE FISH

Grarrgh!

(JONATHAN CROSSES U C ONTO PORCH. WALTZ MUSIC IN. FESTIVAL MUSIC OUT. BELLBOYS ENTER FROM WALL PANELS L AND R. THEY CROSS TO C. SET UP TABLE AND FIX THE WINDOWS. THEY EXIT L AND R.)

THE COMMODORE

How lovely it was this evening, madame, don't you think? (MADAME ROSEPETTLE AND THE COMMODORE ENTER THROUGH THE AUDIENCE AND CROSS TO C BELOW TABLE.) How gentle a wind, madame. And the stars, how clear and bright they were, don't you think? Ah, the waltz. (THEY BEGIN TO WALTZ IN CIRCLE FROM C, TO D R, TO U C, TO D L.) How exquisite it is, madame, don't you think? One-two-three, one-two-three, one-two-three. Ahhhh, madame, how classically simple. How stark; how strong--how romantic--how sublime.

Oh, if only madame knew how I've waited for this moment. If only madame knew how long. How this week, these nights, the nights we shared together on my yacht; the warm, wonderful nights, the almost-perfect nights, the would-have-been-perfect nights, had it not been for the crew peeking through the port-holes. (THEY STOP BACK AT C.) Ah, those nights, madame, those nights; almost alone but never quite; but now, tonight, at last, we are alone. And now, madame, now we are ready for romance. For the night was made for love. And tonight, madame--we will love.

MADAME ROSEPETTLE

Oh, Commodore, how you do talk.

THE COMMODORE

Madame, may I kiss you?

MADAME ROSEPETTLE

Why?

THE COMMODORE

Your lips are a thing of beauty.

MADAME ROSEPETTLE

My lips, Commodore, are the color of blood. (THEY BEGIN TO WALTZ IN AREA R OF TABLE.) I must say, you dance exceptionally well, Commodore--for a man your age.

THE COMMODORE

I dance with you, madame. That is why I dance well. For to dance with you, madame, is to hold you.

MADAME ROSEPETTLE

Well, I don't mind your holding me, Commodore, but at the moment you happen to be holding me too tight. (THEY STOP U R.)

THE COMMODORE

I hold you too dear to hold you too tight, madame. I hold you close, that is all. And I hold you close in the hope that my heart may feel your heart beating.

MADAME ROSEPETTLE

(MADAME ROSEPETTLE GRABS COMMODORE.) One-two-three, one-two-three. (THEY WALTZ IN PLACE.) You're not paying attention to the music, Commodore. I'm afraid you've fallen out of step.

THE COMMODORE

Then lead me, madame. Take my hand and lead me wherever you wish. For I would much rather that I think of my words than my feet.

MADAME ROSEPETTLE

Why certainly, Commodore. Certainly, if that is want-- it will be my pleasure to oblige. (MADAME ROSEPETTLE SPINS HIM TOWARD L S AND AROUND TO R S. SHE STOPS.) Beautiful, isn't it, Commodore? The waltz. The Dance of Lovers. I'm so glad you enjoy it so much. (WALTZ MUSIC OUT.) Commodore! You were supposed to spin just then. When I squeeze you in the side it means spin!

THE COMMODORE

I--I thought it was a sign of affection.

MADAME ROSEPETTLE

You'll learn. (SQUEEZES HIM IN THE SIDE. THE COMMODORE SPINS ABOUT UNDER HER ARM. SEE FIGURE 7.) Ah, you're learning.

THE COMMODORE

Ho-ho, ho-ho. Stop. I'm dizzy. Stop, please. Stop. Dizzy. Ho-ho. Stop. Dizzy. Ho-ho. Stop. Too fast. Slow. Slower. Stop. Ho-ho. Dizzy. Too dizzy. Weeee! (ROSEPETTLE KISSES THE COMMODORE AT U R C. A LONG KISS.) Asthma. (BREAKS FREE AND BACKS U R. ROSEPETTLE FOLLOWS.) Couldn't breathe. Asthmatic. Couldn't get any air. Couldn't get any. . . air. You--you surprised me--you know. Out--of breath. Wasn't--ready for that. (MADAME ROSEPETTLE ALMOST KISSING HIM.) Didn't expect you to kiss me.

MADAME ROSEPETTLE

I know. (CROSSES TO C AND SITS LEFT OF TABLE.) That's why



I did it. Perhaps you'd prefer to sit down for a while, Commodore? Catch your breath, so to speak. Dancing can be so terribly tiring--when you're growing old. Well, if you like, Commodore, we could just sit and talk. And perhaps--sip some pink champagne, eh? Champagne?

THE COMMODORE

Ah, Champagne. (CROSSES TO TABLE AND STANDS U R OF MADAME ROSEPETTLE.)

MADAME ROSEPETTLE

And just for the two of us.

THE COMMODORE

Yes, The two of us. Alone.

MADAME ROSEPETTLE

Yes. All alone.

THE COMMODORE

At last.

MADAME ROSEPETTLE

With music in the distance.

THE COMMODORE

A waltz.

MADAME ROSEPETTLE

A Viennese waltz.

THE COMMODORE

The Dance of Lovers. (TAKES HER HAND.)

MADAME ROSEPETTLE

Yes, Commodore. The Dance of Lovers.

THE COMMODORE

Madame, you have won my heart. And easily.

MADAME ROSEPETTLE

No, Commodore. You have lost it. Easily. (CHAIR IS
PULLED BY INVISIBLE WIRE TO COMMODORE AND FORCES HIM TO
SIT AT C S TABLE. ROSPETTLE OFFERS CHAMPAGNE.)
Champagne?

THE COMMODORE

Champagne.

MADAME ROSEPETTLE

Four?

THE COMMODORE

Please.

MADAME ROSEPETTLE

A toast?

THE COMMODORE

To you.

MADAME ROSEPETTLE

No, Commodore, to you.

THE COMMODORE

No, madame, to us.

MADAME ROSEPETTLE AND THE COMMODORE

To us. (THEY TOAST AND BREAK GLASSES.)

THE COMMODORE

Pardon, madame! Pardon!

MADAME ROSEPETTLE

Pas de quoi, monsieur.

THE COMMODORE

J'etais emporte par l'enthousiasme du moment.

MADAME ROSEPETTLE

Pas de quoi.

(BELLBOYS ENTER AGAIN THROUGH WALLS R AND L. THEY CLEAN UP AND LEAVE FRESH TABLE. THEY EXIT BACK THROUGH WALLS R AND L.) Encore?

THE COMMODORE

Si'l vous plait. To us.

MADAME ROSEPETTLE

To us, Monsieur--Commodore. (THEY TOAST LIGHTLY.) Tell me about yourself.

THE COMMODORE

My heart is speaking, madame. Doesn't it tell you enough?

MADAME ROSEPETTLE

Your heart, monsieur, is growing old. It speaks with a murmur. Its words are too weak to understand.

THE COMMODORE

But the feeling, madame, is still strong.

MADAME ROSEPETTLE

Feelings are for animals, monsieur. Words are the specialty of Man. Tell me what your heart has to say.

THE COMMODORE

My heart says it loves you.

MADAME ROSEPETTLE

And how many others, monsieur, has your heart said this to?

THE COMMODORE

None but you, madame. None but you.

MADAME ROSEPETTLE

And pray, monsieur, just what is it that I've done to make you love me so?

THE COMMODORE

Nothing, madame. And that is why. You are a strange woman, you see. You go out with me and you know how I feel. Yet, I know nothing of you. You disregard me, madame, but never discourage. You treat my love with indifference--but never disdain. You've led me on, madame. That is what I mean to say.

MADAME ROSEPETTLE

I've led you to my room, monsieur. That is all.

THE COMMODORE

To me, that is enough.

MADAME ROSEPETTLE

I know. That's why I did it.

