

THE CASE OF THE CRUSHED PETUNIAS AND  
THE GNÄDIGES FRAULEIN: A PRODUCTION BOOK

by

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Approved by:

Mallore Doe  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Major Professor

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## EXPLANATION OF PLATE I

The program

PLATE I



The K-State Players

and

The Department of Speech

present

*The Case of the Crushed Petunias  
and  
The Gnadiges Fraulien*

by  
TENNESSEE WILLIAMS

a  
Master's Thesis Production

Purple Masque Theatre  
8:00 p.m.  
January 15, 16, 17, 18  
1969

PLATE I

People Who Made This Production Possible

Playwright ..... TENNESSEE WILLIAMS  
Director ..... \*Leanna Lenhart  
Thesis Advisor ..... \*Wallace Dace  
Stage Manager ..... \*Patt Tarry  
Set Design ..... \*Leanna Lenhart  
Costume Design ..... \*Betty Morgan  
Costumes ..... Betty Morgan  
Robert Wirth  
Sound ..... Lee Lovell  
Properties ..... Angee Johns  
Chris Macho  
Vicki Soppe  
Sharon Yarbrough  
Linda Beisner  
\*Hal Knowles  
Richard Hill  
\*Steve Butterworth  
Scenery ..... Hal Knowles  
Technical Productions class  
Makeup ..... Kay Kirby  
Publicity ..... \*Mary Horton  
\*Bill Kammer  
Larry Gilbert  
Sue Tasker  
Elaine Overly  
Bill Strong  
Marti Walls  
Posters ..... Leanna Lenhart  
\*Carl Hinrichs  
Aaron Hinrichs  
Kirk Lovell

Music

The Arkenstone Travelers  
The Lodovick Avenue Washboard Band

Acknowledgements

Mrs. Harry L. Ekart  
Peter Greenquist  
Patrick O'Neill  
Mrs. Robert Conover  
Manhattan Jr. High School

\*Members Theta Alpha Phi

Manhattan Mercury  
KMAN  
KJCK  
WIBW  
KSRH

Cast  
(in order of appearance)

THE CASE OF THE CRUSHED PETUNIAS

Dorothy Simple ..... Carolyn Foote  
Policeman ..... \*John Jagger  
Young Man ..... Kirk Lovell  
Mrs. Dull ..... Diane Gaede

Five Minute Intermission

THE GNADIGES FRAULEIN

Polly ..... \*J. L. Allred  
Molly ..... Patt. Tarry ..... XXXXXXXX  
Permanent Transient ..... Dennis Karr ..... XXXXXXXX  
Indian Joe ..... Jeffrey Danielson  
Gnädiges Fraulein ..... Joyce Furney  
Cocaloony Bird ..... Jan Fent

SCENE I

(The southern most tip of the Disunited Mistakes)

Ten Minute Intermission

SCENE II

(Stars have appeared in the sky  
and tender is the night, etc.)

Produced by special arrangement with Dramatists Play Service

## Introduction

I have always been a fan of Tennessee Williams and when I read The "Gnadiges Fraulein in Esquire magazine, I was overwhelmed by the power of the script and its theatrical possibilities. Williams originally wrote The "Gnadiges Fraulein to be played with The Mutilated under the title of Slapstick Tragedy, a bill of one-act plays. However, I simply did not like The Mutilated. It also required a large cast and a large, somewhat realistic setting which I wanted to avoid. Consequently, I needed to find another play. Since it was about an hour long, I wanted another one-act play, about twenty to thirty minutes in length to go with it and balance out the bill. I decided to stick with Williams, partially to bring more unity to the total production and partially because he has written a great many one-act plays of high quality. Therefore, I came up with an evening with Tennessee Williams, presenting two little-known one-act plays representing one of his earliest attempts at playwriting and one of his most recent attempts.

### Director's Approach to the Play

#### SELECTION OF SCRIPTS

Because of the allegorical nature of both The Case of the Crushed Petunias and The Gnadiges Fräulein, the plays were not limited to any one race, religion, or nationality as far as casting or audience appeal were concerned. At a state university, made up of a cross-section of people, this universality is important. The director hoped to attract students from diversified backgrounds to audition for the plays.

Both plays were well suited to the intimate nature of the Purple Masque Theatre. The settings required were technically uncomplicated and could easily be staged. Also, the non-realistic element of the scripts allowed for audience contact. In an intimate theatre, with a small house, the audience-actor relationship is extremely important. It should be one of closeness, of unity, of communication.

These plays were excellent tools to show the progress and development of Tennessee Williams, as a writer of one-act plays for The Case of the Crushed Petunias was one of his earliest efforts, written by 1939, while The Gnadiges Fräulein was first published in 1965, leaving a difference of twenty-five years between the two plays. Each play represented a turning point in Williams' life as an artist. The Case of the Crushed Petunias was included with four other one-acts under the title American Blues and selected by the Group Theatre in 1939 as a winner of the playwriting contest they had sponsored. Not only did Williams win a \$100 award (which was greatly needed at the time) but he also was contacted by Audrey Wood, who became his literary agent and has remained with him throughout his career to the present time. The Gnadiges Fräulein was his first Broadway attempt at presenting a more

allusive kind of presentation, at trying his hand at the avant-garde play-writing which is popular now. It was a comedy (of sorts) and in a different vein than anything he had done before this time.

#### OVERALL APPROACH

An overall evenness of acting was the goal of the production. No one individual should stand out from the rest of the cast. Ensemble acting and togetherness were necessary to unify the production as a whole. The actors strived to present a feeling of having fun and comradeship between themselves and between the actors and the audience. Although the director had definite ideas about each character and the staging of each play, she welcomed any comments and ideas from the actors or observers. A characterization which an actor comes to through his own interpretation is much better understood and solid than one which is imposed. Sometimes, because of lack of time, however, it seems necessary for the director to go ahead and draw very clear pictures for the actors, instead of letting them paint their own concepts.

To achieve a feeling of including the audience, the characters addressed the audience much of the time, almost as if the audience was another character in the play. Furthermore, the characters were physically close to the audience because of the location of the stage and entrances and exits from the stage through the audience. Characters also confronted audience members. Molly, in scene one of The Gnädiges Fräulein, hands the baseball bat to an audience member, while the cocoloony observes the action, plays and reacts to seeing the audience as well as the characters onstage. In The Case of the Crushed Petunias Miss Simple implores the audience to side with her as she laments her crushed flowers.

Since The Case of the Crushed Petunias was written thirty years ago,

it was updated in presentation and interpretation. The universal element of this play was illustrated in that it was only necessary to change one word of the script to appeal to 1969 audiences--that was changing "open car" to "motorcycle." The Young Man became a personification of the hippie generation while Miss Simple and Primandproper, Massachusetts symbolized the establishment and traditions. A variation of psychedelic lighting was incorporated into the script and action of the play because of the popularity of visual sensations in today's society. Also, the script as it stands alone, being an early experimental attempt at playwriting on the part of Williams, is weak. When The Case of the Crushed Petunias was published in 1948, along with the other plays of The American Blues, "Mr. Williams did not want this early experimental play included in the collection."<sup>1</sup> The emphasis on visual effects helped to heighten the poetic nature of the script.

The overall effect was one of black and white, clear cut symbolism, emphasized by costuming, setting, and lighting with color accents of costuming presented in a mod manner. The quality of youth and life permeated the entire stage. Although Tennessee Williams wrote The Case of the Crushed Petunias before World War Two, Korea and Viet Nam, he speaks out against war. The anti-war element was emphasized in this production since the Viet Nam war is constantly before the public. It is impossible to pick up a newspaper without seeing a heading related to war.

The biggest difficulty of producing The Gnädiges Fräulein was capturing the slapstick-tragic element of the play. These diametrically opposing qualities had to come through the interpretation and style of acting. It was

<sup>1</sup>Signi Lenea Falk, Tennessee Williams (New York, 1961), p. 190.

a delicate balance to achieve. Quite often people tend to catagorize ideas, emotions, or thought. Today's society is geared toward pigeon-holing. Scientific progress continues to specialize and separate people and places into specific classifications. Names become numbers, areas become zip codes, and IBM cards list catagories--select one! Man, is a modern social animal, accustomed to seeing and approaching a subject from a black and white, one or the other standpoint. If something is funny, it is not sad. If one likes a person, he does not at the same time hate the person.

To accomplish a balance between humor and horror, it was necessary to examine the script and find out exactly what was funny and what was horrifying. The humor or slapstick part of the play came through the lines and the visual action of the actors onstage. The tragic side was conveyed through the plot or story, the revelation of what had happened and what was happening in terms of dramatic action. It became an almost nebulous quality that permeated the play--nothing one could put a finger on but nevertheless there. In other words, there was slapstick on the surface and tragedy lying underneath.

The extreme contrast between the humor and horror was the technique employed to achieve the effect on the audience. By making Polly and Molly coarse and callous in their enjoyment of their respective lives and delivery of lines, the sensitivity and helpless horrible condition of the fräulein was pointed up. The funnier the slapstick, the more terrifying the tragedy.

The total effect on the audience was one of confusion. One would catch himself laughing and then wonder at what was so funny because what was happening was terrible. It is difficult for an audience to experience this dual reaction. It is exhausting to be pulled in opposite directions at the same time. How much easier it is to have each emotional response clearly

defined and separated!

### Biographical Material

The name Tennessee did not become associated with the name Williams until Thomas Lanier Williams launched his career in New York, when he was nearing thirty years old. Born March 26, 1911, in Columbus, Mississippi, his early childhood was a quiet and happy one.<sup>2</sup> His sister (Rose) older by two years, his mother (Edwina), and he lived with his mother's parents in the Episcopal rectory where his grandfather (Mr. Dakin) was a minister. He saw very little of his father, Cornelius or C. C. as he was called by many, during this time because his father was a traveling shoe salesman and away much of the time. Williams' life during his childhood is important because it has had a great bearing on his writing. Much of his writing appears to be somewhat autobiographical, or at least the idea and characters are based on his experience supplemented by a vivid imagination.

When C. C. got a desk job with the shoe company in 1918 (27), the family moved away from the grandparents and to St. Louis where they all lived together for the first time. Life was no longer secure and happy for Tom. He and his sister were very close and banded together for protection from the cruelty of the other children in the new neighborhood into which they had moved. Because Tim had diphtheria when he was five, which had left his legs paralyzed for nearly two years, he was a small, rather weak child, and the other children picked on him, calling him "sissy." What was worse, his father also picked on him because of this lack of over-abundant masculinity and constantly referred to Tom as "Miss Nancy." None of this tended to make Tom an outgoing person. Writing became his outlet, a way of releasing

<sup>2</sup>Edwina Dakin Williams, Remember Me to Tom (New York, 1963), p. 16.

his feeling, a means with which to block out the world. His only companion in this aloneness was Rose and as she began to develop into a young lady, he began to lose her also. "This awareness of man's solitary condition became frighteningly acute in the adolescent boy and has never left the mature man." His understanding of the sensitive, misunderstood person, the characters he develops so lucidly, was taking shape when he first began to write.

Another symptom began to develop in young Tom, he became afraid of death. This also has carried over into his adult life and writing. "The boy developed a fear of death that also reached epic proportion. One night it occurred to him that falling asleep was akin to dying. For months thereafter, he fought off sleep at night, holding his eyes open and staring with frightened intensity at the open window."<sup>3</sup> It is hard to rationalize or explain this fear. The only death he actually witnessed as a child was in the alley outside of Rose's bedroom window and that was limited to alley cats who were sometimes cornered by a local dog. However, this phobia has always been with him and is a constant theme in much of his writing. Death is somehow brought into the picture. In The Case of the Crushed Petunias, the Young Man talks about death and contrasts it with life and says that dead people give the only advice worth listening to--LIVE. In The Gnädiges Fräulein, he not only has Molly enter into a long discourse about the Dark Angel making his round of the Big Dormitory, but the cocaloony birds pursue the Fraulein with such vengence, that death seems to be inevitable for her. Tennessee Williams, the grown man, still has such a fear of death himself, that when he became ill in late 1968, he converted to Catholicism. In

<sup>3</sup>Nancy Marie Tishler, Tennessee Williams: Rebellious Puritan (New York, 1961), p. 32.

speaking of the five operations Williams has had performed on his eye for the removal of cataracts, Gilbert Maxwell, a long time friend of Williams, stated:

Here was this hypochondrica being who lived in dread of physical and mental illness, trekking off alone to have a knife taken to his left eye without anesthesia. We agreed that day that it didn't make much sense, but now, twenty-odd years later, I have decided it did. Williams is morbidly, pathologically frightened of illness, but he would endure any amount of pain rather than risk the slightest possibility of making an entrance into that nebulous land from whence no traveler has yet returned. He is determinedly set on living.<sup>4</sup>

His fear of death is bound up with his hypochondria. Every since he collapsed with exhaustion in 1935, he has lived in fear of having a weak heart. His draft card lists him as being 4-F because of his heart condition. Doctors at the time of this early collapse told him that his heart was perfectly alright, but he has never believed them. More than once during his life, he has been completely convinced that he is dying, and it has turned out to be something like gas pains. But then the physical and mental and emotional are very closely related and interconnected and it is often impossible to separate one from the other as Williams illustrates in his characters.

On the other hand, Williams' hypochondria and fear of death have increased his affirmation of life. In The Case of the Crushed Petunias he states it clearly, "Live, live, live." The only way to beat death is to live now, while one is alive. He speaks through the Fraulein in The Gnädiges Fräulein in her never ending struggle to continue living on to the last moment. A person with any less dedication to the proposition of living would have given up the fight long ago. But fear of death can make life delicious.

<sup>4</sup> Tennessee Williams and Friends (Cleveland, 1965), pp. 59-60.

Mrs. Williams loved her children and wanted the best for them. She wanted them to develop in their own individual ways, so she saved \$10 to buy Tom a typewriter when he was in high school. Tom was overjoyed and spent more time than ever writing. Before he graduated from highschool, he published his first story. He had entered a contest and won \$5 for an essay entitled "Can a Good Wife be a Good Sport."

In spite of the subject matter presented in Williams' plays, which usually deal with anything but highly educated people, Tom worked hard to obtain a college degree. He first entered the University of Missouri in 1929. During that time he continued writing, bonded up on his idol D. H. Lawrence, fell in love with a girl from his hometown and joined the Alpha Tau Omega fraternity. He enjoyed fraternity life immensely and was soon introduced to the pleasures of alcohol. He had been exposed to the result of excessive alcohol all through his childhood thanks to his father's weekly binges. He never married the girl because his father intervened and insisted the girl's grandfather send her to another state for her college education. That seems to be the closest he has come to entering the bonds of marriage. At any rate, in 1932, C. C. put Tom to work at the shoe factory because there was a depression going on and he did not see any value in Tom spending his days and nights writing. Needless to say, Tom hated every minute of the next two and one-half years at this mundane job but he continued to write during the nights and eventually this led to his collapse. During the recuperation period, which he spent with his grandparents, the Dakins, in Memphis, he collaborated on writing a play with Dorothy Shapiro called "Cairo! Shanghai! Bombay!" He enjoyed seeing it produced so much that he decided that playwriting was fun and turned his attentions from poetry to the stage. He wrote in "terms of sound, color and movement and had grasped the fact that the theatre was

something more than written language.<sup>5</sup> During his early career as a playwright, he worked along with the directors in staging his scripts and continued to do so with all of his plays on Broadway after he became famous and successful. He often re-writes a script or at least compromises with the actors and directors and listens to their criticisms and comments about how they think his scenes will or will not play. Williar Holland, director of the Mummers, a group he worked with in St. Louis after he left Memphis, declared young Williams to be "...amenable and easy to work with once you explained what the problem was. He was sensitive to criticism only when a play was in its produced form, after it had opened."<sup>6</sup>

Still not finished with college, Williams enrolled at Washington University in St. Louis in 1936, and enjoyed seeing the Mummers stage several of his plays during this time. His last year of school was finally completed at the University of Iowa, where he was able to take a seminar in playwriting, and he graduated with a B. A. That year was not entirely happy, though, for his family. His parents decided to have a lobotomy performed on Rose, who by then had been committed to a mental hospital to treat her growing schizophrenia. At that time they believed their decision to be the best course of action, however, they did not consult Tennessee about this. When he found out, he was horrified and never stopped feeling that if he had known in advance, he might have been able to stop the operation which kept his sister from returning to a complete life. Again, a woman he loved was taken from him. Years later, when he became established as one of the leading playwrights of the day, he took Rose to a hospital in New York where he could

<sup>5</sup> John Gassner, The Theatre in Our Times (New York, 1954), p. 52.