THE COMMODORE

Madame, I just must ask you something. Why are you here?

MADAME ROSEPETTLE

Well, I have to be somewhere, don't I?

THE COMMODORE

But why here, where I am? Why in Port Royale?

MADAME ROSEPETTLE

You flatter yourself, monsieur. I am in Port Royale only because Royale was in my way....I think I'll have to move on tomorrow.

THE COMMODORE

For--home?

MADAME ROSEPETTLE

Only the very young and the very old have homes. I am neither. So I have none.

THE COMMODORE

But--surely you must come from somewhere.

MADAME ROSEPETTLE

Nowhere you've ever been.

THE COMMODORE

I've been many places.

MADAME ROSEPETTLE

But not many enough. (DRINKS.)

THE COMMODORE

(GRABS HER HAND.) Madame, don't go tomorrow. Stay. My heart is yours.

MADAME ROSEPETTLE

How much is it worth?

THE COMMODORE

A fortune, madame.

MADAME ROSEPETTLE

Good, I'll take it in cash.

THE COMMODORE

But the heart goes with it, madame.

MADAME ROSEPETTLE

And you with the heart, I suppose?

THE COMMODORE

Forever.

MADAME ROSEPETTLE

Sorry, monsieur. (PULLS HAND AWAY.) The money's enticing and the heart would have been nice, but you, I'm afraid, are a bit too bulky to make it all worth while.

THE COMMODORE

You jest, madame.

MADAME ROSEPETTLE

I never jest, monsieur. There isn't enough time.

THE COMMODORE

Then you make fun of my passion, madame, which is just as bad.

MADAME ROSEPETTLE

But, monsieur, I've never taken your passion seriously enough to make fun of it.

THE COMMODORE

Then why have you gone out with me?

MADAME ROSEPETTLE

So that I might drink champagne with you tonight.

THE COMMODORE

That makes no sense.

MADAME ROSEPETTLE

It makes perfect sense.

THE COMMODORE

Not to me.

MADAME ROSEPETTLE

It does to me.

THE COMMODORE

But I don't understand. And I want to understand.

MADAME ROSEPETTLE

Don't worry, Commodore. You will.

THE COMMODORE

When?

MADAME ROSEPETTLE

Soon.

THE COMMODORE

How soon?

MADAME ROSEPETTLÉ

Very soon. (THE COMMODORE GRABS MADAME ROSEPETTLÉ BY THE WRIST.) Now.

THE COMMODORE

Madame--I love you. Forever. Don't you understand?
(KISSES HER HANDS.) Oh, your husband--He must have been--
a wonderful man--to have deserved a woman such as you.
(HE SOBS AND KISSES HER HANDS AGAIN.)

MADAME ROSEPETTLÉ

Would you like to see him?

THE COMMODORE

A snapshot?

MADAME ROSEPETTLÉ

No. My husband. He's inside in the closet. I had him
stuffed. Wonderful taxidermist I know. H'm? What do you
say, Commodore? Wanna peek? He's my very favorite trophy.
I take him with me wherever I go.

THE COMMODORE

Hah-hah, hah-hah. Yes. Very good. Very funny. Sort of

a--um--white elephant, you might say.

MADAME ROSEPETTLE

You might say.

THE COMMODORE

Well, it's--certainly very--courageous of you, a--a woman still in mourning, to--to be able to laugh at what most other women wouldn't find--well, shall we say, funny.

MADAME ROSEPETTLE

Life, my dear Commodore, is never funny. It's grim! It's there every morning breathing in your face the moment you open your red baggy eyes. Life, Mr. Roseabove, is a husband hanging from a hook in the closet. Open the door too quickly and your whole day's half shot to hell. But open the door just a little ways, sneak your hand in, pull out your dress and your day is made. Yet He's still there, and waiting--and sooner or later the moth balls are gone and you have to clean house. Oh, it's a bad day, Commodore, when you have to stare Life in the face, and you find he doesn't smile at all; just handsomely hangs there---with his tongue sticking out.

THE COMMODORE

I--don't find this--very funny.

MADAME ROSEPETTLE

Sorry. I was hoping it would give you a laugh.

THE COMMODORE

I don't think it's funny at all. And the reason that I don't think it's funny at all is that it's not my kind of jolly joke. One must respect the dead.

MADAME ROSEPETTLE

Then tell me. Commodore--why not the living, too? (POURS MORE CHAMPAGNE.)

THE COMMODORE

How--how did he die?

MADAME ROSEPETTLE

Why, I killed him, of course. Champagne? (TOASTS THE COMMODORE.) To your continued good health. Ah, the waltz, monsieur. Listen. The waltz. The Dance of Lovers. Beautiful--don't you think? (LAUGHS.)

THE COMMODORE

Forgive me, madame. But--I find I must leave. Urgent business calls. Good evening. (TRYs TO LEAVE CHAIR. HE CANNOT AND SO SINKS BACK INTO SEAT.)

MADAME ROSEPETTLE

Now you don't really want to ever leave--do you, Commodore? After all, the night is still so young--and you haven't even seen my husband yet. Besides, there's a little story I still

must tell you. (RISES AND CROSSES L C.) A bedtime story. A fairy-tale full of handsome princes and enchanted maidens; full of love and joy and music; tenderness and charm. It's my very favorite story, you see. And I never leave a place without telling it to at least one person. So please, Commodore, won't you stay? . . . Just for a little while? Good. (CROSSES TO R OF COMMODORE.) I knew you'd see it my way. It would have been such a shame if you'd had to leave. For you see, Commodore, we are, in a way, united. We share something in common--you and I. We share desire. For you desire me, with love in your heart. While I, my dear Commodore--desire your heart. (CROSSES ABOVE COMMODORE TO D L.) How simple it all is, in the end. His name was Albert Edward Robinson Roespettle, III. How strange and sad he was. All the others who had come to see me had been tall, but he was short. They had been rich, while he was poor. The others had been handsome but Albert, poor Albert, he was as ugly as a humid day--and just about as wet, too. Oh, he was a fat bundle of sweat, Mr. Roseabove. He was nothing but one great torrent of perspiration. Winter and summer, spring and fall, Albert was dripping wet. Yes, he was round and wet and hideous and I never could figure out how he ever got such a name as Albert Edward Robinson Rosepettle, III. (SLOWLY CROSSES TO D R C.) Oh, I must have been very susceptible indeed to have married Albert. I was twenty-eight and that is a susceptible year in a woman's life. And of course I was a virgin, but still I--Oh, stop blushing, Mr. Roseabove. I'm not lying. It's all true. Part of the cause of my condition, I will admit, was due to the fact that I still hadn't gone out with a man. But I am certain, Mr. Roseabove, I am certain that despite your naughty glances my virtue would have remained unsoiled, no matter what. Oh, I had spoken to men. Their voices are gruff. And in crowded streets I had often brushed against them. Their bodies, I found, are tough and boney. I had the foresight to realize I must know what I was up against. So I watched them huddled in hallways, talking in nervous whispers and laughing when little girls passed by. I watched their hands in crowded buses and even felt their feeling elbows on crowded streets. (CROSSES D L C.) And then, one night, when I was walking home I saw a man standing in a window. I saw him take his contact lenses out and his hearing aid out of his ear. I saw him take the teeth out of his thin-lipped mouth and drop them into a smiling glass of water. I saw him lift his snow-white hair off of his wrinkled, white head and place it on a gnarled, wooden hat tree. And then I saw him take his clothes off. And then he was done and didn't move but stood and stared at a full-length mirror whose glass he had covered with towels, then I went home and wept. And

so one day I bolted the door to my room. I locked myself inside, bought a small revolver just in case, then sat at my window and watched what went on below. It was not a pretty sight. (CROSSES D C.) Some men came up to see me. They came and knocked. I did not let them in. (FACES AUDIENCE.)