<sup>6</sup> Tishler, 52.

often see her and has done as much as he can for her.

After finally completing college at the age of twenty-seven, he drifted around for awhile, going from Chicago to New Orleans to California. New Orleans made a big impact on him and his writing. He met prostitutes, homosexuals, thieves, perverts, a little of everything. The year 1939 brought his big break when the Group Theatre awarded him \$100 for a group of one-acts The American Blues, which included The Case of the Crushed Petunias. Several of the plays in this early collection were to become fully developed plays later on. Cypress Hill, the cemetery that he refers to in The Case of the Crushed Petunias is later referred to in Battle of Angels and Orpheus Descending. Starlight Casino becomes Moon Lake Casino in Summer and Smoke. The Case of the Crushed Petunias also "sounds like the more lyrical appeal for sexuality to appear in his later adaption of the D. H. Lawrence short story, 'You Touched Me!'"<sup>7</sup> It was through Molly Day Thatcher, who was one of the judges that selected his plays for the Group Theatre, that Audrey Wood became his agent. Although it has never been stated as such, one might also suspect that Miss Thatcher had something to do with the close association that Williams developed with Elia Kazan, who directed several of Williams' shows on Broadway, for Miss Thatcher became Mrs. Elia Kazan.

Early years in New York, where he studied advanced playwriting with John Gassner and Theresa Helburn, were frugal for Williams.. He managed however, through Miss Wood, to obtain a \$1000 fellowship from the Rockefeller Foundation and he continued to write. He completed what he considered to be his masterpiece--Battle of Angels--and even though it flopped in Boston, he

<sup>7</sup>Tishler, 68.

refused to give up on the script. "The humiliation of failure is a thing which Tenn finds intolerable."<sup>8</sup> This is also reflected in the character of the Fräulein who continues to flap off to the fish-docks determined not to fail in her mission of catching fish. At last, seventeen years later, the revised form of Battle of Angels appeared on Broadway as Orpheus Descending and eventually became the movie The Fugitive Kind. Thus he proved his point: "never say die" or "try, try again."

Williams complained that he couldn't concentrate on his writing in New York because it offered so many distractions and consequently has spent a lot of time in Key West over the last twenty years. He also occasionally returns to New Orleans. But it is his Southern background and living in Florida which led to the setting of The Gnädiges Fräulein. He was acquainted with a Madame of one of the less reputable houses in Key West (137). Afternoons picturing this short, moustached man talking with the head of the establishment and its attractive girls tend to remind one of Toulouse-Lautrec. He is a compulsive swimmer and takes a dip every day in the ocean or at the local "Y" if he is not near the ocean.

Williams seems to stick to a rigid schedule of writing for a few hours every morning so his success as an artist and playwright has not been a Cinderella story. He has worked hard for thirty years to get where he is today.

His friends, which include Carson McCullers, Truman Capote, the late Diana Barrymore, and William Inge, report that he is generous with his time, talent, and money. He is especially willing to help new young writers. After reading Come Back Little Sheba he gave it to Audrey Wood saying,

<sup>8</sup>Maxwell, 193.

"Here's something you better consider carefully." She took Inge as a client. "If he likes a thing his enthusiasm is heartwarming to the frequently frustrated writer who is still unsuccessfully struggling" (104). Although he often is reported in magazine articles to be a quiet withdrawing person, his close associates (who know him as Tenn or even 10) testify that he is quite gregarious among old friends (332). He values friendship and is essentially a kind, gentle man, just the opposite of the brutality he portrays in his plays, such as the callous, selfish Molly in The Gnädiges Fräulein, yet at the same time "every friend and business associate of Williams has at times been suspected of such motives as envy, jealousy, and deliberate desire to wound ...Tenn, convinced that he has been intentionally hurt, insulted, or even subtly speared, remains indignant for days" (328).

In spite of his success (he has won three New York Critics Circle Awards and two Pulitzer Prizes), he has remained close to his family. He is fond of his younger brother Dakin and cares deeply for his mother, as well as Rose. Until his grandfather died at the age of 98, the old man spent much of his time with Tennessee in Florida, New York, or Europe. Williams enjoyed his company, and suffered a deep loss when Mr. Dakin passed away. However, through success, money, and personal anguish, Williams' one fixed purpose in life has been writing and will continue to be so. Although he has essentially written out of his experience and has re-worked themes over and over, he is aware of what the new playwrights are doing and his own writing is taking a turn, around new corners, exploring different passage-ways, never stagnating to the point of extinction.

### Author's Purpose

#### THE CASE OF THE CRUSHED PETUNIAS

Other than relating the fact that The Case of the Crushed Petunias was one of the collection which won him the recognition of the Group Theatre, Williams has said nothing about this particular play. The publishers noted when the collection of one-acts was released in 1948, that Williams did not want this particular play included in the collection, that he felt it was inferior and was an early amateurish attempt at writing. Critics tend to back up this statement. Signi Falk, who has done much extensive study of Williams has her own ideas about what the young playwright was striving to achieve in The Case of the Crushed Petunias:

It is obviously an experimental piece by a young Mississippian who adheres to the myth that Boston maids are prim and unaware of the tremendous possibilities that hover around them. The young man dedicated to rescue the young miss from a fate worse than death--virginity--proposes to meet her on Highway 77 for a couple of beers and a cheese sandwich and a ride in an open car to Cypress Hill, the cemetery, where they can listen to the advice from the dead. Live!<sup>9</sup>

From this we can conclude that as early as 1938 or before, Williams was thinking in terms of symbolism, sex, and the sensitive artist-type. Falk continues her criticism: "This play is obviously a trial flight, an early effort to make symbols do the work of extensive dialogue" (47). Probably the most obvious symbol in the play is that of the petunia, flower symbolism, or translated into today's language--flower-power. "The precise flower symbolism of The Case of the Crushed Petunias anticipates the dreaful lyrical flights of You Touched Me!"<sup>10</sup> Williams' mother even reports that he had an interest in flowers while still a toddler. He was interested in their structure and

<sup>9</sup>Falk, 47.

<sup>10</sup>Tishler, 179.

makeup. One usually associates flowers with beauty--with poetry--and this play is certainly poetical in nature, so the flower symbolism and the poetry go hand in hand. Also it was at this time in Williams' life that his sister Rose (again a flower symbol) came to the fore in his life, with the lobotomy being performed; he perhaps became conscious of how she had withdrawn and hidden from the world, just as Dorothy Simple in The Case of the Crushed Petunias seeks shelter from the world behind her "double row of petunias." He used and has used flowers since then but mostly only the rose. Incidentally he refers to the rose in The Case of the Crushed Petunias when the Young Man suggests that Miss Simple substitute "wild roses" for her petunias.

Falk also asserts that since this early play, Williams has certainly used sex as a symbol. "Sex as the symbol of freedom, sex as the great liberator, sex as the only symbol of life."<sup>11</sup> If we accept this as the basis for an analysis of The Case of the Crushed Petunias, then yes, it can be said that all of this sex symbolism was started in this early play. The Young Man stands for freedom and approaches the young lady through charm, or in other words sexual appeal. He appeals to her uniqueness as a woman, to her attractiveness to him as a man. He wants her to see life!--resulting in sex as the symbol for life. However, he does not approach the subject or use the symbols in anything less than a delicate manner. The whole play, short as it is (eleven pages), is wrapped in a charming warm quality that leaves a sweet taste in the mouth. Williams has been criticized for poetizing, but it is this poetry that captures the unique aura of The Case of the Crushed Petunias.

Although Williams places the location of The Case of the Crushed

<sup>11</sup>Falk, 167.

Petunias in Massachusetts, he was drawing on his childhood experience of being an outsider when his family moved to St. Louis. He was the sensitive, kind-hearted new person in town who was beaten and abused by the "established" children of the neighborhood. He and his sister did not "fit" into the established tradition of what and who was accepted into the society. This cold reception and traditional social law served as a model for the setting of The Case of the Crushed Petunias. Tennessee Williams began early in his writing to fight back against the accepted norm, to take up for the sensitive side of life.

Repeatedly Williams has contrasted the poet and the average man; and to the poet he has given a nobler sense of values and a compassion for humanity. The poet is always the romantic who rebels against conventions and who demands for himself a wild freedom which is incompatible with an urban society. He is a character who feels, but often more deeply, evidently, than he can articulate" (164).

Soon after these plays were brought to the attention of the New York people, Williams began re-writing Battle' of Angels. It appears that he used a bit of the free character he assigned to the Young Man in The Case of the Crushed Petunias as a rough-out sketch for Sandra in Battle of Angels. At one point she repeats almost the same speech of the Young Man's. "Cypress Hill Cemetery, her favorite trysting place, marks her obsession with death. The lesson she believes that the dead teach is live---raise hell at Moon Lake Casina,"<sup>12</sup> whereas the Young Man says to Miss Simple that he will take her for a ride to Cypress Hill, the cemetery, because "dead people give the best advice--just one word--live!"

#### THE GNÄDIGES FRAULEIN

When asked in 1952 "when he would do a play with a South Florida

<sup>12</sup>Tishler, 67.

setting, Williams replied, 'Probably never. The people don't seem to belong to Florida. The place has no indigenous character of its own. Key West used to have its own character, but then President Truman arrived."<sup>13</sup> He obviously changed his mind during the next ten years or so since The Gnädiges Fräulein is set in the Southern-most tip of the Keys. Perhaps the author's purpose in writing this play is best explained by what the playwright himself has to say about the subject,

During the long, long haul of work on a full-length play there are periods when I am obliged to read what I've been writing to see how it is or isn't shaping up. Almost invariably I am so disappointed or repulsed by what I read that I am unable, for a while, to continue work on it, to start a second, third, or fourth draft of the pachydermous project, and then, since I can't just stop working, I divert myself with some shorter project, a story, a poem, or a less ponderous play. These diversions are undertaken simply as that, as diversions, and they nearly always have a quality in common, which is experimentation in content and in style, particularly in style. The fatigue I felt before this escapade is lifted. I find myself enjoying my work again. The inside weather changes; even the outside weather seems to get lighter and brighter, and I am easier to live with, if anyone's living with me.

The Glass Menagerie was one of these diversions. Over a period of three or four years, whenever I tired of what I supposed were more professional projects, I would pick up and go on with the "Menagerie," and it would refresh me, although I never believed it would be presented on Broadway. Another one of these diversions was Camino Real...

Slapstick Tragedy is another one of these works that I've done with little thought of anything but self-amusement and relief from the only, long haul of making a full-length play. Last year I showed it to a producer, Charles Bowden, and to my pleased surprise he felt very strongly that it could and should be produced, the two plays together under the title that fits them both.

I believe that the peculiar style of these two short plays is accurately defined by their mutual title. They are not "Theatre of the Absurd;" they are short, fantastic works whose content is a dislocated and wildly idiomatic sort of tragedy, perhaps a bit like the feature stories in that newspaper, the National Enquirer, which I think is the finest journalistic review of the precise time that we live in. The style of the plays is kin to vaudeville, burlesque and slapstick, with a dash of pop art thrown in.

<sup>13</sup> Maxwell, 130-31.

So there you are. Where are you? It was not my idea to write a prefatory explication of these two plays that seem to be hard for most financial backers to understand except as "a play about cancer" and "a play about terrible birds." Categorically speaking, they are not about either, and I think, in production, they may seem to be a pair of fantastic allegories on the tragicomic subject of human existence on this risky planet.<sup>14</sup>

In a way, Williams seems to be making fun of himself and his writing by including all of his stock characters and situations in this one play. He has the fallen southern woman, the sex-oriented woman, the callous reality character, the lover-itinerant masculine sexual fantasy image, a consuming plague in the form of an over-grown bird, a permanent transient, and the setting is not in the best neighborhood of the city. He has overly exaggerated all of the elements his plays include and sets the tone of the script with the opening prologue given by Polly who repeats over and over that everything is southernmost in Cocaloony Key--"Southernmost write-up, southernmost gang-bang, southernmost gilding of the southernmost lily, southernmost fried chicken, southernmost white Anglo-Saxon protestants."<sup>15</sup> It is as if Williams sat back, tongue in cheek, and let the good work roll. Unfortunately, the Broadway critics did not interpret his efforts in this way and the show only ran a week on Broadway. It would have been much better suited to the intimacy of an off-Broadway setting.

To achieve this satire on himself and life, the statement he made in 1962 when he was working on Night of the Iguana, foreshadows his efforts in this play of three years later:

Right now I'm trying to express a play more in terms of action. Not in terms of physical action; I mean, in sort of a gun-fire dialogue instead of the long speeches that I've always relied on before...I'm

<sup>14</sup> Slapstick Tragedy-text, Esquire, 64(August, 1965), 95.

<sup>15</sup> The Gnadiges Fraulein (New York: Dramatists Play Service, 1966), pp. 5, 6.

conscious of more than ever I've been writing too much on the nose, you know, and I've always sensed the fact that life was too ambiguous to be presented in a cut and dried fashion... I think the one beautiful and great thing about the new wave of playwrights is that they approach their subject matter with this new kind of allusiveness. The whole attitude of this new wave of playwrights is not to preach, you know. Not to be dogmatic, to be provocatively allusive ... (they) are exploring subtleties of human relations that haven't been explored ... I think my kind of pseudo-literary style of writing for the theatre is on its way out.<sup>16</sup>

If this was Williams intent, then he succeeded in establishing an allusive quality. He did not leave the audience with a cut and dried answer to a cut and dried question or problem. In speaking with members of the audience who saw the production, each person consistently said that he left the theatre talking about what the playwright was trying to say in the play and each seemed to come up with a different answer. This seems to be the reaction to many of the plays by writers whom Williams admires--Anouilh, Giraudoux, Albee, Pinter,--not Ionesco or Kopitt (18). However, he did not accomplish establishing the allusiveness through "gun-fire dialogue instead of long speeches." If anything, the speeches, which are delivered almost entirely by Polly and Molly, are longer and more in the form of soliloquies than any other play he has written. Not only is the dialogue long, there is much physical action, not all of it onstage, but present, nevertheless. The Fräulein returns from the fish-docks in a more and more damaged condition throughout the play, illustrating that extreme physical action took place before she appeared onstage.

Williams succeeds in writing a comedy, with tragic undertones, but a comedy just the same. This is unusual for him. Most of the plays of his, except Period of Adjustment, which he labeled a serious comedy, have been

<sup>16</sup> Lewis Funke and John E. Booth. "Williams on Williams," Theatre Arts, 46 (January, 1962), 72-73.

written in the obviously serious vein. Here, he goes all out with some of the gags, reaching, as the name implies in the original bill, slapstick--the humor being the juxtaposition of the ridiculous against the awful conditions of life. For instance, Molly considers herself to be a "society leader" when in appearance, she is merely a "lazy, slovenly bitch, with social pretentious"--a hag who runs a boarding house for derelicts and is happy in her position in life.

Williams projects himself into the Fräulein through her endurance and constant battle to continue the fight with the cocaloony birds for her meager subsistence. He once wrote, "The one dominant theme in most of my writings, the most magnificent thing in all nature, is valor--and endurance."<sup>17</sup> The gnädiges Fräulein is Williams' spokesman throughout the play.. She is the character with whom he can empathize. She is the character who lives in an imaginary world like Williams' sister, Rose, does. She lives in a world of her own creation just as Williams himself claims to do with his writing: "What I am doing is creating imaginary worlds into which I can retreat from the real world because I've never made any kind of adjustment to the real world."<sup>18</sup> His imaginary world succeeds in becoming a theatrical world. His writing comes to life on the stage because he feels that that is the ultimate end of playwriting. "A play in a book is only a shadow of a play and not even a clear shadow of it ...The printed script of a play is hardly more than an architects' blueprint of a house not yet built or built and destroyed."<sup>19</sup>

<sup>17</sup> Harry Taylor, "The Dilemma of Tennessee Williams," Masses and Mainstream, I(April, 1948), 55.

<sup>18</sup> Funke, 18.

<sup>19</sup> Desmond Reid, "Tennessee Williams," Studies (Winter, 1957), 432.

This desire to see his plays produced would perhaps explain his close relationship with directors who tackle his work. He is never satisfied until he sees his work on the boards and then after a play has opened he is desperately nervous until the reviews come out in the morning papers, for he feels he has not been successful until the public accepts and enjoys his work.

Theme

Williams, in most of his writing, is "concerned with the dream-mechanisms of unfortunate characters who try to create and preserve ideal images of themselves ...he gives primacy to the psychologically rather than socially relevant facts of each situation."<sup>20</sup> However, although he consistently writes of human suffering, there is little anger in his writing. He is always gentle and understanding with his characters because he understands them. He is concerned with how characters arrive at their present state of being. "He attempts to determine how, not why life occurs."<sup>21</sup> He becomes the defender of oppressed individuals, not oppressed classes of people. He works on a one to one basis. He is not primarily concerned with social issues unless they have affected him in a personal way, for he has to write through understanding, and he understands through exposure and experience.

The Case of the Crushed Petunias and The Gnädiges Fräulein differ from his other plays in that they are not deep, psychological character studies. The central character is indeed revealed but when all is said and done, one is not left with the impression of a clear cut understanding of the characters. It is not totally because both of these plays are one-acts for he has illustrated brilliant character sketches in other one-acts. Much of this lack of clear development comes from both plays being experimental in their structure and development with The Case of the Crushed Petunias being a novice effort and The Gnädiges Fräulein being a relief from boredom. Also, the characters in the latter play are comic characters and comic

<sup>20</sup> Gassner, 348-49.

<sup>21</sup> Esther Merle Jackson, The Broken World of Tennessee Williams (Madison, 1965), p. 60.

characters often are not developed to the degree that tragic characters are developed.

#### THE CASE OF THE CRUSHED PETUNIAS

Perhaps the Young Man best sums up the theme of The Case of the Crushed Petunias when he shouts "Live, live, live," as his doctrine. Once one is dead there are no more chances. The only recourse is to live while one is young and alive. This is a hard concept to sell to the inhabitants of Primanproper, Massachusetts. The town represents all of the conservative, traditional, small-town, fearful towns of the world. The straight-laced people are embodied in Miss Simple. She is defensive and tries to protect her long established beliefs. When one is too bound to tradition and convention, one might as well be dead. There is little to enjoy in life. One has to dare to live to reap the full benefits of life. Although life, or rather existence, is most secure when lived within the bounds of conservative tradition, it is a mere shadow of existence. The script implies that enjoyment comes from sexual relationships; however, this is only implied and is not the dominating characteristic or message of the play.

The petunias, which are crushed by the young man, represent security. People can easily hide behind security. It is a good defense to keep from facing the realities of life, of enjoying the pleasures of life, of taking chances. Fear of the unknown produces fear of life. The young man is an unknown factor. He just must be kept out of the community because he is a threat to all the established security that has been built up. In other words, security is a form of death when translated into the young man's terms.

Also, war is denounced. War is a form of death. War is a product of boredom which is the result of an over-secure environment. Wars are waged

to bring excitement into the world. As a result, war ends in death of human life, both physical and spiritual. It makes no difference if the war is one between countries or between individuals, the result is the same--death. As has been previously stated, Williams is strongly in favor of life. Thus no form of death can be tolerated.

This theme of living in The Case of the Crushed Petunias foreshadows later Williams' plays. Miss Simple could be a thumbnail sketch of Alma, the straight-laced minister's daughter in Summer and Smoke. She is a conservative fanatic, both in her philosophy of life and in her personal relationships with men (which have been extremely limited in number and depth). The Case of the Crushed Petunias is similar to The Gnädiges Fräulein in the living theme, but each play sets about delivering its message in completely different ways.

The young man neatly falls into the poet-itinerant-dreamer-lover character which Falk finds in all of Williams' scripts (172). He is a poet to the extreme. He uses poetical and rhythmic language to convey his message of life. The world is beautiful when seen through his eyes. He dreams of a world without war, a world where people live in happy communion with each other, a world where people enjoy the beauty in the nature surrounding them. His love of life permeates his very being to the extent that he wants to share this love with others, especially females. He entreats Miss Simple to have a beer and a sandwich, and drive to the cemetery, which is the local lover's land, to enjoy the beautiful evening with him. However, he is more than just a lover of women, he is a lover of life and beauty. He is a lover of personal freedom, not restricted by laws and established mores. Freedom is symbolized in the wanderer. The Young Man, like Val in Orpheus Descending, is a wanderer. He can not be confined to one location for a permanent exist-

ence. He has too much living to do, and to live is to be free. Freedom comes with absence of restrictions, with no more regimented rows of timid petunias.

### THE GNÄDIGES FRAULEIN

Being a bit of a permanent transient himself, Williams can write about drifters with understanding. Much of the criticism and analysis written about his past plays can be aptly applied to The Gnädiges Fräulein. "Tennessee Williams is a poet of frustration, and what his play says is that aspiration, sensitivity, departure from the norm are bettered, bruised and disgraced in our world today."<sup>22</sup> The Fräulein departed from the norm, not in a sexual sense as many of his fallen heroines do, but by catching a fish in her teeth and thus competing with a seal for the attention of the seal trainer. As a result the seal eventually slugged her with his flipper and she was forced into a drifting existence, constantly being battered by those surrounding her--both the owner of the boarding house and the cocaloony bird who attacks her physically every time she nears the fish-docks. She can be considered a disturbed character like the rest of Williams "fugitives." She is involved in a high-voltage dramatic situation and Williams who works with these kinds of situations is "curious about all kinds of maladies of body and mind as well as all situations involving violence, disease and death."<sup>23</sup> He certainly explores all of these areas in the character of the Fräulein. She mentally lives in the past, she physically is blind and bleeding, she is engaged in a violent conflict with the vicious cocaloony birds

<sup>22</sup>Harold Clurman, review of "A Streetcar Named Desire," in "Lies Like Truth," Theatre Reviews and Essays (New York, 1958), p. 74.

<sup>23</sup>Maxwell, 111.

and will eventually be gouged to death. The gnädiges Fräulein becomes a caricature and composite of many of Williams' leading ladies--Blanche, Mrs. Stone, Laura.

Williams repeatedly dramatizes the unjust cruelty of man toward his fellow man. Molly is totally unconcerned about the woes and damaged condition of the Fräulein as long as the Fräulein pays for her board and room. If the payment does not come on time, Molly has no qualms about her treatment of the Fräulein. Even with the Fräulein standing on the porch with both eyes gouged out and bleeding severely, Molly picks up the megaphone and begins to yell orders at the Fräulein. She is totally unmoved by what is happening to the mental and physical condition of the Fräulein.

Themes used in Williams' plays occur over and over and can be broken down into certain types or characters which speak for him. Applying these categories as defined by Weales and Falk to The Gnädiges Fräulein, we can see that they are all there. The artist as defined by Williams never put a word to paper or paint to a canvas, for he is defined by his temperament, or those unique things about the person that set him apart from the rest of the world.<sup>24</sup> In The Gnädiges Fräulein the Fräulein becomes the sensitive artist. Her art consisted of walking around the stage carrying back and forth the various props needed for a trained seal act. She exists in the past, mentally spending many hours of each day reflecting on the glory she knew at the height of her show business career and looking through her scrapbook at the faded press clippings and reciting them aloud. She is delicate in appearance, with slow gracious movements and proud stature. Gentleness des-

<sup>24</sup>Gerald Weales, "Of Human Badinage," Reporter, 34(March 24, 1966), 49.

cribes her well. She is fighting the unjust cruelty of the world and losing the battle, although she will never give up of her own free will. She will be destroyed by society or the bird.

The Fräulein or sensitive artist verges on the insane or disturbed according to Weales (20). Anyone who catches fish in the teeth and risks her life every time she does so, is not completely of this world!

The sexually aggressive woman, Polly, is there also. Polly can not wait to get her hot little hands on the golden body of Indian Joe. She enjoys her idea of a good time during the afternoon when she disappears into the house with Indian Joe (exit to the big double bed scene) and locks the door after her, not appearing for several hours and when she does so, she is dragging her skirt behind her. She solves everything with a little or a lot of sex.

"Some attention should be given to Williams' commonplace, average woman who is a gossip who often is seemingly as heavy in the head as in the buttocks and who forms the hopeless contrast to the heroines."<sup>25</sup> Both Molly and Polly would fit this description to some degree. Polly is more of a gossip than Molly since she works for the newspaper and her job is digging up information for print. However, Molly sees and hears a lot with all the traffic through her boarding house and all she needs is an audience and she can talk for hours.

Indian Joe symbolizes the heavy masculine image, the itinerant-lover. He is really more of a sexual fantasy as described by Williams. One might say "stud at large," to use the words of Val in Orpheus Descending. For the Fräulein, he is the embodiment of her life-long dream for love. In her mind

<sup>25</sup>Falk, 170.

he is her lover, although in reality he has never paid any attention to her except to take advantage of the free fish she brings him to eat. Indian Joe's becoming the sex symbol is ironical because he is much of a dandy.

The struggle to continue life over death is probably the most prominent theme appearing in The Gnädiges Fräulein. Just as Williams himself will not give up life for anything--will continue to write and re-write a script until it is at last accepted by a producer, so do the characters in The Gnädiges Fräulein carry on, regardless of the obstacles placed in their paths. Williams is preoccupied with death only to the extent that he uses it as a tool to make life triumph. In this respect, The Gnädiges Fräulein is not far different from The Case of the Crushed Petunias. Life is for living. Death is for avoiding. One gets the bizarre feeling that death will eventually take its toll, but at the same time the desire to live is strong enough to ward off this doom for a long time. There is nothing unusual about the bizarre factor in The Gnädiges Fräulein for it is often found in much of his work, but then life is bizarre and existence is futile in the long run, for what meaning can one find in life, except in the day to day acceptance and facing of whatever comes as it comes. After all, no one gets out of it alive. Everyone has to go eventually, so why not make the most of it while one can.

### Style

A poetical quality is the dominant characteristic of Tennessee Williams' style. The lines assigned to his characters are steeped in words that lilt along as if part of a poem. Even Molly, the rough boarding house owner, in The Gnädiges Fräulein speaks in a poetic manner. For instance, when she describes the history of the gnädiges Fräulein she often gets hung up in such elaborate phrases as, "...the face of me uplifted to the constellation of Hercules toward which the sun drifts with the whole solar system tagging along on that slow, glorious joy-ride toward extinction." It is this poetic quality that contributes to the dream-like, fantasy element of his plays.

Even though he uses poetry in his words, Williams insists that,

Poetry doesn't have to be words ...In the theatre it can be situations, it can be silences. Colloquial, completely unheightened language can be more poetic. My great bête noir as a writer has been a tendency to what people call...to poeticize, you know, and that's why I suppose I've written so many Southern heroines. They have a tendency to gild the lily and they speak in a rather florid style which seems to suit me because I write out of emotion, and I get carried away by the emotion.<sup>26</sup>

Polly emphasizes this feeling of Williams as she repeatedly speaks of "gilding the lily" in her society column--such as calling a "gang-bang" "multiple nuptials."

Tennessee Williams' work has been popularly called "poetic realism." However, Gassner believes it goes beyond that. "It edges over into theatricalist realism because he (Williams) tends toward the symbolist school of writing, and whenever symbolism has to be given physical equivalents it

<sup>26</sup>Funke, 17.

becomes theatricalism."<sup>27</sup> The plays of Williams are definitely loaded with symbolism. In fact, in The Case of the Crushed Petunias he makes it so obvious that in this production it was accented even more by making the petunias a large physical object that lit up throughout the show. It is this theatrical quality that has made Williams one of the outstanding American playwrights of our time. He differs from other playwrights in that his emphasis is on this theatrical poetic quality, instead of plot structure. He emphasizes and produces "highly successful theatre and highly successful showmanship, but considerably less than that as critically secure drama."<sup>28</sup> The important thing to remember here is that drama is meant to be produced and if it is theatrical and if it plays well, then it makes an important contribution to the realm of theatre and dramatic literature.

Williams represents two elements in his writing. The way he writes is beautiful--his style is poetic--yet at the same time what he has to say, what he has to show about his characters is just the opposite. He consistently portrays the seamy, less pleasing side of living. George Jean Nathan's comment about A Streetcar Named Desire can be applied to nearly all of Williams' plays including The Gnädiges Fräulein, "The form and style and manner of the revelation may be beautiful, but the revelation itself is not" (165).

Williams may be best known for his full length plays, but he has written a great many one-acts of high quality. "The one-act form is a natural for Tennessee Williams because it conceals his plot weakness and, on the other hand, highlights his genius for creating character through

<sup>27</sup>Gassner, 351.

<sup>28</sup>George Jean Nathan, review of "A Streetcar Named Desire" in The Theatre Book of the Year (New York, 1948), p. 163.

realistic dialogue. These early plays are full of message and are excessively poetic.<sup>29</sup> This can readily be proven in The Case of the Crushed Petunias, one of his very early efforts. The entire play revolves around the message. There is little action onstage. All the characters do is talk at each other until the Young Man finally gets his point across. The message is completed--end of play. Yet at the same time, the whole feeling projected throughout the play is one of beauty and poetry. Partially this is because of the poetic nature of some of the lines. Williams even goes so far as to have the Young Man recite a poem he has written.

Since Williams is concerned with what is theatrical more often than with what is truth, his plays often take on a episodic quality. The result is a series of "highly charged dramatic scenes that will deliver a good shock."<sup>30</sup> Falk contends that Williams has a tendency to include too much of everything because this is how he can provide a shock (175). He multiplies discordant elements in his plays. In The Gnädiges Fräulein he contrasts Molly and Polly sitting on the porch quietly rocking and smoking and reminiscing with their constant bickering. He contrasts the Fräulein's passion for Indian Joe with the Indian's indifference to her. The laziness of the coca-loony is played against its violent action towards the Fräulein when it gouges out her eyes. He does this over and over again to produce the theatrical, the effective, the shocking.

Williams also has a habit of overloading a particular characterization or the biography of a character (175). Just as he reveals much more about Blanche in A Streetcar Named Desire or Catherine in Suddenly Last Summer

<sup>29</sup>Tishler, 68.

<sup>30</sup>Falk, 174.

than he does the other characters in these plays, he does the same thing with the Fräulein in The Gnädiges Fräulein. In fact, he reveals almost nothing about anyone else in the play and the whole story revolves around the history and present condition of the Fräulein.

It would almost seem that Tennessee Williams had read Falk's analysis of his work and then set out to write The Gnädiges Fräulein so that it incorporated all of the techniques that Falk discusses about earlier Williams' plays. The characters in The Gnädiges Fräulein talk to the audience (179). There is a chase scene when the birds pursue the Fräulein back from the fish-docks (180). He relies almost entirely on exposition to reveal character--Molly and Polly talk during the entire play to inform everyone of what is happening including a long soliloquy apiece (186). The end of scene one leads to the "big double bed" as Polly runs after Indian Joe--mooing (186). And the play ends in violence when the Fräulein returns in such a bloody damaged condition from the fish-docks that it seems unbelievable that she is still alive. All of these techniques apply to Williams' more recent work, since The Glass Menagerie. They do not apply to The Case of the Crushed Petunias.

The most outstanding characteristic of style in this play (aside from its poetical nature) is the way the characters are drawn in The Case of the Crushed Petunias. They seem to be more of caricatures than characters. Because the play is so allegorical, it becomes very representational. Each character is a walking, talking symbol of something more universal than the character himself. Because of this, even though the story line of The Gnädiges Fräulein is less realistic than the message in The Case of the Crushed Petunias, this short little effort of Williams is the less realistic of the two plays. It is much more of a fantasy. It borders on the category of the Morality plays.

### Character Development

#### THE CASE OF THE CRUSHED PETUNIAS

Looking at the play from an overall standpoint, the characters come closer to being caricatures than well developed characters. They exist in an allegorical setting. Each person onstage represents a "type" found in life. Therefore, a presentational, exaggerated acting style was established. Each character was represented in an extreme.

The play was cast from physical observation at auditions. Physical size, voice quality, freedom of voice and movement, and a lack of inhibition were the main considerations in casting.