"Hello in there," they said.

"Hello in there, my name is Steven.

Steven S. (for Steven) Steven.

One is odd, but two is even.

I know you're not, but I'm not leavin'."

Or something like that. But they all soon left anyway. I think they caught the scent of a younger woman down the hall...And so I listened to the constant sound of feet disappearing down the stairs. I watched a world walk by my window; a world of lechery and lies and greed. I watched a world walk by and I decided not to leave my room until this world came to me, exactly as I wanted it. (CROSSES U S TO ABOVE COMMODORE.) One day Albert came toddling up the stairs. He waddled over to my room, scratched on the door and said, in a frail and very frightened voice, "Will you please marry me?" And so I don't know why, but I did. It was as simple as that. I still so wonder why. I don't really know why. I guess it just seemed like the right thing to do. No, that's not right.--Perhaps it's--yes, perhaps it's because one look at Albert's round, sad face and I knew he could be mine--that no matter where he went, or whom he saw, or what he did, Albert would be mine, my husband, my lover, my own--mine to love; mine to live with;--mine to kill. (CROSSES U R.) And so we were wed. That night I went to bed with a man for the first time in my life. The next morning I picked up my mattress and moved myself into another room. Not that there was something wrong with Albert. Oh, No! He was quite the picture of health. His pudgy, pink flesh bouncing with glee. Oh, how easily is man satisfied. How easily is his porous body saturated with "fun". All he asks is a little sex and a little food and there he is, asleep with a smile, and snoring. Never the slightest regard for you, lying in bed next to him, your eyes open wide. No, he stretches his legs and kicks you in the shins; stretches his arms and smacks you in the eye. Oh, now noble, how magical, how marvelous is love. (STARTS CURVED CROSS FROM R C, TO U C, TO ULC.) So you see, Mr. Roseabove, I had to leave his room. For as long as I stayed there I was not safe. After all, we'd only met the day before and I knew far too little about him. But now that we were married I had time to find out far more. A few of the things I wanted to know were; What had he done before we'd ever met, what had he wanted to do, what did he still

want to do, what was he doing about it? What did he dream about while he slept? What did he think about when he stared out of the window?...What did he think about when I wandered out and he was alone? These were the things that concerned me most. And so I began to watch him closely. My plan worked best at night for that was when he slept--I would listen at my door until I heard his door close. (CROSSES D L.) Then I'd tiptoe out and watch him through his keyhole. When his lights went out I'd open up his door and creep across the floor to his bed and then I'd listen more. My ear became a stethoscope that recorded the fluctuations of his dream life. For I was waiting for him to speak; waiting for the slightest word that might betray his sleeping, secret thoughts--Only I listened for a word of love...But, no, Albert only snored and smiled and slept on, and on. And that, Mr. Roseabove, is how I spent my nights!--next to him; my husband, my "Love". (CROSSES TO ABOVE COMMODORE.) A month later I found that I was pregnant. (CROSSES TO R OF COMMODORE.) It had happened that first horrible night. How like Albert to do something like that. I fancy he knew it was going to happen all the time, too. I do believe he planned it that way. One night, one shot, one chance in a lifetime and bham! you've had it. It takes an imaginative man to miss. It takes someone like Albert to do something like that. (CROSSES D R C.) But yet, I never let on. Oh, no. Let him think I'm simply getting fat, I said. And that's the way I did it, too. I nonchalantly am putting on weight; Albert nonchalantly watching my belly grow! If he knew what was happening to me he never let me know it. He was as silent as before. Twelve months later my son was born. He was so overdue, when he came out he was already teething. He bit the index finger off the poor doctor's hand and snapped at the nurse till she fainted. I took him home and put him a cage in the darkest corner of my room. But still I--

THE COMMODORE

Was it a large cage?

MADAME ROSEPETTLE

What? (CROSSES TO R C.)

THE COMMODORE

Was his cage large? I hope it was. Otherwise it wouldn't be very comfortable.

MADAME ROSEPETTLE

I'm sorry. (CROSSES TO COMMODORE.) Did I say cage? I meant crib. I put him in a crib and set the crib in a corner of my room where my husband would not see him. For until I'd found out exactly why he'd married me, I would not tell him that a son had been born. (SLOWLY CROSSES TO D L C.) Shortly after that, Rosalinda came. She was one of Albert's many secretaries. I've always felt there was something star-crossed about those two, for she was the only person I ever met who was equally as ugly as he. It seems that Rosalinda's mother had once owned a laundromat, and she, being a curious child, had taken an exploratory trip through the mangler, with the result that she now resembled nothing more nor less than a question mark. (CROSSES TO U L C.) Well, naturally, I never let on that I knew she had come. When she walked in front of me I looked straight through her. When she spoke I looked away. I flatly refused to recognize her presence. And though Albert watched me like a naughty child anxious to see his mother's reaction to a mischievous deed, I disregarded him and continued my life as if nothing had changed. So at night, instead of preparing one, I prepared two beds. Instead of fluffing one pillow I fluffed up two and straightened an extra pair of sheets. I said good night as politely as I could and left them alone--the monster and my husband, two soulmates expressing their souls through sin. (CROSSES U L.) And while they lay in bed I listened at the keyhole. And when they slept I crept in and listened more. Albert had begun to speak! After months of my listening for some meager clue he suddenly began to talk in torrents. Words poured forth and I, like some listening sponge, soaked them up and stayed for more. He told her things he never told to me. Words of passion and love. He told her how he worshipped the way she cooked; how he worshipped the way she talked; how he'd worshipped the way she'd looked when he'd first met her; even the way she looked now. And this to a hideous, twisted slut of a woman sleeping in sin with him! . . . Words he never told to me. . . (CROSSES TO L OF COMMODORE.) I ask you, Mr. Roseabove, I ask you--how much is a woman supposed to take?? Ah, but the signs of regret were getting to show. And oh, how I

laughed when I saw. How little he ate; how little he spoke; how slowly he seemed to move. It's funny but he never slept anymore. I could tell by his breathing. (CROSSES ABOVE COMMODORE.) Then one night he died. One year after she had come he passed on. The doctors didn't know why. His heart, they said, seemed fine. It was as large a heart as they'd ever seen. And yet he died. At one o'clock in the morning this large heart stopped beating. But it wasn't till dawn that she discovered he was dead. Well, don't you get it? Don't you catch the irony, the joke? What's wrong with you? He died at one. At ONE O'CLOCK IN THE MORNING!! DEAD!! Yet she didn't know he was dead till dawn. What a lover he must have been! WHAT A LOVER!! (CROSSES TO R C.) Well, don't you see? Their affair, their sinfulness--it never even existed! He tried to make me jealous but there was nothing to be jealous of. His love was sterile! He was a child. He was weak. He was impotent. He was mine! Mine all the time, even when he was in bed with another, even in death--he was mine! COMMODORE CLIMBS OUT OF CHAIR, AND CRAWLS TOWARD D C.) Don't tell me you're leaving, Commodore. Is there something wrong? Why, Commodore, you're on your knees! How romantic. Don't tell me you're going to ask me to marry you again? Commodore, you're trembling. What's wrong? Don't tell me you're afraid that I'll accept? (COMMODORE STOPS D C.)

THE COMMODORE

(RISING.) I--I-I--feel sa-sorry for your---ssson--that's all-I--can--sssay. (EXITS THROUGH AUDIENCE D C.)