MISS SIMPLE--The young lady playing the part of Miss Simple was of medium height, slender build and of fair complexion. She had a high voice but could lower her vocal range when occasion demanded it.

Miss Simple is the embodiment of all the straight-laced, opinionated, walled-off, prim, traditional young ladies of the world. Although only twenty-five at the time when the play takes place, she might as well be the old maid school teacher of forty-five as far as her ideas and outlook on life are concerned. We are told nothing of her past life, but by observing her reactions to the Young Man and by listening to what he says about her, one is led to believe that she has been in this place since the beginning of time. What does she do? But, of course, she runs a notions shop. She sells the "odds and ends of existence" as the Young Man says. It is not really her fault that she is so straight-laced. After all, she has spent her entire life in Primanproper, Massachusetts. Perhaps she has made occasional trips into Boston to buy things--supplies for the shop. But this is more for snob appeal than out of necessity. She would never think of going into Boston to enjoy a "night on the town."

The script tells us that she "carries on a lot of correspondence ...with wholesale firms in Boston." She is very prompt and attends to business matters with meticulous enthusiasm. All letters are answered immediately. No loose ends are ever left hanging, either in her business life or in her social life.

Her social life, undoubtably, consists of afternoon teas, concerts of only the best traditional music by well established composers who have been dead for at least two hundred years, and discussions of traditional art work which reiterate all the words which are the accepted statements to make on the subject.

She tries to present her best appearance at all times. Her posture is at best, rigid. She has a proud carriage and holds her chin high, thus causing the nose to be just a little up in the air. Although she normally never loses her composure, the discovery of her crushed petunias is simply more than she can bear. She is outraged and upset to a point of near tears. She temporarily lets anger take over and begins shouting at the top of her lungs for a policeman. Why so much emotion and outrage over a few flowers? The petunias are her world. They represent tradition, security, stability--and the fact that they were deliberately destroyed means that an unknown element is present in her life. She does not know how to cope with the unknown. Even the mere thought of an outsider coming into her world is more than she cares to entertain. Her only course of action is to apprehend the culprit and get rid of him. Otherwise he might intrude, even more, into the nice, quiet static lives of people like herself. She can not allow the possible introduction of a new idea, a foreign influence, a different anything to disrupt the established day to day existence.

This is where Dorothy Simple is when the Young Man enters her shop.

But all is not lost for the Young Man, she stops long enough on her way to fetch a policeman to inquire as to why he destroyed her petunias. That was the only opening he needed. Since she is younger than many other young women like herself, a small part of her mind has not yet been closed into a steel trap. Through the course of the play, although she resists strenuously, the Young Man manages to get through to her. Every defense that she puts up, he manages to break down with truths. She still has a spark of humanity and curiosity to which he can appeal. Although she emphatically denies it, the Young Man is right when he tells her that she is fascinated by him and the life that he is trying to bring to her. Slowly she becomes interested in what he has to say but she is very cautious. It is not an easy thing for one to realize that all of her life, to the present time has been meaningless. Each time he presents an alternative, she erects a barricade--he in turn, tears it down--she puts up another and so on. At last, partially because he has appealed to her emotions by telling her what a truly beautiful person she is (no one else has ever said that to her), partially because he has illustrated the lack of substance in her arguments and partially because he simply wears her out with his determination, she finally lets herself go and comes over to his way of thinking--if not completely, at least willing to try the world and life outside.

By the end of the play, she assumes the Young Man's characteristics. She endorses life with zealous abandon. Her posture and movements are free instead of stiff, her outlook on life is filled with happiness and she has the courage to think for herself. This is pointedly illustrated when she insults a long standing snobbish customer by saying in blunt terms just exactly what she thinks of the woman. By breaking these traditional customs and ties, she is able to say good-bye to her past life forever.

YOUNG MAN--Although the script indicates that the young man is a large person, as is exemplified by the size 11 D shoe that he wears, the actor playing this role was small in size. He was about as tall as Miss Simple, and slight of build. He had long hair and a beard, not unlike Jesus Christ.

The script does not indicate anything about this character except that he is a young man from the world. Therefore, the interpretation is left up to the director. In this particular production, the play was updated from 1939 to fit 1969. The Young Man was played as a "hippie" as far as his appearance was concerned. The dominating characteristic that can immediately be detected in him is that he is bubbling over with the joy of living. Life is a precious commodity to him and his mission is to travel around the world sharing the message of this life with those thousands of people, like Miss Simple, who are alive in the world but are merely existing, not living.

He is the embodiment of the free spirit. Anything that is regimented, caged, forced into a mold by tradition represents death to him. Life must be free; it must be wild if it is to be real life. He believes that people who live behind barricades miss the joy and beauty of being alive. They are totally unaware of the poetical elements that surround each person in the common ordinary objects that they meet everyday. Even a shaft of April sunlight is poetry to him. It serves to illustrate to him the miracle that he is a human being capable of thinking instead of being a particle of dust.

He enters in the play, setting about his mission of breaking down established norms and traditions by crushing the symbolic barricades of all barricades, namely Miss Simple's petunias. After he has once managed to accomplish this break down, then he has a foot in the door to reach Miss Simple--which he eventually does.

He reaches Dorothy by being a man of a thousand faces. One moment he

is charming, the next he is a tyrant. One moment he is the tender young poet, the next he is a hard core realist. He is amusing, fascinating, scintillating, determined and child-like. He is amusing when he imitates W. C. Fields while trying to convince Dorothy to meet him. After reciting his poem, he is child-like in his innocent and sincere desire to know Miss Simple's reaction to his artistic endeavor. He seems to be carrying the burdens of the world during his speech on how death (represented by war), is opposed by life (represented by freedom and imagination of spirit). Then he immediately becomes the hard sell salesman as he continues with his thesis.

Beneath all the varied tactics that he uses on Dorothy is a genuine love of people. For people are life. And life must be lived before one reaches the grave. He could not deliberately destroy or hurt anything without replacing it with something better. When Dorothy finally agrees to meet him, he is so happy that all he can do is look into her eyes, smile, bid her a brief parting remark and rather awkwardly exit. The moment is sincere. It is real. It is tender. Above all, it is touchingly effective.

POLICEMAN--Solidness of stature is the keynote here. The young man in this part was over six feet tall, had red hair and of medium build. His mere size in comparison to the other cast members set him apart--which, functioning as an officer of the law, he is. He did not overshadow Miss Simple however, because she had such stamina and stood on the first level platforms while he remained on the floor level.

The policeman is also a stereotype. His character is not defined at all by the script. He is simply a good man who tries to do his job and is usually not very effective, but then there is very little to do in Primanproper, Massachusetts when it comes to enforcing the law. He simply strolls along the streets, twirling his billy club, perhaps humming to himself and

never gets in a hurry. A rather grandfatherly attitude seems to surround him.

MRS. DULL--The actress was of medium height and build with pale reddish hair and a very light complexion. Without makeup her features seemed to disappear.

Mrs. Dull is what Dorothy Simple would have become in fifteen years if the Young Man had not stepped in. Dorothy describes her as sniffing too much and being a busy body--and busy body she is. She is a hard and fast preacher of the traditions and rules and will immediately cut to ribbons anyone who steps out of line. She considers herself to be the social leader of the community. She is self-assured and is totally convinced that she has the answer to any question which could possibly arise. For instance, when Dorothy tells her she is stocking new merchandise, Mrs. Dull immediately replies, "Things in bottles or things in boxes?" For her there could be no other alternative.

#### THE GNÄDIGES FRÄULEIN

Since all of the characters could be played as being almost any age, physical requirements concerning body build, were non-existent. In fact, the director wanted as much diversity in the physical makeup of the cast as possible for variety. The casting was open to any ethnic background or type with very few preconceived ideas about how each character should look and only one type being able to fulfill this requirement.

Due to the loss of a cast member during the final rehearsal week, the part of Molly had to be re-cast. This gave the new actress, eight rehearsals until opening night. She did an excellent job as did all the members of the cast.

POLLY--A slender, medium tall young lady with dark, short hair was

cast in this role. The actress had a great deal of former acting experience.

Being the society editor of the Cocaloony Gazette gives Polly a certain amount of prestige. Exactly what kind of prestige is questionable. At any rate, she considers herself an important figure in the community when it comes to social careers because she can slant a write-up in any direction she wants to. Also, she knows what's going on in town by using her newspaper position to find information.

Polly is not a complicated person. She accepts things as they come. For instance, she objectively speaks about the cocaloony birds which have become parasites on the community and is preparing to give a lecture to the Audubon Society at the beginning of the play.

In spite of her somewhat crude manners and exterior appearance, Polly is likeable and has occasional touches of humanity concerning other people--like the gnädiges Fräulein. However none of the moments last very long because she is a realist and does not see the point of excessive worrying about the condition of humanity. Polly is concerned with the present, not the past.

She considers herself to be fashionable and attractive but her taste in clothes leaves something to be desired and her overdone makeup gives anything but a well groomed appearance. She also has a quality of feminity in her gestures while at the same time being rather crude and uninhibited in her actions, such as adjusting her clothing in public.

Polly quite openly likes sex and makes no bones about it. When Indian Joe appears she oggles him and flirts with him--until at last she chases him into the house for immediate acceptance of his implied invitation to go to bed with him. The afternoon with him is obviously enjoyed.

She is forever carrying on a bickering with Molly, yet at the same

time, the two hags will always continue their fueding friendship. Polly definitely considers herself to be a class above Molly.

MOLLY--This role was portrayed by a young lady who was just slightly shorter than Polly and not quite as skinny in build. Her hair was longer and lighter than Polly's and gave a small contrast to Polly in overall appearance.

Molly runs the boarding house and as Polly states in the script "fancies herself to be the social leader of Cocaloony Key." She appears to everyone else to be the exact opposite of what she thinks she is. For here is a rough, run-down hag who is primarily interested in herself and her income which is furnished by the boarding house she owns and operates for permanent transients. Yet her income is meager since most of these people are derelicts and have not got a cent to their names. She claims that she does not allow credit in The Big Dormitory, as she refers to the boarding house, but the Fräulein is still living there and she is behind in her payments. So, in spite of how hard Molly says she is, she still furnishes a refuge for these people.

Polly describes her as a "vulgar, slovenly bitch" and this is fairly accurate most of the time, when it comes to Molly's behavior and manners. She is continually yelling through a megaphone at the Fräulein issuing mandates and commands. But in spite of all the yelling and coarse talk, she does not take action against anyone. She likes to talk and once she is warmed up to a subject she will continue whether one wants to listen to her or not.

Molly tends to be more hospitable to people when she thinks there is something in it for her--like when she asks Polly to stay and rock on the porch with her when Polly lights up a Mary Jane--or when Polly pulls out a wine bottle, Molly immediately invites her to stay for supper.

Although Molly can certainly appreciate sex appeal in a person like

Indian Joe, she is far from preoccupied with the subject. She can take it and enjoy it, or leave it and not worry about it.

Like Polly, Molly is realistic about life and gets through the struggle for survival without worrying about the everyday trials and tribulations that are encountered in life.

For all her vulgar, disinterested manner, she speaks with a certain poetic quality which can be attributed to her social pretensions. Molly is primarily interested in self, self, self yet at the same time one can not totally dislike her.

"GNÄDIGES FRÄULEIN--A tall, dark, extremely slender young lady was cast as the Fraulein. This fits the description alluded to in the script.

A vast contrast is exhibited between the Fräulein and the other two women. The Fräulein lives in the past. Her days of glory were all in the past. The playwright furnishes a great deal more information about her than he does of the other two women. But then the play is about her and Polly and Molly spend most of their time talking about her.

So what do we know about the Fräulein? We know nothing about her before she entered vaudeville. At the time of her show business career, she was merely the pretty girl who walked around the stage carrying back and forth the various props needed for a trained seal act. She was in love with the seal trainer who was a Viennese dandy. He did not return her love. She was simply another prop which he used in his act. After several years of this life, traveling around the country side, carrying on a completely one-sided love affair, the Fräulein suddenly could not bear it any longer and decided she had to make a desperate play for the attention of the seal trainer. So, one day, not even knowing that she was going to do it in advance, the Fräulein jumped and intercepted the fish thrown to the seal by the trainer. What is

more, she intercepted the fish by catching it in her mouth just as the seal did. What she was trying to do was attain the same kind of attention that the seal had from the trainer, by imitating the seal and thus thinking that the trainer would share his affections with her as well as the seal. However, this was not the outcome from the incident. Instead of gaining the attentions of the love of her life, she gained the approval of the audience. They thought the bit was hilarious. So she was kept in the act because this was a big selling point and they could get many more bookings. In the end, her position with the Viennese dandy was not any better than it was before when she remained in the background but when she became the star of the show, she attained a different recognition. She captured the love of the audience and the glory of hearing all the applause for her and her alone. Of course, this did great things to build up her ego, for at this time in history, the seal-Fräulein act was playing before many of the royal courts and she got to meet these royal personages.

The act broke up when the seal hit her one day and she simply drifted around the countryside with no job, no family, no love. At last she ended up in Cocaloony Key, a completely fallen woman. Molly provided her with a way of maintaining an income by suggesting that since she had past experience of catching fish that she catch throw away fish at the docks in Cocaloony Key because that was about all the food available in the locale. The Fräulein agreed to this and thus continued her struggle for survival. Her nature is one of dogged determination. An ordinary person in these circumstances would have given up years ago, but not the Fräulein. She comes from sturdier stock than that. For her to give up, would be to die, like the other people in the boarding house, and she desires to remain in the land of the living regardless of how little it holds for her at the present.

She mentally exists completely in the past, spending many hours of each day reflecting on the glory she knew at the height of her show business career by looking through her scrapbook at the faded press clippings and reciting them aloud. She does not need to use the scrapbook for she long ago memorized them. Those were the days when she was beautiful and by this time she has convinced herself that the Viennese dandy really loved her. Part of this image is sustained for her by the presence of a blond haired resident of the Big Dormitory who reminds her of the seal trainer. She thinks that the Indian is her loved one and that finally she is living her dream of a love affair with the seal trainer. Ironically, though the present affair is also one-sided on her part just as the love of the past was.

She is a tragic-comic figure. One is compelled to laugh at her ludicrous appearance and awkward attempts to dance as she did at one time in the act of her past, but she is also somewhat horrifying.

Above all, she has retained a certain aura of being from a noble family. A lady by birth, as the name implies. Her entire bearing contrasts with the coarseness of both Molly and Polly, for she is delicate in appearance, with slow gracious movements and proud stature. Gentleness permeates her being. She is incapable of wishing ill-will against anyone, regardless of how they treat her. The only time she will fight is to stay alive and in that instance, she must fight the cocaloonies for the thrown away fish. However, she simply grabs a fish and runs and does not harm the birds physically in any manner or form even though they have viciously attacked her several times until by the end of the play she seems to be on the verge of death.

COCALOONY BIRD--Since this part could be played by either a male or a female, a female was cast. This was partially because a much higher percentage of woman auditioned than men and other shows which required men were

being cast at the same time. The young lady was medium tall, and of a rather stocky build.

Movement and the ability to manipulate around the stage in a bulky costume are primary considerations for any actor in this role of the bird.

The cocaloony bird resembles a pelican in appearance except it is larger than life-size. Because of the large amount of fishing done in the Keys many fish are thrown away if they do not meet the standards of the markets. Therefore, the birds no longer have to fish for themselves. All they have to do is wait for the thrown away fish. As a result the cocaloony has become lazy and considers the rejected fish to be his private area. He violently opposes anyone else intruding upon this territory and thus wants to get rid of the Fräulein who is competing for thrown away fish. He feels so strongly about this that he will stop at no lengths to discourage her activities in this area even if it means killing her. He feels perfectly justified in his action and attitude.

The bird has acquired many human characteristics. When he appears onstage he speaks to the other characters by "awking" at them and listens to what is being said. He sits in the rocker like a human, but struts around, flapping his wings like a bird. He is like Molly in that he is primarily concerned with self and nothing else.

INDIAN JOE--The one physical requirement stipulated in the script is that he be a blonde. Therefore, I tried to cast an actor that could at least pass for a blonde.

The Indian is the Viennese dandy substitute for the gnädiges Fräulein. He has a well developed body and is attractive to women. Furthermore, he knows it and therefore has no regard for women because he can get one whenever he wants one. He spends much of his time each day patting his pompadour and

and grooming his appearance, all the while admiring his image in the mirror. He also is concerned with self only.