MADAME ROSEPETTLE

And I feel sorrier for you! (CROSSES D C.) For you are nothing! While my son is mine. His skin is the color of fresh snow, and his mind is pure. For he is safe, Mr. Roseabove, and it is I who saved him. Saved him from the world beyond that door. The world of you. The world of his father. A world waiting to devour those who trust in it; those who love. A world vicious under the true hypocrisy of kindness, ruthless under the falseness of a smile. Well, go

on, Mr. Roseabove. Leave my room and enter your world again--your sex-driven, dirt-washed wate of cannibals eating each other up while they pretend they're kissing. Go, Mr. Roseabove, enter your blind world of darkness. My son shall have only light!! (EXITS U L. BELLBOYS ENTER THROUGH THE WALLS AND CLEAN UP. THEY SET UP LIVING ROOM, AND EXIT BACK THROUGH WALLS L AND R. ROSEPETTLE ENTERS FROM U L BEDROOM AND EXITS THROUGH AUDIENCE D C. JONATHAN ENTERS FROM PORCH U C AND CROSSES TO C.)

VENUS FLYTRAPS

(THEY REACH FOR JONATHAN.) Grrrrrrr!

(JONATHAN BACKS TO R C. AND HITS THE TABLE ON WHICH THE FISH AND THE DICTAPHONE LIE. THE DICTAPHONE MAKES A STRANGE NOISE AND BEGINS TO SPEAK.)

THE DICTAPHONE

(MADAME ROSEPETTLE'S VOICE.) ". . . And of course, could one never forget those lovely seaside shops--"

(DICTAPHONE RACES FASTER AND LOUDER. JONATHAN HITS MACHINE. IT SCREAMS AND STOPS. THE FISH GIGGLE AND THE PLANTS SNARL. JONATHAN EXITS U R AND GETS AXE. RE-ENTERS AND CROSSES TO U C, CHOPS THE FLYTRAPS DOWN, AND THEN TURNS TO CHOP ROSALINDA THE FISH.)

ROSALIE

(OFFSTAGE D C.) Jonathan! (ENTERS THROUGH AUDIENCE D C AND CROSSES U C TO L OF JONATHAN AT TABLE.) Jonathan! What have you done? Jonathan! Put down that silly old axe. You might hurt yourself. Jonathan!

JONATHAN

I killed it!

ROSALIE

Ssh. Not so loudly. (CROSSES TO U L C BY WINDOWS.)
Where'd you put her body?

JONATHAN

There.

ROSALIE

Where? I don't see a body. Where is she?

JONATHAN

Who?

ROSALIE

Your mother.

JONATHAN

I haven't killed my mother. I've killed her plants. The
one I used to feed. I've chopped their hearts out.

ROSALIE

I thought you'd killed your mother. (THE PIRANHA FISH
GIGGLES. JONATHAN CROSSES TO ABOVE TABLE AND LIFTS AXE.)

Jonathan, stop. (CROSSES TO JONATHAN AND GRABS HIS ARM.)
Jonathan! (JONATHAN SMASHES THE AXE AGAINST THE FISH BOWL,
AND IT BREAKS.)

ROSALINDA THE FISH

AAEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEE!!

ROSALIE

Now look at the mess you've made.

JONATHAN

Do you think it can live without water?

ROSALIE

What will your mother say when she gets back?

JONATHAN

Maybe I should hit it again. Just in case. (STRIKES IT
AGAIN.)

ROSALINDA THE FISH

UGHHHHHHHHHHHHH!

(JONATHAN CROSSES TO COUCH AND SITS.)

ROSALIE

There's something bothering you, isn't there?

JONATHAN

I thought I'd never see you again. I never thought I'd talk to you again. I never thought you'd come.

ROSALIE

Did you really think that? (CROSSES L TO ABOVE COUCH.)

JONATHAN

She told me she'd never let you visit me again. She said no one would ever visit me again. She told me I had seen enough.

ROSALIE

But I had a key made.

JONATHAN

She--she hates me.

ROSALIE

What?

JONATHAN

She doesn't let me do anything. She doesn't let me listen to the radio. She took the tube out of the television set. She doesn't let me use her phone. She makes me show her all my letters before I seal them. She so--doesn't--

ROSALIE

Letters? What letters are you talking about?

JONATHAN

Just--letters I write.

ROSALIE

To whom?

JONATHAN

To people.

ROSALIE

Other girls? (SITS R OF JONATHAN.) Could they be to other girls by any chance?

JONATHAN

No. They're just to people. No people in particular. Just people in the phone book. Just names. So far I've covered

all the "A's" and "B's" up to Barreara.

ROSALIE

What is it you say to them? Can you tell me what you say to them--or is it private? Jonathan, just what do you say to them?

JONATHAN

Mostly I just ask them what they look like. But I don't think she ever mails them. She reads them, then takes them out to mail, but I don't think she ever does. I'll bet she just throws them away. Well, if she's not going to mail the, the, the letters--why does she say she will? I--I could save the stamps.

ROSALIE

Guess why I had this key made.

JONATHAN

I'll bet she's never even mailed one. From Abandonno to Barreara, not one.

ROSALIE

Well, do you know why I had this key made? Do you know why I'm even wearing this new dress?

JONATHAN

She tells me I'm brilliant. She makes me read and re-read

books no one's ever read. She smothers me with blankets at night in case of a storm. She tucks me in so tight I can't even get out till she comes and takes my blankets off.

ROSALIE

Try and guess why I'm all dressed up. (RISES AND CROSSES
R A FEW STEPS.)

JONATHAN

She says she loves me. (RISES AND CROSSES BY ROSALIE TO
D C.) Every morning, before I even have a chance to open my eyes, there she is, leaning over my bed, breathing in my face and saying, "I love you, I love you."

ROSALIE

Jonathan, isn't my dress pretty?

JONATHAN

But I heard everything tonight. I heard it all when she didn't know I was here.

ROSALIE

What's the matter? JONATHAN CROSSES U C.) Jonathan, what's the matter?

JONATHAN

But she must have known I was here. She must have known!

I mean--where could I have gone? (PAUSE.) But--if that's the case--why did she let me hear?

ROSALIE

Jonathan, I do wish you'd pay more attention to me. Then look here, look at my dress. (CROSSES UP TO L OF JONATHAN.) You can even touch it if you like. Guess how many crinolines I have on. Guess why I'm wearing such a pretty, new dress, Jonathan!

JONATHAN

Maybe--it didn't make any difference to her--whether I heard or not.

ROSALIE

Come with me. (CROSSES TO D C.)

JONATHAN

What?

ROSALIE

Leave and come with me.

JONATHAN

Where?

ROSALIE

Anywhere.

JONATHAN

Wha'--wha'--what do you mean?

ROSALIE

(STANDS ON RAMP D C.) I mean, let's leave. Let's run away. Far away. Tonight. Both of us, together. Let's run and run. Far, far away.

JONATHAN

You--mean, leave? (SLOWLY CROSSES TO C.)

ROSALIE

Yes, leave.

JONATHAN

Just like that?

ROSALIE

Just like that.

JONATHAN

But-but--but--

ROSALIE

You want to leave, don't you?

JONATHAN

I--I don't know--know. I--I--

ROSALIE

What about the time you told me how much you'd like to go outside, how you'd love to walk by yourself, anywhere you wanted?

JONATHAN

I--I don't--know.

ROSALIE

Yes, you do. Come. (JONATHAN CROSSES TO HER AT D C.)
Come give me your hand. Stop trembling so. Everything will be all right. Give me your hand and come with me. Just through the door. Then we're safe. Then we can run far away, somewhere where she'll never find you, come, Jonathan. It's time to go.

JONATHAN

There are others you could take. (CROSSES BACK TO C.)

ROSALIE

But I don't love them.

JONATHAN

You--you love me?

ROSALIE

Yes, Jonathan. I love you.

JONATHAN

Wha-wha-why?

ROSALIE

Because you watch me every night.

JONATHAN

Well--can't we stay here?

ROSALIE

No!

JONATHAN

Wha-wha-whhhy?

ROSALIE

Because I want you alone. I want you, Jonathan. Do you understand what I said? I want you for my husband.