One might call him the stereotyped Hollywood Indian since about all he does is walk around showing off his body and coming forth with an occasional "ugh." He also makes a valiant effort to protect the women from the coca-loony bird by challenging it to a dual with his tomahawk. Whether he would have made the same challenge without the tomahawk is debatable. He probably would have, since he has a masculine image to uphold.

PERMANENT TRANSIENT--The wino was played by a short young man of medium build. This character is representative of all the residents of The Big Dormitory. He spends most of his time nursing a wine bottle and fishing. He appears very briefly two times in the play.

## CHARACTERS IN ORDER OF APPEARANCE BY SCENES

The Case of the Crushed Petunias

Dorothy Simple

Policeman

Young Man

Mrs. Dull

The Gnädiges Fräulein

SCENE 1

Polly

Molly

Permanent Transient

Indian Joe

Gnädiges Fräulein

Cocaloony Bird

SCENE 2

Molly

Polly

Indian Joe

Gnädiges Fräulein

Costumes

## THE CASE OF THE CRUSHED PETUNIAS

The black and white theme of the setting was carried through in the costumes. Miss Simple was in black while Mrs. Dull was in white so that at the end of the play when the two women confront each other they will appear as opposites. This was done to help emphasize Miss Simple's reversal of character from the beginning to the end. She was no longer of the same frame of mind as the rest of the people of the town.

The Young Man was in bright, happy colors because he did not see life in black and white as the townspeople did and he was experiencing the joy of living.

The overall style of costuming was done with a hip, mod flavor which suggested the stereotyped characters but avoided the complete realistic appearance.

## THE GNÄDIGES FRÄULEIN

The Fräulein was the only character with a costume change. Due to the length of time between changes, the costume was constructed on a break-away basis to facilitate the change. The main flavor presented in the costumes was one of fading decay. However Indian Joe was in direct contrast to this by being very glamorized in appearance so that although his costume was recognizable as an indian costume, it was anything but realistic.

COSTUME PLOT  
THE CASE OF THE CRUSHED PETUNIAS

Dorothy

Black velvet shift dress, micro-mini length, with wide white lace trim at collar and sleeves.

Matching black velvet bloomers with white trim that peeks out from beneath dress hem.

Black tights.

Black shoes.

Young Man

Brillian, wild pink, blue, gold and white print acetate shirt with long, loose fitting bodice and wide sleeves, gathered at wrist.

White duck bell bottom pants.

Maroon socks with a hole in them.

Black boots.

Policeman

Blue uniform with appropriate trim and badge.

Black socks.

Black shoes.

Mrs. Dull

White cotton suit with boxy jacket and straight skirt, 3/4 length sleeves.

Black turtleneck shirt with collar showing at neck above collarless suit jacket and at wrists.

White stockings.

White shoes.

## THE GNÄDIGES FRAULEIN

Polly

Blue and white floral print circular cotton skirt.

Blue cotton peasant blouse. Ruffles on sleeves and across neck, trimmed in small red lace.

Yellow and white striped cotton bloomers.

Red sash tied at waist.

Natural stockings.

Blue back strap shoes.

Dowdy straw hat trimmed in orange flowers.

Red necklace and earrings.

Gaudy colored stone brooches.

Molly

Non-descript faded light brown and blue cotton print dress. Sloppily fitting.

Flowered cotton bloomers.

White sweat socks that fall down.

Dirty white and brown saddle shoes.

Gnädiges FräuleinEntrance 1

Overly large white, red, green turquoise net tou-tou. Heart shaped bodice decorated in gaudy sequins.

Brilliant fuzzy orange wig.

Huge white organdy bandage tied in a large butterfly bow at back and stained with blood over one eye.

Magenta ostrich feather fan.

Black opera hose.

Black ballet-type slippers.

Entrance 2

Maroon velvet sleeveless, V-neck dress. Makes her look very tall and skinny.  
Pocket inside deep V for lorgnon.

Yellow taffeta underdress.

Large, men's size tall black rubber fishing boots.

Entrance 3

Same as above, with these additions:

Dress is ripped and torn and spattered with blood.

One rubber boot is missing.

Patches of hair are missing. More blood on face.

Entrance 4

Same as above, with these additions:

A second bandage over other eye.

Black slippers instead of boot.

Entrance 5

Nearly all of costume has been torn away. Dress is merely a few scraps of maroon and yellow attached to a body stocking to give the appearance of being almost nude.

Large patch of hair missing.

Body and self and costume covered with blood.

No shoes.

Cocaloony Bird

Realistic bird costume with oversized celastic head that extends above head of actor. Separate wings.

Gray tights.

Web feet attached to slippers.

Indian Joe

Brown vinyl breech clout. Colored glass bead designs.

Belt of colored glass beads.

Headband and red feather.

Rust colored eight inch high-topped moccasins.

Permanent Transient

Old, torn brown pants.

Dirty white undershirt.

Suspenders.

Old tan hat.

Dirty handkerchief.

No socks.

Old brown shoes.

Makeup Plot

## THE CASE OF THE CRUSHED PETUNIAS

MISS SIMPLE

Panstick (twilight blush)  
Moist red rouge  
Brown pencil liner  
Sapphire blue, red, and brown shadow  
Neutral powder

YOUNG MAN

Panstick (twilight blush)  
Brown pencil liner  
Red and brown shadow  
Neutral powder

POLICEMAN

Panstick (twilight blush)  
Brown pencil  
Red and brown shadow  
Neutral powder  
Moustache

MRS. DULL

Panstick (twilight blush)  
Moist red rouge  
Brown pencil liner  
Red and brown shadow  
Neutral powder

## THE GNÄDIGES FRÄULEIN

POLLY

Panstick (twilight blush)  
Moist red rouge  
Dark brown pencil liner  
Blue and brown shadow  
Neutral powder  
Ruby red lipstick  
Black beauty mark

MOLLY

Panstick (twilight blush)  
Moist red rouge  
Dark brown pencil liner

Brown, red and gray shadow  
Neutral powder

#### FRAULEIN

Panstick (twilight blush)  
Blush-on rouge  
Dark brown pencil liner  
Green, brown and red shadow  
Neutral powder  
Panchromatic blood

#### INDIAN JOE

Texas dirt body paint  
Dark brown pencil liner  
Bleached hair  
Blue, red, yellow, green, white tempera for flower on body

#### PERMANENT TRANSIENT

Panstick (twilight blush)  
Dark brown pencil liner  
Gray, brown and red shadow  
Nuetral powder

### Settings

#### TECHNICAL PROBLEMS PRESENTED AND SOLVED

A great deal of consideration was put into the set because it had to serve two plays. Although both plays were located in fictional and allegorical places, the locales varied greatly. The Case of the Crushed Petunias was set in Primanproper, Massachusetts while The Gnädiges Fräulein was set in the southernmost tip of the Florida Keys. This problem was solved because neither of the plays required a realistic setting. The settings could be as realistic or as abstract as the director wished. Also, due to the nature of the physical conditions of the theatre, which consisted of a permanent back wall with a door on either side of the stage area set 16' apart, and a three-quarter thrust stage that was made up of a core of platforms forming a stage 12' by 24' by 1', consideration had to be made of the requirements of each script.

Furthermore, since the platforms which made up the stage were moveable, the director wished to try a different arrangement of the platforms for the acting area and avoid the standard 12' by 24' by 1' stage that was often used in the past. To accomplish this, platforms that were six inches high were used to establish different levels on the stage, with the actual theatre floor being the lowest level of the acting area.

#### THE BASIC SET

The stage consisted of a T-shape. Upstage, against the back wall were three 4' by 8' by 1' platforms. They were placed end to end to make a total stage width of twenty-four feet. A 3' by 4' by 6' platform was placed on the stage right platform. This served as the top step leading up to the screen door. A 1' by 4' by 6" platform was placed on the theatre floor against the right platform along the four foot end of it. A 1' by 7' by 6" platform was placed against the downstage edge of the platform in the same manner. These

narrow pieces functioned as the bottom step. The total effect was a set of three steps leading up to the screen door.

Forming the middle part of the leg of the "T" was a 4' by 8' by 1' platform which extended from the center platform. Connected to this was a 4' by 2' by 6" platform which formed the bottom section of the "T". Flush with the center part of the "T" was a 4' by 8' by 6" platform. (See floor plan for clarification of the arrangement of platforms.)

#### COLOR

Since the Case of the Crushed Petunias was bright and airy and gay in flavor, while Williams, in his production notes of the acting script, envisioned the setting for The Gnädiges Fräulein as "everything in the subtle varieties of greys and greyish white that you see in pelican feathers and clouds, and thus did not call for a great deal of color, a compromise was made. The permanent black back wall of the theatre, was incorporated into the set. The floor was painted with black latex. In other words, the basic set was black. This functioned as a neutral setting for The Gnädiges Fräulein. Set pieces added color and distinction to The Case of the Crushed Petunias. This solution worked beautifully.

#### THE CASE OF THE CRUSHED PETUNIAS

An 8' by 10' petunia was cut from Commander board and painted white. Black stripes were painted on to delineate each petal and sharpen the outside edge of the flower. Then holes were drilled at six inch intervals along the petals and Christmas tree lights were inserted. When this was hung just above the stage level on the back wall, the background or wall gave the illusion of fading away and the petunia stood out. The starkness of this expanse of white against black was extremely striking and effective. It also served to emphasize the locale and attitudes of the people of the town.

These people tended to see things in black and white. Everything was clear cut and precise for them, especially Miss Simple, whose notions shop the play is set in. A bright note was added when the petunia lit up. It served as the main source of color, along with the striking costumes which carried out the black and white theme and is discussed extensively in the section on costuming the production.

From the left petal of the petunia, hung a flat bird cage which was cut from Commander board. The cage, with bird inside, was painted white with black outlines in a cartoon style and was highlighted with gold glitter. From the right petal hung a sign, also painted in this same cartoon style, listing three representative items sold in the store.

Two and one-half feet in front of the petunia, hung a chandelier which was cut from Commander board, painted white and also outlined in black with a cartoon-like style. It was suspended on nylon fishing line. The chandelier was counterweighted so that when the Young Man bumped into it, he merely needed to push it up to get it out of his way.

The door upstage left, was open and backed with black masking flats. The right entrance contained the screen door, which was necessary for The Gnädiges Fräulein and was used once in this play. Because of the impact of the rest of the black and white set, the screen door did not interfere with the total design.

Since the play took place both inside the shop and outside on the walk, and the definition of these areas was partially left up to the minds of audience members, three exits were needed. This was accomplished by using the above mentioned opening in the up left side of the back wall as the door into the notions shop; using an exit in the audience far right, offstage, which led to downtown, Primanproper, Massachusetts; and an exit offstage far

left, which also went through the audience (into the lobby of the theatre) and led to downtown. Using exits in the audience helped achieve the desired goal of the director, who wanted as much break-down of barriers between the audience and actors as possible.

Furniture was almost non-existent. Four feet in front of the petunia center, was a cartoon-like chair cut from plywood and painted pink. It was outlined in black. It consisted of two sides and a seat and was flat in appearance, like everything else. The seat had been cut in the middle and it was held together with toothpicks so that it would break away when the Young Man sat in it. Down right on the center platform was a block which served as a stool for the actors. It was 12" by 12" by 18" and was painted black to give the appearance of being an extension of the floor.

#### THE GNÄDIGES FRÄULEIN

This setting was extremely simple. It consisted of the basic stage setting of platforms with a screen door in the up right opening of the back wall. An open screen covered the left opening in the back wall. The platforms suggested the porch of a run-down boarding house. The theatre floor was the yard. The black back wall was the front of the boarding house. The screen consisted of panels hinged together, painted black, and it functioned as the wall and windows of the parlor which was used for interior pantomime scenes. This open framework, was constructed from 1" by 1" wooden strips so that it allowed a view into the house without interfering with sight lines for any member of the audience seated on the extreme up right or left. It was hinged so that it folded into a  $3\frac{1}{2}$  by 6' unit, thus making it easy to set up on the stage and facilitate the scene change from The Case of the Crushed Petunias to The Gnädiges Fräulein.

The screen door was permanently mounted in the right opening of the

back wall and was eighteen inches from the floor. This was the highest level it could be from the theatre floor and still allow the cocaloony bird to pass through it. By placing the screen door in this position, the highest level onstage, with steps leading up to it, the entrances of the Fräulein were emphasized. View of the Fräulein, when she was seated on the steps reading her scrapbook, was also facilitated. If she would have been on a lower level, Molly and Polly sitting in their chairs would have over-shadowed her.

The script demands at least three exits, plus an interior view of the house, which in this production, meant a fourth exit. The areas used in The Case of the Crushed Petunias were again used in The Gnädiges Fräulein. As was mentioned before, the screen door was in the up right opening onstage. This led into the boarding house. The left opening led onto the stage into the parlor. Off far left, through the audience, led to the fish-docks. Off far left, through the audience led to the side of the house to an offstage, back entrance into the boarding house. The two extreme left and right exits through the audience functioned beautifully. When the Fräulein would come stumbling back from the fish docks, her entire entrance and cross was extremely theatrical and effective. She entered from the left side of the audience, crossed in front of the front audience and exited through the right audience. Her mere presence, so near to them, broke down some of the barriers between actor-stage and audience. Also, she made the longest cross possible in the Purple Masque Theatre. This long cross was necessary to give the audience a chance to grasp what was happening, because of the importance placed on the Fräulein's fleeing return from the fish-docks.

Two rocking chairs comprised the entire amount of furniture. The rockers fit the setting of a boarding house for permanent transients quite well, for they were borrowed from the porch of a somewhat run-down apartment

house in Manhattan and were naturally weathered. They did not match at all. One was a wooden high-backed chair which was painted black and had little colorful designs painted across the top of the back. The other was a short-backed, leather covered brown chair. The leather was torn and the stuffing was falling out. In fact, these chairs were so authentic, that it was necessary to replace the rocker pieces several times during the rehearsal period. By keeping the rockers in the center area, the actors had no problems manipulating from one level to another.

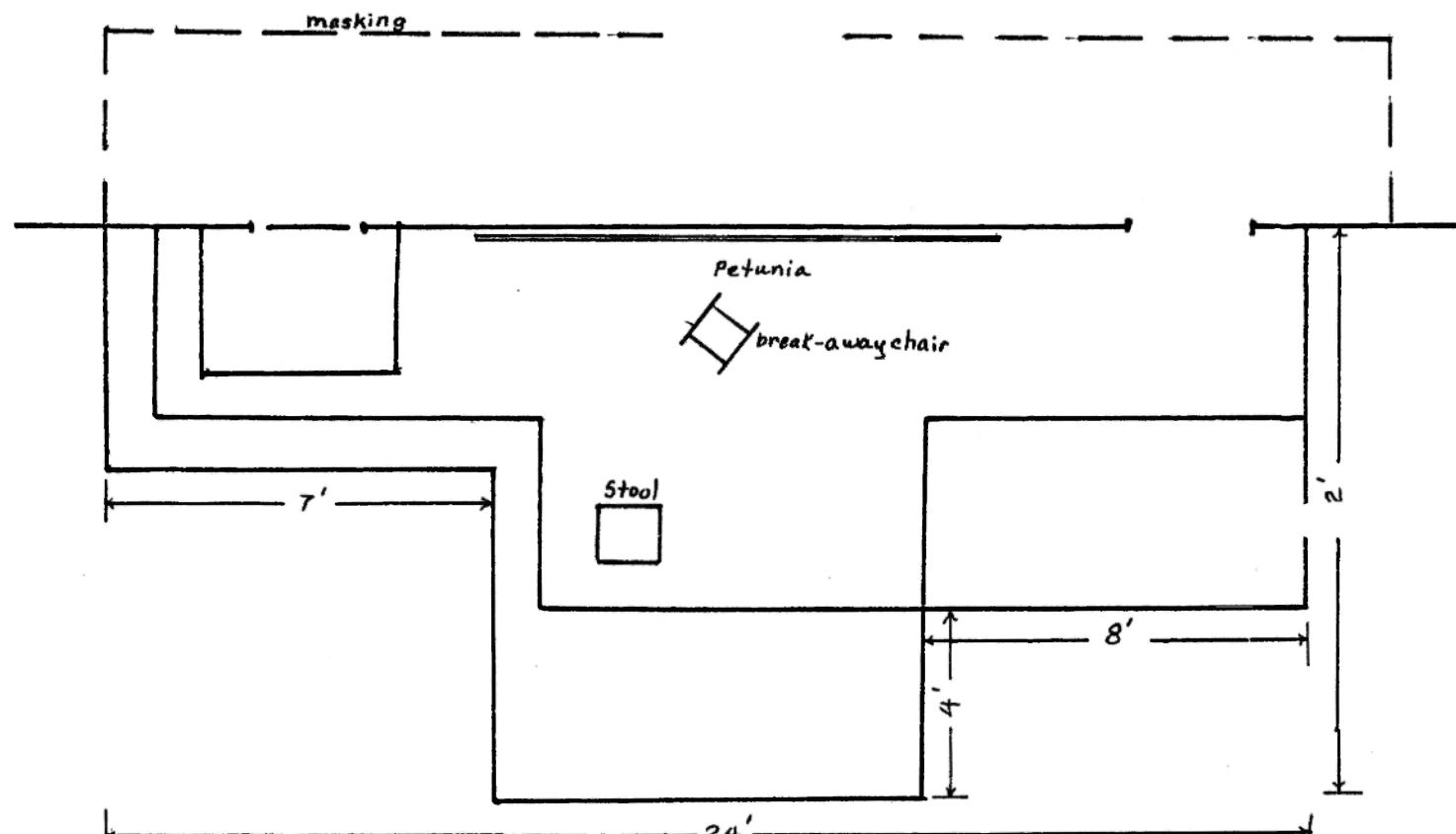
Although Williams, in the production notes of the actor's script, gives a detailed description of how he conceives of the setting, the near absence of a set in this particular production did not reduce its impact. Again it relates to the director's desire for audience involvement. The audience was provided with a space. A porch, a screen door, a screened off area were defined within this space. The rest of the set, details of what the boarding house looked like, was left up to the imagination of the audience.