JONATHAN

I--I--can't, I mean, I--I want to go--go with you very much but I--I don't think--I can. I'm sorry. (KNEELS C. ROSALIE CROSSES TO R OF JONATHAN.)

ROSALIE

What time will your mother be back?

JONATHAN

Na--not for a while.

ROSALIE

Are you sure?

JONATHAN

Ya--yes.

ROSALIE

Where is she?

JONATHAN

The usual place.

ROSALIE

What do you mean, "the usual place"?

JONATHAN

The beach. She likes to look for people making love. Every night at midnight she walks down to the beach searching for people lying on blankets and making love. When she finds them she kicks sand in their faces and walks on. Sometimes it takes her as much as three hours to chase everyone away. (ROSALIE CROSSES U L TOWARD THE MASTER BEDROOM.) WHAT ARE YOU DOING!? STOP!! You can't go in there!!! STOP!!

ROSALIE

Come. (DOOR OPENS.)

JONATHAN

Close it. Quickly!

ROSALIE

Come, Jonathan. Let's go inside.

JONATHAN

Close the door!

ROSALIE

You've never been in here, have you? (EXITS U L.)

JONATHAN

No. (CROSSES TO U L TO DOOR.) And you can't go in, either. No one can go in there but Mother. It's her room. Now close that door!

ROSALIE

(OFF STAGE.) What's wrong with the lights?

JONATHAN

Mother's in mourning. (CROSSES QUICKLY TO U L DOOR.) What have you done?! (BACKS TO U L C.) What have you done?

ROSALIE

Come in, Jonathan.

JONATHAN

GET OUT OF THERE!

ROSALIE

Will you leave with me?

JONATHAN

I can't!

ROSALIE

But you want to, don't you?

JONATHAN

Yes, yes, I want to, but I told you--I--I--I can't. (CROSSES TO R C.) I can't! Do you understand? I can't! Now come out of there.

ROSALIE

Come in and get me.

JONATHAN

Rosalie, please.

ROSALIE

MY, what a comfortable bed!

JONATHAN

GET OFF THE BED!!! (CROSSES U L TO DOOR.)

ROSALIE

What soft, fluffy pillows. I think I'll take a nap.

JONATHAN

Rosalie, please listen to me. Come out of there. You're not supposed to be in that room. Please come out. Rosalie, please.

ROSALIE

Will you leave with me if I do?

JONATHAN

Rosalie--? (CROSSES TO U C.) I'll--I'll show you my stamp collection if you'll promise to come out.

ROSALIE

Bring it in here.

JONATHAN

Will you come out then?

ROSALIE

Only if you bring it in here.

JONATHAN

(CROSSES TO U L DOOR.) But I'm not allowed to go in there.

ROSALIE

Then I shan't come out!

JONATHAN

You've got to!!

ROSALIE

Why?

JONATHAN

Mother will be back. (CROSSES TO C AND LOOKS OUT OVER AUDIENCE.)

ROSALIE

She can sleep out there. I think I'll take a little nap. This bed is so comfortable. Really, Jonathan, you should come in and try it.

JONATHAN

MOTHER WILL BE BACK SOON!!

ROSALIE

Give her your room then if you don't want her to sleep on the couch. I find it very nice in here. Good night.

JONATHAN

(SLOWLY CROSSES TO U L C.) If I come in, will you come out?

ROSALIE

If you don't come in I'll never come out.

JONATHAN

And if I do?

ROSALIE

Then I may.

JONATHAN

What if I bring my stamps in? (RUNS OFF U R AND GETS COINS AND STAMPS.)

ROSALIE

Bring them in and find out.

JONATHAN

(OFF STAGE.) I'm bringing the coins, too.

ROSALIE

How good you are, Jonathan. (JONATHAN RE-ENTERS U R.)

JONATHAN

My books, too. (CROSSES TO U L.) How's that? I'll show you my books and my coins and my stamps. I'll show you them all. Then will you leave?

ROSALIE

Perhaps. (JONATHAN EXITS U L. WALLS CHANGE AND BED SLIDES ON WITH ROSALIE RECLINING ON IT. CLOSET SLIPS INTO PLACE. JONATHAN ENTERS U L.) What's wrong?

JONATHAN

I've never been in here before. (SLOWLY CROSSES TO L OF BED U C.)

ROSALIE

It's nothing but a room. There's nothing to be afraid of.

JONATHAN

Well, let me show you my stamps. (CROSSES TO ABOVE BED.)
I have one billion, five--

ROSALIE

Later, Jonathan. We'll have time. Let me show you something first. (TAKES HIS HAND.)

JONATHAN

What's that?

ROSALIE

You're trembling.

JONATHAN

What do you want to show me?

ROSALIE

There's nothing to be nervous about. Come. Sit down.

JONATHAN

What do you want to show me?

ROSALIE

I can't show you if you won't sit down.

JONATHAN

I don't want to sit down! (CROSSES D L C.)

ROSALIE

Jonathan!

JONATHAN

You're sitting on Mother's bed.

ROSALIE

THEN--Let's pretend it's my bed.

JONATHAN

It's not your bed!

ROSALIE

Come, Jonathan. Sit down here next to me.

JONATHAN

We've got to get out of here. (CROSSES TO U L DOOR.)
Mother might come.

ROSALIE

Don't worry. We've got plenty of time. The beach is full

of lovers.

JONATHAN

(TURNS BACK.) How do you know?

ROSALIE

I checked before I came.

JONATHAN

(CROSSES TO BED.) Let--let me show you my coins. (SITS ON
L END OF BED.)

ROSALIE

Why are you trembling so?

JONATHAN

Look, we've got to get out! (BACKS TO U C.) Something
terrible will happen if we don't.

ROSALIE

THEN--leave with me. (KNEELS ON BED.)

JONATHAN

The bedroom? (CROSSES TO U L OF ROSALIE.)

ROSALIE

The hotel. The island. Your mother. Leave with me, Jonathan. Leave with me now, before it's too late.

JONATHAN

I--I--I

ROSALIE

I love you, Jonathan, and I won't give you up. (TAKES HIS HAND.) I want you . . . all for myself. Not to share with your mother, but for me, alone--to love, to live with, to have children by. I want you, Jonathan. You, whose skin is softer and whiter than anyone's I've ever known. Whose voice is quiet and whose love is in every look of his eye. I want you, Jonathan, and I won't give you up.