All in all, the setting and arrangement of the platforms worked very well, as well as being a pleasing arrangement to look at.

## EXPLANATION OF PLATE II

Floor plan of The Case of the Crushed Petunias

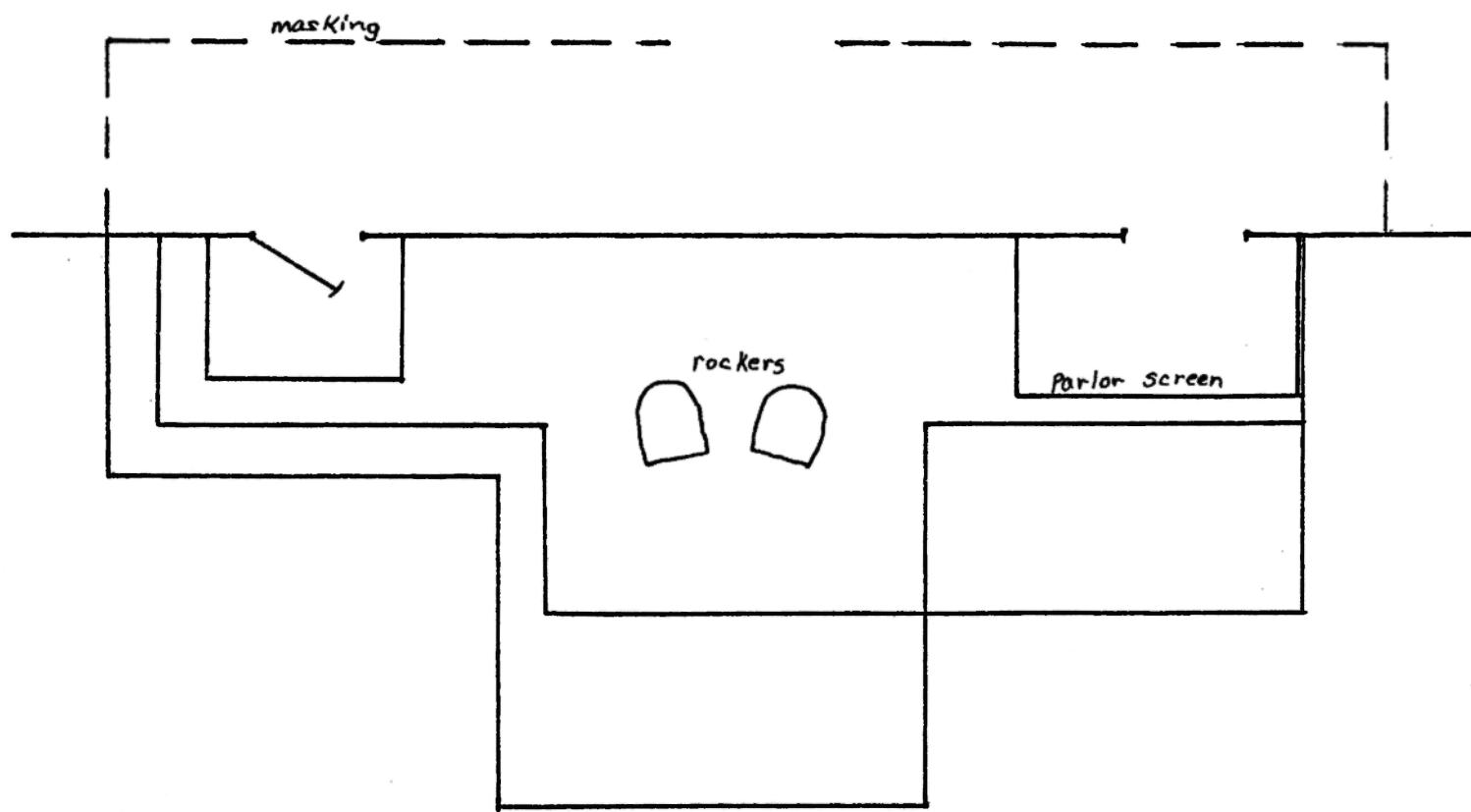
PLATE II



Scale:  $\frac{1}{4}''=1'$

EXPLANATION OF PLATE III  
Floor plan of The Gnadiges Fraulein

PLATE III



Scale:  $\frac{1}{4}$ "=1'

#### EXPLANATION OF PLATE IV

##### The Case of the Crushed Petunias

Costumes and setting

A. Young Man, Miss Simple

B. Miss Simple, Mrs. Dull

PLATE IV



#### EXPLANATION OF PLATE V

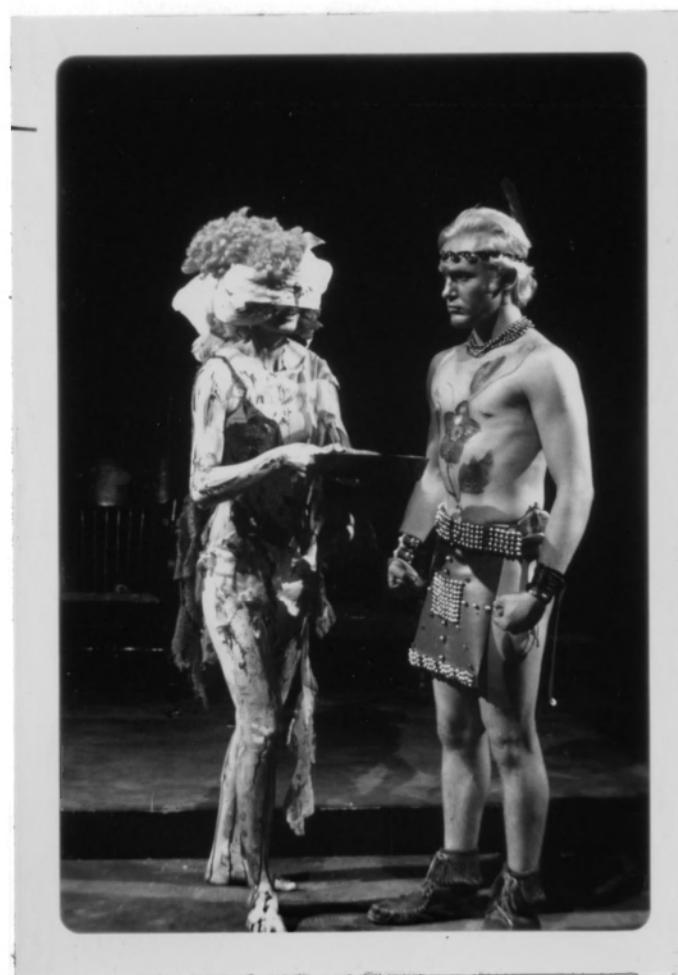
##### Costumes and setting

- A. The Case of the Crushed Petunias--Policeman, Miss Simple
- B. The "Gnädiges Fräulein--Fräulein, Indian Joe

PLATE V



A.



B.

## EXPLANATION OF PLATE VI

The Gnädiges Fräulein

Costumes and setting

- A. Permanent Transient, Polly, Molly
- B. Fräulein, Molly, Polly

## PLATE VI



A.



B.

EXPLANATION OF PLATE VII

The "Gnadiges Fraulein"

Costumes and setting

A. Polly, Cocaloony Bird, Indian Joe, Molly

B. Molly, Fraulein, Polly

## PLATE VII



A.



B.

Property Plot

## THE CASE OF THE CRUSHED PETUNIAS

## Stage props

small breakable chair	up center stage
stool	down stage right

## Policeman

night stick
pad of paper
pencil

## Young Man

calling card with LIFE INCORPORATED (3x5)
small package of seeds

## Mrs. Dull

shopping bag (full of clanky cans)
------------------------------------

## THE GNÄDIGES FRÄULEIN

## Stage props

camera with flash attachment	on screen up stage left
megaphone	between chairs center stage
baseball bat	down stage left
bass drum and beater	up stage right
small bucket	up center stage
vacancy sign	on screen stage left

## Molly

folding fan ready to fall apart
skeleton key
mop and bucket
telescope
large safety pin pinned to dress

## Polly

reading glasses on chain
TWA zipper bag containing:
wine bottle in basket
small cigarettes (like marijuana)
box of kitchen matches
several sheets of typewritten pages
steno pad
ballpoint pen

## Gnädiges Fräulein

lorgnon
old scrapbook of press clippings
old faded program
fishing bucket with lid

skillet  
meat fork  
comb  
piece of orange fuzz from hair  
oversized stuffed fish

Indian Joe  
atomizer  
hand mirror  
tomahawk

Permanent Transient  
fishing pole with line and bobber

## Lighting Effects

### PROBLEMS

Due to a minimum of instruments and dimmers, lighting needed to be concise. Presenting two plays in an evening can pose problems. However, both The Case of the Crushed Petunias and The Gnädiges Fräulein were similar in tonality. Neither show was heavy. Therefore a general, even, overall bright lighting effect was used for the major portion of both shows, with special spots used where needed in each individual play. By dividing the stage into three areas upstage and three areas downstage, flexibility was achieved when not all areas needed to be lighted. In The Gnädiges Fräulein, area three, which served as the parlor, was not used but was replaced with a special spot.

### THE CASE OF THE CRUSHED PETUNIAS

The petunia was the biggest special effect in this play. It was lit with ten strings of Christmas tree lights, which formed the petals of tender petunia. These strings of lights were connected to a special dimmer board that operated independently of the rest of the stage lighting. It lit in moving patterns or in still patterns and by lighting up according to the action on the stage, it seemed to become one of the actors. It had a personality of its own. Sometimes it was blue and sometimes red or multi-colored. There were definite points in the script where it was in full bloom. The rest of the time its nature varied depending upon what was called for by the lines and action onstage.

Spots were used to focus attention on special scenes and also to heighten the visual effect of the petunia. To achieve this theatrical quality, the director chose a magenta spot forming a heart shape on the Young Man when he was reciting his poem. Not only did the color accent him and his

costume, but the heart-shaped curve of the light was again reletently reflected in the curve of the petunia petals.

The yellow spot on the Young Man and Dorothy was dictated by the script because of the Young Man's reference to the "shaft of April sunlight."

#### THE GNÄDIGES FRÄULEIN

Lighting effects for this play were kept simple. Most of the action of the play took place in general overall stage lighting. A blue spot was used to light the parlor of the house. Blue was chosen to give a better contrast between the parlor, which was an interior setting, and bright lighting on his rest of the stage, which was an exterior setting.

A red spot was used inside the house above the screen door so that each time the Fräulein stood posed behind the door for an entrance, her orange hair would be highlighted and her entrance would be more theatrical

A yellow spot, focused on the screen door directly from the front pipe was used between the first and second scenes for two reasons. One, it served as a transition between the intermission and the beginning of the scene by coming up during the intermission and so that when the house lights dimmed out, this yellow light was focused on the screen door and there was not any blackout to alienate the subject. This also allowed Molly to take her place onstage unnoticed but still able to see where she was walking. Two, the attention focused on the screen door by the spot, served as a reminder that this is where Polly had disappeared to at the end of scene one and also brought to mind the action taking place inside the house. It pointed up Polly's entrance.

## LIGHTING INSTRUMENT CHART

<u>Area</u>	<u>Instrument</u>	<u>Gelatin</u>
1	500 Watt Fresnel 500 Watt Fresnel	Salmon Pink 834 Straw 805
2	500 Watt Fresnel 500 Watt Fresnel	Salmon Pink 834 Straw 805
3	500 Watt Fresnel 500 Watt Fresnel	Salmon Pink 834 Straw 805
4	500 Watt Fresnel 500 Watt Fresnel 1000 Watt Fresnel	Salmon Pink 834 Straw 805 Straw 805
5	500 Watt Fresnel 500 Watt Fresnel	Salmon Pink 834 Straw 805
6	500 Watt Fresnel 500 Watt Fresnel 1000 Watt Fresnel	Salmon Pink 834 Straw 805 Salmon Pink 834

Special

Kirk	500 Watt Leko (step lens) 500 Watt Leko (step lens)	Dk. Magenta 838 Dk. Magenta 838
Sunlight	500 Watt Leko (step lens)	Golden Amber 815
Parlor	500 Watt Leko (step lens) 500 Watt Leko (step lens)	Daylight Blue 851 Daylight Blue 851
Screen Door	500 Watt Leko (step lens)	Golden Amber 815

## LIGHT CUE SHEET

(cross-referenced by red numbers in the script)

## THE CASE OF THE CRUSHED PETUNIAS

1. Petunia up.
2. House out.
3. All stage lights up immediately. Petunia out.
4. Petunia blinks.
5. Cross fade spot up on Young Man and other lights out.
6. Petunia on.
7. Sneak up area on Dorothy first then fade out spot as Young Man leaves it.
8. Stage up fast as Young Man finishes poem. Petunia out.
9. Start sunlight spot up first then crossfade stage down.
10. Petunia on.
11. Start stage lights up first then fade out sunlight.
12. Petunia on.
13. Strobe on.
14. Long, slow fade on stage revealing the strobe.
15. All stage lights out by now.
16. Stage up fast as Young Man gets down from stool.
17. Turn strobe off.
18. One by one all the areas fade out behind the actors. It is very smooth and subtle. The center spot begins to fade just slightly. As Miss Simple stands in front of the petunia (which is going wild), the spot on her fades out and she is left silhouetted by the petunia.
19. Lights up for curtain call.
20. Lights out at end of curtain call.
21. Petunia fades out as house fades up.

Five minute intermission

## THE GNADIGES FRAULEIN

1. While music is still playing, stage comes up as house fades down.
2. Flicker lights by turning switches on and off.
3. Parlor lights up blue.
4. Parlor out.
5. Highlight Fräulein in red.
6. Red out as Fräulein enters.
7. Parlor up.
8. Turn off parlor with switch when Molly snaps fingers.
9. Highlight Fräulein.
10. Out as she enters.
11. Blackout as Molly looks in door.
12. House up.
13. 5 minutes after intermission starts, sneak up light on screen door.
14. House out.
15. Stage up after Molly is seated.
16. Sneak out screen door light as Polly descends steps.
17. Highlight Fräulein.
18. Out as Fräulein enters.
19. As Molly and Polly exit into house, the areas slowly fade behind them, leaving the Fräulein spotted down center.
20. Parlor up as Molly and Polly enter it. Now only Fräulein and parlor pantomine are spotted.
21. Parlor dims out after third boat whistle.
22. Spot out as Fräulein exits.
23. Lights up for curtain call immediately.
24. Lights out immediately.
25. House up immediately.

## Sound Effects

### LIVE EFFECTS

One live effect was used. It was a small brass bell which hung back-stage and was rung by the Young Man just before he made his entrance in The Case of the Crushed Petunias.

### RECORDED EFFECTS

All recorded sound effects used in both shows, were recorded on a single tape. A separate tape was used for the pre-show music and it played for twenty-five minutes while the audience was being seated. Since all the cues were recorded in order of use on a single tape, it was an easy matter of starting and stopping the tape recorder for all sound effects. A speaker was located on a pipe above the first row of the audience, center.

PRE-SHOW AND LEAD-IN MUSIC--"In-A-Gadda-Da-Vida" by the Iron Butterfly.  
ATCO SD33-250.

BIRD CHIRP--"Audio Fidelity Sound Effects-Vol. 3," mechanical bird. DFS 7011.

SWOOSH OF COCALOONY BIRDS--"Elektra's Sound Effects-Vol. 3," F-100 subsonic flyby. EKL 253.

FISH-BOAT WHISTLE--"Elektra's Sound Effects-Vol. 3," Steamship blast. EKL 253.

FRANTIC BIRD NOISES--"Elektra's Sound Effects-Vol. 2," tropical birds, sea-gulls and crows. EKL 252.

## ORIGINAL MUSIC

"STARS ARE THE WINDOWS OF HEAVEN"--Music written and recorded by The Lodovick Avenue Washboard Band for The Gnädiges Fräulein. Since the original music could not be located, the band took the four lines sung by the Fraulein in the play and wrote their own tune. The set of music was to a '30s tempo and style and was recorded with a portable tape recorder in a living room to give the music a tinny, old '78 record sound. The group consisted of a guitar, fiddle, banjo, washboard, kazoo and wash-tub bass.

"C SOLO MIO"--Recorded on the violin and played by a music student.

"WHISPERING HOPE"--Recorded on the violin and guitar by the same music

student and his girl friend.

#### TECHNICAL PROBLEMS

The frantic bird effect presented a problem because the commercial sound effect records contained no single cut which gave the desired sound. This was solved by doing the recording at a radio station. Cuts of "Tropical birds" and "Seagulls" were simultaneously recorded then the "Crows" cut was cued in three-fourths of the way through the recording.

The same thing was done for "Whispering Hope." The music was recorded, then the fish-boat whistles were cued in so that the music and whistles ended up being on one cut.

## SOUND CUE SHEET

(cross-referenced by blue numbers in the script)

## THE CASE OF THE CRUSHED PETUNIAS

1. The pre-show music begins 25 minutes before the show starts.
2. Raise the volume of the music 2 minutes before the show starts.
3. Music fades out on a 10 count.
4. Bird chirps. Stops on "Oh, hush up."
5. The Young Man rings bell backstage.
6. The bird chirps twice.

## THE GNÄDIGES FRÄULEIN

1. Music starts 2 minutes before actors enter. Wait for the swoosh near the end of the music.
2. Swoosh of cocaloony bird flying over.
3. Swoosh.
4. Swoosh.
5. Swoosh.
6. Swoosh.
7. Swoosh.
8. Swoosh.
9. Swoosh.
10. Swoosh.
11. Swoosh as cocaloony fird flies over, goes into a dive and flies off into the distance, fading away.
12. Swoosh as cocaloony flies over and lands.
13. Swoosh when cocaloony gets out of sight as it takes off.
14. Fish-boat whistle.
15. Fish-boat whistles twice.

16. Start fading in bird sounds as the Fräulein screams. These noises continue getting louder and reach a peak as the Fräulein comes into view. They fade down as the Fräulein disappears from view.
17. The bird sounds fade out.
18. Fish-boat whistle.
19. Fish-boat whistle.
20. Fish-boat whistle.
21. A violin playing starts 9 minutes, 30 seconds after intermission starts. It lasts 2 minutes and ends as the stage lights come up.
22. Start bird sounds and continue to get louder. They reach a high point in volume as the Fräulein appears and they rapidly fade out as she exits. It is absolutely still when Polly re-enters.
23. Start violin and guitar recording of "Whispering Hope" as soon as the Fräulein begins singing. A fish boat whistle is heard about 5 words into the song. The music increases in volume. A second whistle is heard and the music speeds up and gets louder. The jazzy music continues to play loudly as the actors take curtain call. It ends as they bow.

THE CASE OF THE CRUSHED PETUNIAS

by

Tennessee Williams

SETTING: The action of the play takes in the Simple Notion Shop, owned and operated by Miss Dorothy Simple. It is located in Primanproper, Massachusetts, which lies within the cultural orbit of Boston. The stage is all black with a large white petunia covered with bright lights, up center, against the back wall. To the left of the petunia is the entrance into the notion shop. To the right, is a door into a closet. Off stage right and stage left lead to the rest of the town. The platforms serve as a slight delineation between the inside and the outside of the shop, but these barriers are often ignored. There is a stool just right of center. Two minutes before the start of the play, the petunia begins to occassionally light up until at the opening of the play, it is brightly lit in time with the music. The petunia stays lit while the house lights and music slowly fade out. As the music ends, Dorothy enters screaming for a police officer. As she screams, the stage lights come up to reveal her notions shop. Dorothy has just opened the shop and is agitatedly waving her arms and running back and forth up right.)

Dorothy  
Officer?

(She sees the officer who is strolling into view far left and runs to him.)

Officer?

(He continues his exaggerated stroll, twirling his billy club and crosses down left.)

Officer  
Yes, Miss Simple?

Dorothy  
I wish to report a case of deliberated and malicious sabotage!

Officer  
(pausing)  
Sabotage of what, Miss Simple?

Dorothy  
(hysterically)  
Of my Petunias!

(He continues to slowly stroll stage right in front of the platforms. He pays little attention to her.)

Officer  
Well, well, well. Now what do you mean by that?

(She paces along front edge of lower left platform, mentally picturing the damaged petunias.)

Dorothy  
Exactly what I said. You can see for yourself. Last night this house was surrounded by a beautiful double row of pink and lavender petunias. Look at them now!

(She wrings her hands.)

When I got up this morning I discovered them in this condition. Every single little petunia deliberately and maliciously crushed under foot!

(She stamps her foot. The officer strolls far right.)

Officer  
My goodness! Well, well, well!

(She turns towards him indignantly.)

Dorothy  
"Well, well, well" is not going to catch the culprit!

(He stops and turns towards her.)

Officer  
What do you want me to do, Miss Simple?

(She crosses to right edge of center platform.)

Dorothy  
I want you to apprehend a petuniacial maniac with a size eleven D foot.

(He makes notations in his notebook.)

Officer  
Eleven D?

Dorothy  
(explaining)

Dorothy (continued)

Yes. That is the size of the footprints that crushed my petunias. I just now had them measured by a shoe clerk.

Officer

(crossing left)

That's a pretty large foot, Miss Simple, but lots of men have got large feet.

(He continues to slowly cross far left during Dorothy's speech. She follows him on the first level, babbling on and on.)

Dorothy

Not in Primanproper, Massachusetts. Mr. Knowsit, the shoe clerk, assured me that there isn't a man in town who wears a shoe that size. Of course you realize the danger of allowing this maniac to remain at large. Any man who would crush a sweet petunia is equally capable in my opinion of striking a helpless woman or kicking an innocent child!

Officer

I'll do my best, Miss Simple. See you later.

(He exits far left.)

Dorothy

(curtly)

Yes. Good-bye.

(She crosses right. As she reaches center, the canary cheeps timidly.)

Oh, hush up! Excuse me, please. My nerves are all to pieces!

(The bell tinkles as a customer enters up left. He is a young man with long hair and beard. He is somewhat clumsy. As he crosses to up center, he bumps into the chandelier.)

Gracious, please be careful. You're bumping your head against my chandelier.

Young Man

(good-humoredly)

Sorry, Miss Simple. I guess I'd better sit down.

(The delicate little chair collapses beneath him.)

Dorothy

Heaven have mercy upon us! You seem to have a genius for destruction! You've broken that little antique chair to smithereens!

Young Man

Sorry, Miss Simple.

(He hands her the two halves of the chair while he remains sitting on the floor.)

Dorothy  
I appreciate your sorrow, but that won't mend my chair.

(She sets chair offstage up right, re-enters, re-gains her composure, then addresses him in a businesslike manner.)

Is there anything I can show you in the way of notions?

Young Man  
I'd like to see that pair of wine-colored socks you have in the window.

Dorothy  
What size socks do you wear?

(He removes boot and inspects the inside of it.)

Young Man  
I keep forgetting. But my shoes are eleven D.

(She straightens and turns towards him sharply.)

Dorothy  
What size did you say? Eleven? Eleven D?

(He puts on boot and gets up from floor.)

Young Man  
That's right, Miss Simple. Eleven D.

(She steps towards him.)

Dorothy  
(cunningly casual)  
Oh. Your shoes are rather muddy, aren't they?

Young Man  
That's right, Miss Simple, I believe they are.

(She crosses behind him to left center.)

Dorothy  
Quite muddy. It looks like you might have stepped in a freshly watered flower-bed last night.

Young Man  
Come to think of it, that's what I did.

Dorothy

I don't suppose you've heard about that horrible case of petunia crushing which occurred last night?

Young Man

As a matter of fact, I have heard something about it.

Dorothy

(setting trap, sweetly)

Who from, then? He's the only man who knows about it except--

(She steps forward, to audience.)

except--except--the man who did it!

(The canary cheeps twice. She turns to the young man and moves in for the kill.)

You--you--you--are the man who did it!

Young Man

(bending backwards)

Yes, Miss Simple. I am the man who did it.

Dorothy

Don't try to get away!

(He throws his hands into the air and backs a couple of steps.)

Young Man

I won't Miss Simple.

(She backs towards up left door.)

Dorothy

Stand right where you are till the officer comes!

Young Man

(worried)

You're going to call the officer?

Dorothy

Yes, I am, I certainly am.--In a minute.

(She stops and steps toward him.)

First I'd like to ask you why you did it? Why did you crush my petunias?

Young Man

Okay. I'll tell you why.

Young Man (continued)

(He steps towards her.)

First, because you'd barricaded your house--and also your heart--behind that silly little double row of petunias.

(He moves in to her.)

Dorothy

Barricaded? My house--my heart--behind them?

(She crosses down center to avoid what he is saying.)

That's absurd. I don't know what you mean.

Young Man

I know. They're apparently such delicate, fragile creatures, these petunias, but they have a terrible resistance.

Dorothy

(facing him, sarcastically)

Resistance to what, may I ask?

(He slowly crosses to her.)

Young Man

Anything big or important that happens to come by your house. Nothing big or important can ever get by a double row of petunias! That is the reason why you are living alone with your canary and beginning to dislike it.

Dorothy

(to audience)

Dislike my canary? I love it!

Young Man

Secretly, Miss Simple, you wish the bird-seed would choke it!

(Dorothy steps down away from Young Man.)

You dislike it nearly as much as you secretly disliked your petunias.

Dorothy

(to audience)

Why should I, why should you, why should anybody dislike petunias!

Young Man

(behind her)

Our animosity and its resultant action is best explained by a poem I once composed on the subject of petunias--and similar flora.

(He runs to front of her eagerly.)

Would you like to hear it?

(She starts to cross left.)

Dorothy  
I suppose I should, if it's relevant to the case.

Young Man  
Extremely relevant. It goes like this:

(He takes her arm and seats her on down left corner of center platform. He crosses to center of center platform and begins poem very dramatically after exaggerated preparation.)

How grimly do petunias look  
on things not listed in the book

For these dear creatures never move  
outside the academic groove.

They mark with sharp and moral eye  
phenomena that pass them by

(He begins to speed up the poem and actions--snaps fingers--dances.)

And classify as good or evil  
mammoth whale or tiny weevil.

They note with consummate disdain  
all that is masculine or plain

They blush down to their tender roots  
When men pass by in working boots

All honest language shocks them so  
they cringe to hear a rooster crow

Of course they say that good clean fun's  
permissible for every one

But find that even Blindman's Bluff  
is noisy and extremely rough

AND--

(He kneels by her right side and finishes in a stage whisper.)

Not quite innocent enough!

(He continues in his normal voice, inquisitively.)

Young Man (continued)  
What do you think of it?

(She jumps up, outraged. Now she is on the attack.)

Dorothy  
Unfair! Completely unfair!

Young Man  
(laughing)  
To organized petunias?

Dorothy  
(advancing on him)  
Yes, and besides, I don't think anyone has the right to impose his opinions in the form of footprints on other people's petunias!

Young Man  
(moving away)  
I'm prepared to make complete restitution.

Dorothy  
(firmly)  
What with?

(He removes a small envelope from his pocket.)

Young Man  
(secretly)  
With these.

Dorothy  
What are they?

Young Man  
(excitedly)  
Seeds.

Dorothy  
Seeds of what? Sedition?

(He scampers around front of stool and crosses left to her.)

Young Man  
No. Wild roses.

Dorothy  
(very primly and properly)  
Wild? I couldn't use them!

Young Man  
Why not, Miss Simple?

Dorothy

(to audience, dogmatically and preachy)

Flowers are like human beings. They can't be allowed to grow wild. They have to be---

Young Man

(mimicking her)

Regimented?

(He looks her over and continues to tease her.)

Ahhh. I see. You're a horticultural fascist!

(She sharply crosses down right with an indignant gasp.)

Dorothy

I ought to call the policeman about those petunias!

Young Man

Why don't you then?

Dorothy

(not looking at him)

Only because you made an honest confession.

(He crosses toward her.)

Young Man

That's not why, Miss Simple

Dorothy

No?

Young Man

(behind her)

The actual reason is that you are fascinated.

Dorothy

(aloof)

AM I? Indeed!

Young Man

Indeed you are, Miss Simple. In spite of your late unlamented petunias,

(He is on her right.)

you're charmed,

(He jumps to her left.)

you're intrigued--

Young Man (continued)  
(He looms behind her, like Dracula.)  
you're frightened!

Dorothy  
(looking at him)  
You're very conceited!

Young Man  
Now, if you please, I'd like to ask you a question.

Dorothy  
You may.

(She crosses to up right platform.)

But I may not answer.

Young Man  
You will if you can. But you probably won't be able.

(He crosses up to stool and straddles it facing up toward her.)

The question is this: What do you make of it all?

Dorothy  
I don't understand--All what?

(He spins around on the stool to face audience.)

Young Man  
The world? The universe? And your position in it? This miraculous accident of being alive! Has it ever occurred to you how much the living are outnumbered by the dead? Their numerical superiority, Miss Simple, is so tremendous that you couldn't possibly find a ratio with figures vast enough above the line, and small enough below to represent it.

Dorothy  
You sound like you were trying to sell me something.

Young Man  
I am, I am, just wait!

(She crosses impatiently to up left door.)

Dorothy  
I'm not in the market for---

(He runs left and blocks her exit.)

Young Man

Please! One minute of your infinitely valuable time!

(She looks at watch and steps down to lower left platform.)

Dorothy

All right. One minute.

(He moves in close to her and points off down left.)

Young Man

Look!

Dorothy

At what?

Young Man

Those little particles of dust in the shaft of April sunlight through that window.

Dorothy

What about them?

(During the next speech she looks off in the direction he was pointing with her face uplifted in the shaft of April sunlight, while he watches her and becomes "the poet.")

Young Man

(tenderly)

Just think. You might have been one of those instead of what you are. You might have been any one of those infinitesimal particles of dust. Or any one of millions and billions and trillions of other particles of mute, unconscious matter. Never capable of asking any questions. Never capable of giving any answers. Never capable of doing, thinking, feeling anything at all! But instead, dear lady, by the rarest and most improbable of accidents, you happened to be what you are. Miss Dorothy Simple from Boston! Beautiful.

(She begins to react through her eyes to him.)

Human. Alive. Capable of thought and feeling and action. Now here comes the *vitia* part of my question. What are you going to do about it, Miss Simple?

(She crosses down left. She is somewhat moved by what he has said.)

Dorothy

Well, goodness--gracious--sakes alive! I thought you came in here to buy some socks?

Young Man  
Yes, but I've got to sell you something first.

Dorothy  
(hesitantly)  
Sell me what?