JONATHAN

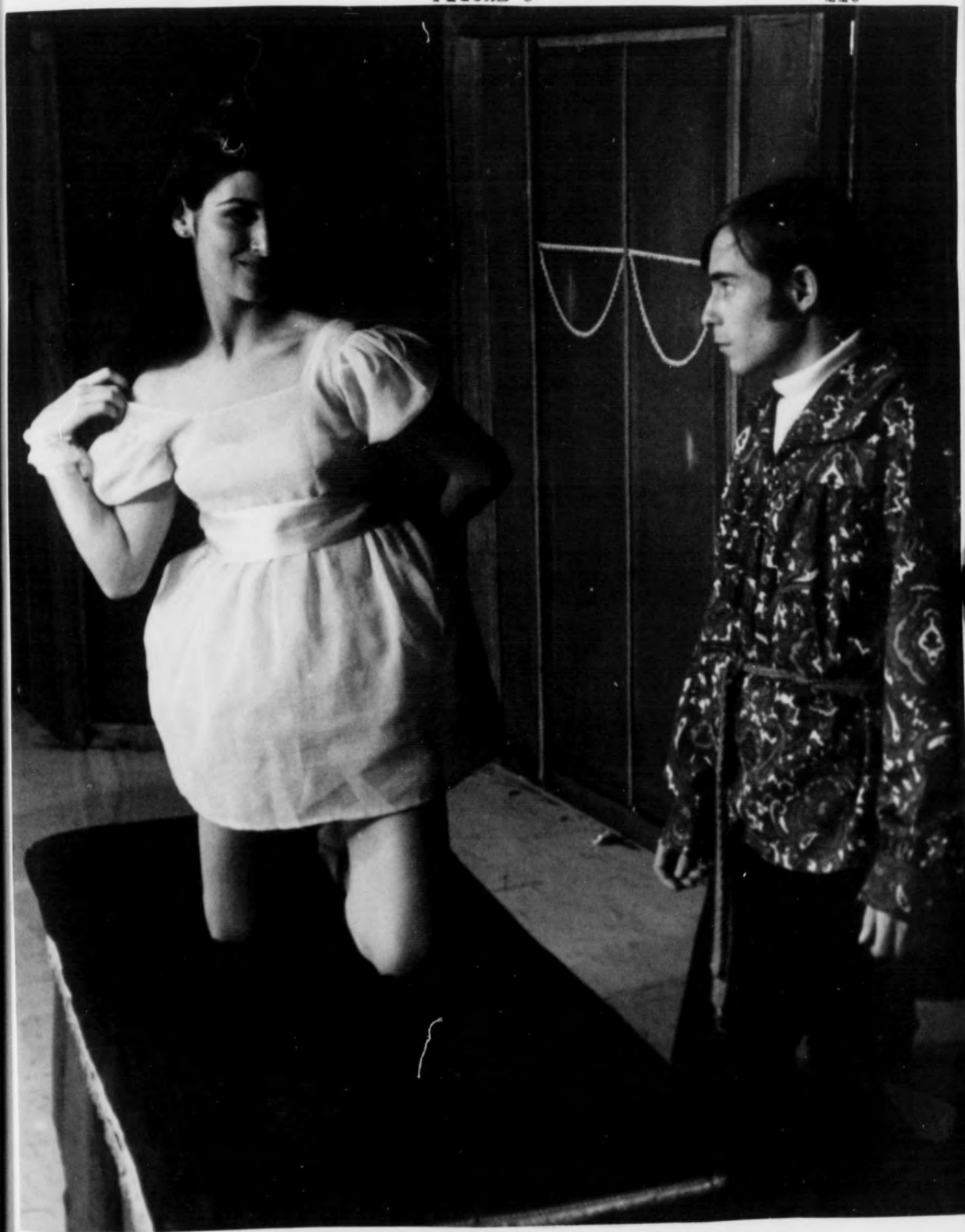
What do you want me to do?

ROSALIE

(STRETCHES OUT ON COUCH.) Forget about your mother. Pretend she never existed and look at me. Look at my eyes, Jonathan; my mouth, my hands, my skirt, my legs. (STANDS ON THE BED.) Look at me, Jonathan. Are you still afraid?

JONATHAN

I'm not afraid. (ROSALIE STARTS TO UNBUTTON HER DRESS. SEE FIGURE 8.) What are you doing?! (BACKS U L.) No!



ROSALIE

Your mother is strong, but I am stronger. (TAKES OFF SKIRT.)
I don't look so pink and girlish any more, do I? But you
want me anyhow. You're ashamed but you want me anyhow. It's
written on your face. And I'm very glad. Because I want you.

JONATHAN

PUT IT ON! Please, put it back on!

ROSALIE

Come, Jonathan. (LIES DOWN ON BED.) Lie down. Let me loosen
your shirt.

JONATHAN

no . . . NO . . . NO! STOP! Please, stop!

ROSALIE

Don't be afraid, Jonathan. Come. Lie down. Everything will
be wonderful. (DROPS A STRAP OVER ONE SHOULDER.)

JONATHAN

(CROSSES TO L END OF BED.) G-et--off my mother's bed!!

ROSALIE

I want you, Jonathan, all for my own. (TAKES JONATHAN'S

HAND.) Come. The bed is soft. Lie here by my side. JONATHAN SITS. CORPSE FALLS OUT OF U C CLOSET AND LANDS ON ROSALIE. JONATHAN LEAPS TO U L OF CLOSET. SEE FIGURE 9.) Who the hell is this!?

JONATHAN

It--it--it--it--it's

ROSALIE

What a stupid place to keep a corpse. (CROSSES U C AND PUSHES CORPSE BACK IN CLOSET. CROSSES TO JONATHAN AND BACKS WITH HIM TO U C ABOVE COUCH.) Forget it, Jonathan. I put him back in the closet. Everything's fine again.

JONATHAN

It's--it's--it's my--my--my--

ROSALIE

It's all right, Jonathan. It's all right. Sshh. Come. Let me take off your clothes. (PULLS JONATHAN CLOSE AT UC. AGAIN CORPSE FALLS OUT. IT LANDS ON ROSALIE. JONATHAN CROSSES U L.)

JONATHAN

It's--it's my--ffffather.

ROSALIE

Oh, for God's sake. (PUSHES CORPSE OFF TO L C. JONATHAN



FIGURE 9

STANDS FROZEN U L.) Jonathan . . .? LISTEN TO ME, JONATHAN! STOP LOOKING AT HIM AND LOOK AT ME! I love you, Jonathan, and I want you now. Not later and not as partner with your mother but now and by myself. (PULLS JONATHAN TO ABOVE BED. LIES DOWN ON BED HOLDING JONATHAN'S HAND.) I want you, Jonathan, as my husband. I want you to lie with me, to sleep with me, to be with me, to kiss me and touch me, to live with me, forever. Stop looking at him! He's dead! Listen to me. I'm alive. I want you for my husband! Now help me take my slip off. Then you can look at my body and touch me. Come, Jonathan. Lie down. I want you forever.

JONATHAN

Ma-mother was right! You do let men do anything they want to you.

ROSALIE

Of course she was right! Did you really think I was that sweet and pure? Everything she said was right. Behind the bushes and it's done. One-two-three and it's done. Here's the money. Thanks. Come again. Hah-hah! Come again! So what? It's only you I love. They make no difference.

JONATHAN

You're dirty! (TRIES TO MOVE BUT ROSALIE HOLDS TIGHT.)

ROSALIE

No, I'm not dirty. I'm full of love and womanly feelings. I want children. Tons of them. I want a husband. Is that dirty? Take off your clothes.

JONATHAN

NO!!

ROSALIE

Forget about your father. Drop your pants on top of him, then you won't see his face. Forget about your mother. She's gone. Forget them both and look at me. Love is so beautiful, Jonathan. Come and let me love you; tonight and forever. Come and let me keep you mine. Mine to love when I want, mine to kiss when I want, mine to have when I want. Mine. All mine. So come, Jonathan. Come and close your eyes. I'm sure your eyes closed will make it better. It's better that way. Close your eyes so you can't see. Close your eyes and let me lie with you. Let me show you how beautiful it is . . . love.

(JONATHAN SLOWLY CROSSES TO HER AND SMOTHERS HER WITH HER DRESS. THEN TRIPS AND FALLS OVER THE CORPSE. JONATHAN EXITS IN SLOW MOTION U L. THE WALLS AND FURNITURE CHANGE BACK. JONATHAN RE-ENTERS U L AND CROSSES ONTO PORCH U C.)

MADAME ROSEPETTLE

Twenty-three couples! (ENTERS THROUGH AUDIENCE D C. CROSSES TO U L.) I annoyed twenty-three couples, all of them coupled in various positions, all equally distasteful. It's a record, that's what it is. It's a record! (SEES PLANTS.) What has happened? My plants! (CROSSES TO U C.) Rosalinda! (CROSSES TO ABOVE TABLE.) Great Gods, my fish has lost her water! ALBERT! ALBERT! Ah, there you are, Edward, (CROSSES TO U R C.) what has been going on during my brief absence? What are you doing out here when Rosalinda is lying in there dead? DEAD!? (CROSSES TO ABOVE TABLE.) Oh, God, dead. Robinson, answer me. What are you looking for? I've told you there's nothing out there. (EXITS U L. JONATHAN WAVES AT AIRPLANE. MADAME ROSEPETTLE RE-ENTERS U L AND STOPS AT U L C.) This place is a madhouse. That's what it is. A madhouse. ROBINSON! I went to lie down and I stepped on your father! I lay down and I lay on some girl. (JONATHAN CROSSES SLOWLY TO D C.) Robinson, there is a woman on my bed and I do believe she's stopped breathing. What is more,

you've buried her under your fabulous collection of stamps, coins and books. I ask you, Robinson. As a mother to a son I ask you. What is the meaning of this?

BLACKOUT

CURTAIN

PART II

CRITICAL EVALUATION

The purpose of this chapter is to present a critical evaluation of the work of the Director's Bureau. The analysis will be made in the following order: (1) the goals and aims of the Bureau, (2) the methods employed, (3) the results achieved, and (4) the general reaction to the work.

PART III

The Director's Bureau has been established as a permanent organization. The first year of its work was devoted to the study of the situation in the Bureau of the Director. The second year was devoted to the study of the situation in the Bureau of the Director. The third year was devoted to the study of the situation in the Bureau of the Director. The fourth year was devoted to the study of the situation in the Bureau of the Director. The fifth year was devoted to the study of the situation in the Bureau of the Director. The sixth year was devoted to the study of the situation in the Bureau of the Director. The seventh year was devoted to the study of the situation in the Bureau of the Director. The eighth year was devoted to the study of the situation in the Bureau of the Director. The ninth year was devoted to the study of the situation in the Bureau of the Director. The tenth year was devoted to the study of the situation in the Bureau of the Director.

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PART III

CRITICAL EVALUATION

The purpose of this chapter is to present this director's personal critical evaluation of his work with Oh, Dad, Poor Dad, Mama's Hung You in the Closet and I'm Feelin' So Sad. The analysis will be handled by discussing the following: (1) the goals and aims of interpretation, (2) compositional aspects, (3) actor-director relationships, and (4) audience reaction to the production.

Interpretation

The director chose this play for several reasons. The first was the simple challenge of directing an absurdist drama. The director's practical experience with theatre of the absurd was limited. Two years before he had produced Samuel Beckett's play, Waiting for Godot, with some success, winning the Carolina Dramatic Association's highest award. There were of course very different problems and an entirely different view of life in "Oh Dad". The director wished to investigate those problems and to explore Arthur Kopit's interpretation of life.

The second reason for the director's choosing this play was to expose the students of Elon College to an important contemporary playwright, and his thoughts. In the past, the

academic and cultural life of Elon had centered around the classics and light comedy. The director hoped to broaden campus knowledge by presenting a contemporary view of our society. The discussions prompted by the play revealed a healthy interest among the community in new statements by new playwrights.

Thirdly, the director found himself surrounded by students of theatre begging to be exposed to absurdist production. Their love and devotion prompted the director to schedule "Oh Dad . . ." for the fall. As a result these students began individual research into contemporary drama, disciplining their time wisely so that they might learn more of today's theatre.

To a man, the cast agreed with the director's interpretation of the play--not simply as a caricature or parody, but as a serious attempt by a young concerned dramatist to restate tragedy in modern terms. At this point the director feels that Kopit rather left the investigation dangling, but perhaps this is as it should be. It remains to be seen if the author will expand his technique, and grow into a full mature playwright.

The director then did not mean for the audience to simply laugh and go home, rather he meant for them to laugh, feel pity and terror, and go home to think about what they had seen. To this end, we felt somewhat successful, although there were moments when the thin line between enjoyment and offensiveness

was broken. As an example, the actresses playing Rosalie and Madame Rosepettle had been instructed to wear body stockings in the same color as their dresses. The director hoped to suggest as much as possible of the naked body, so as to arouse interest in one of the primary grains of turmoil in the play, sex. He hoped to intensify the audience's view of "Oh Dad . . ." to x-ray proportions by carrying the audience along to the point that they recognized the actresses' body stockings. "Oh, ho! They're teasing us", they should say, but not before they had recorded their own indignation at supposing the most evil of thoughts, the very same thoughts that ran through Madame Rosepettle's open mind.

To this end the director had instructed the actress playing Rosalie to wear pink panties under her pink body stocking. On dress rehearsal night she wore white panties instead and this small neglect actually broke the entire effect of the play. There was very little laughter at that preview performance. The director can only feel that something as small as a pair of white panties in this case did destroy the interpretation of "Oh Dad . . ." as a tragi-farce by introducing an element too real to be a part of the theatrical whole.

Theatrically the set was to take on a subjective relationship to the play. In order that the setting might become the environment, the director asked for revolving wall

panels and at one point had the entire room move to reinforce the distorted state of Jonathan's mind.

The revolving panels allowed the bellboys to appear and disappear seemingly as if a part of the environment. They were always close at hand to serve Madame Rosepettle.

The moving walls placed the characters in a controlled environment. When Jonathan did for the first time invade his mother's sacred room, the undulating lights and moving walls were used to heighten the grotesque relationship between mother and son.

These theatrical devices were quite successful considering the limitations of Mooney Little Theatre and a lack of design experience. The stage and the ceiling are white tile, which reflected a great deal of outside light. The windows, because of poor masking devices, made it quite impossible to have a complete blackout. This spoiled, for example, the transition from bedroom to living room. To combat the seepage of light, the director tried to cover the change with undulating color. The change was still obvious, although not quite as distracting.

The director hoped the walls might be full-size revolving panels that would fit in a light frame, but had to settle for three-quarter panels. They decreased the effectiveness of a total moving environment, and almost gave the appearance of a gothic melodrama.

The director often wished for some fly space, but managed to shift scenery logically enough to show the influence that environment has upon our lives.

If the director were to produce this play again, he would like to review his x-ray theory and probably use Victorian-like costumes. It may be that the power of suggestion is stronger in this play if it is seen through the audience's imagination.

Composition

The director of Oh Dad, Poor Dad was vital to the production, in that he did at all times control the picturization of Kopit's play. Character placement was dictated by the relative strengths and weaknesses of the characters in that particular scene.

Compositionally, Madame Rosepettle was least restricted. She, of course, dominated the play and in large measure guided it to its final outcome. The others were more often manipulated as if by her invisible presence.

Psychologically, the compositions were basically acceptance-rejection or guilt-innocence oriented. The flexible proscenium-thrust staging allowed for many shallow-deep relationships, which were used on purpose to combat the horizontal set arrangement. Key moments were composed in opposition to the natural flow of the set. The director hoped to establish the grotesque and unusual by this approach,

and to expose the audience to an experience of conflicting planes. The environmental plane of horizontal and symmetrical set units and props were in constant battle with the human element of diagonal and vertical movements. Crucial moments of acceptance-rejection were heightened by these opposing forces.

Compositionally, the characters were given positions relative to their personalities. Madame Rosepettle dominated the stage with upstage positions and sat down in the scene with the Commodore only facing full front, while the Commodore sat facing Madame Rosepettle and the weaker side of the stage off left. Again when she was confronted by Rosalie over the care and feeding of her son, Madame Rosepettle positioned herself between the two young people facing almost full front while Jonathan sat at her feet and Rosalie stood with her back to Madame Rosepettle facing off right. Although Rosalie was defying her strength, Madame Rosepettle remained visually the stronger of the two.

Jonathan was given weak moments and positions. He continually chose to show his weakness by sitting or drooping his shoulders.

The director gave Jonathan one strong move at the very end of the play. The mother then stepped back into the room dismayed at the desecration of her room and as she called from her doorway Jonathan moved on a slow cross to down center. Only at the very end did Jonathan seem to make a positive

move. Compositionally, we could now question the relationship between mother and son. If Jonathan dominates now, will he continue to dominate and if so what shape will his domination take?

The director feels he was successful in those moments just mentioned. On several occasions the audience would respond to the Rosalie-Madame Rosepettle confrontation with audible gasps, and Jonathan's strong move at curtain provoked immediate sympathetic smiles and applause.

Actors

In this discussion the director will try to analyse problems that arose while working with some of the actors. He will also mention good points and try to show how during rehearsal the director and the actor together solved these problems.

Madame Rosepettle presented the most serious problem. The actress had been a student at Elon and was a teacher in the Alamance County Public Schools. She had experience and to some degree understood many of the qualities of Madame Rosepettle. The director and the actress approached the role with the understanding that this would be the most exciting and most challenging artistic project she would encounter for some time.

The actress was enthusiastic, but she soon found that this role would take more of her time than she had imagined.

Pressures at home and at school very early in rehearsals began to take their toll. Concentration was the first ingredient to go. Movements were changed to the point that the director had to suggest before each rehearsal that everyone relax, and clear their minds of all extraneous matter.

Every rehearsal for the actress and the director became a slow, painful effort to strip away the many layers of inhibition. Several alarming elements of Madame Rosepettle's character drove the actress further away from the necessary freedom of the creative process. During rehearsal the director did all in his power to create for her an atmosphere of ease and mental freedom. Still the actress would not suspend her disbelief. It began to look as if the performance of Madame Rosepettle would simply be a technical one, but there remained one last hope.

The director now looked forward to the tensions and adrenalin of opening night. Structurally and technically she was ready. Quietly the director told the actress that her mind and body had been brought to this moment. She was asked to relax and enjoy the role and allow the spirit of this woman to come forth. That night the actress was Madame Rosepettle; self-confident, relishing acid pauses, and showering conquering smiles on all who felt her perform. It is sad that during subsequent performances the actress was unable to reach a similar level of performance.

Even the finest actor can occasionally find himself resting on his laurels. The actor cast as Jonathan began his study of that character in a very lazy manner. Well into the second week the actor was still playing either himself or his past role. Line readings made little sense, and he did not relate to situations or other actors. At this point, the director had to shock the actor into a selfless line of thought. Knowing that the actor was basically serious about his work, and that he thrived on challenge and self-improvement, the director decided to use controlled anger and disappointment as a means of forcing the actor back into his good work habits. This technique worked as movements, motivations and character detail began to emerge. Immediately the real actor began to make the character come to life. The actor worked diligently outside his appointed rehearsal time.

How can a director help an actor build a performance when the actor can find nothing in the character to relate to? This problem has a first for the director. Usually an actor can find some thread upon which to build, be it physical, mental or emotional, but the actor playing Commodore Roseabove appeared to be either "walking the role", or mugging for the first two weeks. Finally there had to be an individual rehearsal called.

The director and the actor sat facing each other.

"I do not know this man", the actor said. "I don't know anyone like him either." The battle was on. For an hour or more they talked and worked. The director had the actor try various postures and moves. An attempt was made to reach the Commodore through simple emotions and/or passions, such as lust and greed. Could the actor relate to anyone he knew? An uncle? An acquaintance? A friend of his father's? Finally the actor stopped. "Thank you", he said. "I'll see you tonight", and he left the theatre.

That night the actor had assembled a believable and genuinely funny beginning for the character of Commodore Roseabove. The actor had anchored himself to the image of his uncle, a man who enjoyed all of life, and had begun to extend and enlarge only the elements of lust and greed, in his part uncle, part fiction. This process took patience, sweat and mental torture, and from it all the actor found a single bone, the image around which he could construct a skeleton, the characteristics. The actor then fattened and clothed the character of Commodore Roseabove, and was joyfully accepted by the audience.

Audience Reaction

In his play Arthur Kopit gave Madame Rosepettle many unusually blunt and bitter lines. Diabolically and hysterically the playwright revealed the character's strange views on matters of sex, love, religion, marriage and family

tradition. Would a relatively conservative community reject such a bold statement on the insanity of life? By and large the reaction was indeed favorable.

Opening night was certainly a success. The Greensboro Daily News praised the cast and crew. The audience appeared to be involved in the play, alternately laughing or reacting with expressions of concern, pleasure and incredulity.

The second evening of performance was a letdown. Inexperience had it's way. The tempo was down and the actors tried too hard. The next night the cast began to slowly put together the pieces. The show improved each night thereafter, but "Oh Dad . . ." never again emerged with the spiritual wholeness it had possessed opening night.

There were moments, of course, on the fourth and final night when the play was dangerously close to being right, but all too briefly the iceberg revealed what lay beneath the surface of the sea, and then gently settled it's being below the mirror of level water.

The actor-audience relationship was not at all what the director wanted. The acting area and seating area in relation to movement and composition functioned as planned, but this relationship did not serve to increase the aesthetic experience. Actually, the audience was to have been confronted with the ideas, not the action.

Why did confrontation weaken the production? The lighting in Mooney Theatre was the culprit. The director tried

to mask off the acting area from the house but the equipment proved to be inadequate. This meant that the first two rows were in an unusually bright spill area, and that another two rows had more than enough light to read their programs during the show.

If we understand the audience as working under unit reaction, we can begin to see how this light spill served to intensify the self-consciousness of the individual, rather than the self-lessness of the individual. The segment of the audience in the light spill could see both themselves and one another. They began to imagine they were being watched, and so subsequently they felt embarrassed by the grotesque thoughts of the playwright and the close, intense action of the direction. The entire audience needed to rest in a cushion of black space.

This production of Arthur Kopit's play, "Oh Dad, Poor Dad, Mama's Hung You in the Closet and I'm Feelin' So Sad" was for the director exciting, frustrating, intense and exhausting. The tireless effort of the young people involved should be roundly applauded, and perhaps there might be a special curtain call for Mr. Arthur L. Kopit.

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APPENDIX

ELON PLAYERS

— PRESENT —

OH DAD

POOR DAD

MAMMA'S HUNG

YOU IN THE CLOSET

AND

I'M FEELING SO SAD

by

Arthur Kopit

directed by

Ed Pilkington

NOVEMBER 20, 21, 22*, 24 — 8:15 P.M.

*2:15 P.M.

CAST

Madame Rosepettle _____ Nancy W
Jonathan _____ Jim G
Commodore Rosabove _____ Dale K
Lt. Bell Boy _____ Bill
Bell Boy # 1 _____ Jeff
Bell Boy # 2 _____ Dan
Bell Boy # 3 _____ Henry B
Dad _____ Bob
Fly Trap # 1 _____ Ann S
Fly Trap # 2 _____ Glenda
Rosalie _____ Stevie C



Intermission between
Scene 2 and Scene 3

Ushers provided by Sigma Phi Beta.

CAST

ettle Nancy Wilkinson
..... Jim Gillespie
sabove Dale Kaufman
..... Bill Shaver
..... Jeff Fields
..... Dan Miller
..... Henry Buckner
..... Bob Snyder
..... Ann Shawhan
..... Glenda Condon
..... Stevie Cowden



Intermission between
Scene 2 and Scene 3

ed by Sigma Phi Beta.

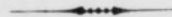
CREW

Stage Manager	Dan Miller
Technical Director	Dice Wyllie
Sound	Bill Swartz
Props	Ed Baker Al Watson
Special Effects	Dave Scudder
Costume and Make-up	Jacquei Lye
Assistant Costumer	Chris Miller
Costume Crew	Ann Shawhan Cathy Albair
Publicity	Larry Sage
Lights	Dice Wyllie
Stage Crew	Clay Buckner Janet Sylvester



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Jay Wilkinson



Produced by special arrangement with
Samuel French

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at University of North Carolina at Greensboro.