Young Man  
A wonderful bill of goods.

Dorothy  
(to him)  
I'll have to see it before I sign the order.

Young Man  
That's impossible. I can't display my samples in this shoppe.

Dorothy  
(to audience)  
Why not?

Young Man  
They're much too precious. You have to make an appointment.

(He crosses to her. She retreats right.)

Dorothy  
Sorry. But I do all my business in here.

Young Man  
(starting to leave)  
Too bad for you.--In fact, too bad for us both.

(He turns around and eagerly crosses right toward her.)

Maybe you'll change your mind?

Dorothy  
I don't think so.

Young Man  
Anyway, here's my card.

(He hands her a white card.)

Dorothy  
(reading it, bewildered)  
LIEE INCORPORATED.

(She looks at him.)

Young Man

Yes, I represent that line.

Dorothy

I see. You're a magazine salesman?

Young Man

No. It isn't printed matter.

(She crosses right.)

Dorothy

But it's matter, though?

(He begins to walk around the stool and right half of the stage, slowly at first, then building up energy and pacing as the speech builds.)

Young Man

Oh, yes, and it's matter of tremendous importance, too. But it's neglected by people. Because of their ignorance they've been buying cheap substitute products. And lately a rival concern has sprung up outside the country. This firm is known as DEATH UNLIMITED. Their product comes in a package labelled WAR. They're crowding us out with new aggressive methods of promotion. And one of their biggest sales-points is EXCITEMENT. Why does it work so well? Because you little people surround your houses and also your hearts with rows of tiresome, trivial little things like petunias! If we could substitute wild roses there wouldn't be wars! No, there'd be excitement enough in the world without having wars! That's why we've started this petunia-crushing campaign, Miss Simple.

(He jumps up on stool facing the audience.)

Life, incorporated, has come to the realization that we have to use the same aggressive methods of promotion used by DEATH UNLIMITED over there! We've got to show people that the malignantly trivial little petunias of the world can be eliminated more clearly, permanently and completely by LIFE, INCORPORATED than by DEATH UNLIMITED!

(He gets down from stool and turns to her.)

Now what do you say, Miss Simple? Won't you try our product?

Dorothy

(nervously)

Well, you see it's like this--I do all my buying in Boston and--

Young Man

What do you buy in Boston?

Dorothy

You can see for yourself. Look over the stock.

Young Man

(examining the stock)

Thimbles--threads--ladies' needle work--white gloves--

Dorothy

Notions.. Odds and ends.

Young Man

(to her)

Odds and ends--of existence?

Dorothy

(agreeably)

Yes, that's it exactly.

Young Man

What do you do after hours?

Dorothy

(sitting on stool)

I carry on a lot of correspondence.

(He crosses to behind her.)

Young Man

Who with?

Dorothy

(rigidly)

With wholesale firms in Boston.

Young Man

How do you sign your letters?

Dorothy

"Sincerely." "As ever." "Very truly yours."

Young Man

(kneeling to her)

But never with love?

Dorothy

(sarcastically)

Love? To firms in Boston?

(He rised and crosses around her as he speaks.)

Young Man

I guess not. I think you ought to enlarge your correspondence. I'll tell you what I'll do. I'll meet you tonight on Highway No. 77!

Dorothy

(quickly)

On, no! I have my correspondence!

Young Man

(enticingly)

Delay your correspondence. Meet me there. We'll have a couple of beers at the Starlight Casino.

Dorothy

(with frantic evasion)

But I don't drink!

(He circles in front of her to her right.)

Young Man

(imitating W.C. Fields)

Then eat. Swiss cheese on rye. It doesn't matter. Afterwards I'll take you for a ride on a motorcycle.

Dorothy

(suspiciously)

Where to?

Young Man

To Cypress Hill.

Dorothy

Why, that's the cemetery.

(He stands still looking at her.)

Young Man

Yes, I know.

Dorothy

Why there?

Young Man

Because dead people give the best advice.

Dorothy

Advice on what?

Young Man

The problems of the living.

Dorothy  
(curiously)  
What advice do they give?

(He advances to her left.)

Young Man  
Just one word. Live!

Dorothy  
Live?

(He grabs her hands, pulls her up, and dances around.)

Young Man  
Yes, live, live, live! It's all they know, it's the only word left in their vocabulary!

Dorothy  
(confused)  
I don't see how--?

(They are both standing down center.)

Young Man  
I'll tell you how. There's one thing in Death's favor. It's a wonderful process of simplification. It rids the heart of all inconsequentialities. For instance, it goes through the dictionary with an absolutely merciless blue pencil. Finally all that you've got left's one page--and on that page one word!

Dorothy  
(in a small voice)  
The word you hear at night on Cypress Hill?

Young Man  
The word you hear at night on Cypress Hill!

Dorothy  
(beginning to understand, maybe)  
Ohhh. Oh, oh!

(He begins to stroll right leading her along. He has now become the salesman and is throwing out his pitch.)

Young Man  
But no one hears it till they deal with me. I have a secret patented device that makes it audible to them. Something never processed by Du Pont. But none the less a marvelous invention. It's absolutely weightless and transparent. It fits inside the ear. Your friends won't even know you have it on. But this I guarantee: you'll hear that word, that sound much like the long, sweet sound of leaves in motion!

(By this point they have crossed to just left of center.)

Dorothy  
(really confused)

Leaves?

Young Man  
(continuing)

Yes, willow leaves or leaves of cypresses or leaves of wind-blown grass!  
And afterwards you'll never be the same. No, you'll be changed forever!

Dorothy  
In what way?

(He dances to up right corner.)

Young Man  
You'll live, live, live!--And not behind petunias. How about it, Miss Simple? Dorothy? Is it a date?

(He runs to her.)

Tonight at half-past eight on No. 77?

Dorothy  
Whereabouts on Highway No. 77?

Young Man  
By the wild plum-tree--at the broken place in the long stone wall--where roots have cleft the rocks and made them crumble.

(She crosses up center away from him.)

Dorothy  
It sounds so far. It sounds--uncivilized.

Young Man  
(following her)  
It is uncivilized, but it isn't far.

(she crosses down center trying to evade him.)

Dorothy  
How would I get out there? What means of transportation?

(He moves in to her.)

Young Man  
Borrow your kid brother's bike.

Dorothy  
(thinking fast)

Dorothy (continued)  
Tonight's Scout meeting night; he wouldn't let me.

Young Man  
Then walk, it wouldn't kill you!

Dorothy  
(thinking she has the upper hand)  
How do you know? It might. I come from Boston.

Young Man  
(growing impatient)  
Listen lady. Boston's a state of mind that you'll grow out of.

(She crosses far right.)

Dorothy  
Not without some insulin shock treatments.

(He crosses to her.)

Young Man  
Stop evading! Will you or will you not?

(She turns to him somewhat angrily.)

Dorothy  
I've got so much to do. I have to return some books to the public library.

(She crosses up right.)

Young Man  
(advancing upon her)  
Just one more time--will you or will you not?

Dorothy  
(wheels and yells at him)  
I can't give definite answers--I'm from Boston!

Young Man  
(threateningly)  
Just one more mention of Boston's apt to be fatal!

(He calls her bluff and starts to leave left.)

Well, Miss Simple? I can't wait forever!

Dorothy  
(looking at him)  
I guess I--might.

(He stops and crosses to her. They are facing each other.)

Young Man  
(disgustedly)  
You guess you might?

Dorothy  
(backing up step, tentatively)  
I mean I guess I will.

Young Man  
(advancing)  
You guess you will?

(By now she is on top platform and suddenly throws her hands into the air happily giving in.)

Dorothy  
I mean I will--I will!

(They both remain silent looking at each other for a moment.  
They are both happy.)

Young Man  
That's better.

(He starts to exit left.)

So long, Dorothy.

(He grins and goes out quickly.)

Dorothy  
Good-bye.

(She stares dreamily into space for a moment. Mrs. Dull enters up left carrying a shopping bag.)

Mrs. Dull  
(sharply)  
Miss Simple!

Dorothy  
(coming out of day dream)  
Oh! Excuse me. What do you want?

Mrs. Dull  
I want a pair of wine-colored socks for my husband.

Dorothy  
I'm terribly sorry but the only pair in stock have been reserved.

Mrs. Dull  
(snobbishly)

Mrs. Dull (continued)  
Reserved for whom, Miss Simple?

(Dorothy crosses left to Mrs. Dull.)

Dorothy  
(showing card)  
A gentleman who represents this line.

Mrs. Dull  
(sniffing)  
Life, Incorporated? Huh, I never heard of it.

(Dorothy takes a step forward then crosses right inspecting the shop.)

Dorothy  
Neither had I before. But now I have. And tomorrow the store will be closed for extensive alterations.

Mrs. Dull  
(With raised eyebrows)  
Alterations of what kind, Miss Simple?

Dorothy  
I'm going to knock out all four walls.

Mrs. Dull  
(overwhelmed)  
Knock out--what--? Incredible!

(Dorothy crosses down around platforms to far left.)

Dorothy  
Yes, to accommodate some brand-new merchandise. Things I never kept in stock before.

Mrs. Dull  
(extremely nosy)  
What kind of things? Things in bottles, Miss Simple, or things in boxes?

Dorothy  
(elated)  
Neither one nor the other, Mrs. Dull.

(Mrs. Dull steps towards the audience and addresses them.)

Mrs. Dull  
(knowingly)  
But everything comes in bottles or in boxes.

Dorothy  
Everything but Life, Incorporated.

Mrs. Dull  
What does it come in, then?

Dorothy  
(increasingly excited)  
I'm not sure yet. But I suspect it's something unconfined, something wild and open as the sky is!--Also I'm going to change the name of the store.

(Dorothy crosses up and twirls right, across stage.)

It isn't going to be SIMPLE NOTIONS any more, it's going to be TREMENDOUS INSPIRATIONS!

Mrs. Dull  
(to audience)  
Gracious! In that case you'll certainly lose my custom.

(Mrs. Dull holds her nose high in the air and starts to exit up left. She is stopped by Dorothy's words and she does a double take upon hearing them.)

Dorothy  
I rather expected to.

Mrs. Dull  
(amazed)  
And you're not sorry?

(Dorothy crosses down and sits on stool.)

Dorothy  
(grinning mischievously)  
Not the least bit sorry. I think I caught a slight skin rash from dealing with your silver. Also you sniff too much. You ought to blow your nose. Or better still, you ought to trim it down. I've often wondered how you get your nose through traffic.

(Mrs. Dull gasps, looks desperately about her, rushes out.)  
You forgot your groceries, Mrs. Dull!

(Dorothy grabs the shopping bag, crosses up left and heaves the bag out the door. A loud crash is heard off stage. The policeman strolls on from far left. He is still making notations in his notebook and enters continuing where he left off after first entrance.)

Officer?--Officer!

Officer  
(without looking up)  
Did you say size eleven D, Miss Simple?

(She crosses left to him.)

Dorothy  
Never mind that now, that's all been settled.

Officer  
(looking up disgustedly)  
Amicably? Out of court, you mean?

Dorothy  
Amicably and out of court. The saboteur has made full restitution  
and the case is dropped. Now what I want to ask of you is this: how do I  
get out to No. 77?

(He slowly strolls right.)

Officer  
(surprised)  
Highway No. 77? That road's abandoned.

Dorothy  
Not by me. Where is it?

Officer  
It's in awful condition, it's overgrown by brambles!

(She runs right eagerly and rests with one knee on stool.)

Dorothy  
I don't care! Where is it?

(The policeman crosses up right then down to far corner.)

Officer  
(warningly)  
They say the rain has loosened half the stones. Also the wind has taken  
liberties with it. The moon at night makes such confusing shadows people  
lose their way, go dangerous places, do outrageous things!

Dorothy  
(eagerly)  
Things such as what?

Officer  
(continuing, not listening to her)  
Oh--senseless acrobatics, cart-wheels in mid-air, unheard of songs they sing,  
distil the midnight vapors into wine--do pagan dances!

(She jumps up from stool.)

Dorothy

(elatedly)

Marvelous! How do I get there?

Officer

(facing her)

I warn you, Miss Simple, once you go that way you can't come back to Primandproper, Massachusetts!

Dorothy

Who wants to come back here? Not I! Never was anyone a more willing candidate for expatriation than I am tonight!

(She crosses up right closer to the policeman.)

All I want to know is where it is--Is it north, south, or east or west of town?

(He starts to point left with his club, then changes mind and starts to point toward audience, then right.)

Officer

(bewildered)

That's just it, ma'am. It's in all four directions.

Dorothy

Then I don't suppose that I could possible miss it.

Officer

Hardly possibly, if you want to find it.

(He starts to exit far right.)

Is that all?

(She crosses center stage in front of petunia.)

Dorothy

Yes, sir, that's all.--Thanks very much.--Good-bye!

(She throws her hands into the air exhalted.)

Good-bye forever!

(The lights fade out, but the petunia remains lighted. The stage lights come up instantly for a curtain call. As the actors exit, the stage lights dim out fast. The petunia stays lit and cross fades out as the house lights fade up.)

THE GNÄDIGES FRÄULEIN

by

Tennessee Williams

SETTING: The play takes place on the porch and yard of a ramble-shamble cottage on the Keys. It is an unrealistic arrangement of porch, steps, yard, and parlor. A screen door in the back wall is the entrance into the house. Steps lead up to the door. An open frame screen, up left, against the wall suggests the interior of the parlor of the house. Platforms arranged in a modified "T" shape suggest the porch. There are two old rocking chairs center stage. Off stage left leads to the fish-docks. Off stage right lead around the side of the house to the back. Music ("Stars are the Windows of Heaven") is playing when the house lights fade out as the stage lights fade up. At this moment Polly, the society Editor of the Cocaloony Gazette, backs into view from far left, looking at the sky and clutching her TWA flight bag. There is a loud swoosh above her as a cocaloony bird flies over. She crouches, then straightens as the swoosh fades out. She straightens her hat and clothes when suddenly the swoosh recurs and she crouches again. She speaks to herself and the audience about the incident.)

Polly

Was that two cocallony birds that flew over or was it just one cocaloony bird that made a U-turn and flew back over again? OOPS!

(She crouches, then rises as the swoosh fades out and quickly crosses to the audience down center left.)

Bird-watchers watch those birds! They're very dangerous birds if agitated and they sure do seem to be agitated today. OOPS!

(She crouches.)

I might as well remain in this position if it wasn't so inelegant for a lady in my position.

(She rises and starts to cross down right.)

What is my position? Why I'm the southermost gossip-columnist and society editor of the southernmost news-organ in the Disunited Mistakes. OOPS!

Polly (continued)

(She crouches than rises and crosses far up right as swoosh fades away.)

Everything's southernmost here because of a geographical accident making this island, this little bit of heaven dropped from the sky one day, the southernmost bit of terra firma of the- OOPS!

(She crouches and rises as swoosh fades away. She remains standing still, facing front.)

I've lost concentration!

(She stares out blankly for a couple of moments.)

My mother said that the way you tell a lady is that a lady never steps out of her house, unless her house is on fire, without a pair of gloves, on, and that's how you tell a lady if want to tell one and you got something to tell one. Have I got my gloves on? No! And I didn't hear the fire engine, all I heard was that swoosh and flap sound in the air of a cocaloony, so I must get back concentration!

(She raps herself on the head.)

Oh, I got it back now, yais, perfect!

(She begins to amble left, talking to the audience as she crosses.)

What I was saying was that everything's southernmost here, I mean like this morning I did the southernmost write-up on the southernmost gang-bang and called it Multiple Nuptials which is the southernmost gilding of the southernmost lily that any cock-eyed sob-sister and society editor, even if not southernmost, ever dreamed of, let alone- OOPS!

(She crouches and risers.)

perpetrated...

(She crosses right across platforms.)

Yais, everything's southernmost here, like southern fried chicken is southernmost fried chicken. But who's got a chicken?

(She stops and addresses the whole audience.)

None of us southernmost white Angle-Saxon protestants are living on fish and fish only because of thyroid deficiency in our southernmost systems, we live on fish because regardless of faith or lack of it, every day is Friday, gastronomically speaking, because of the readjustment of the economy which is southernmost too. OOPS!

Polly (continued)

(She crouches and after she rises takes notes from her zipper bag.)

Did I lose concentration? No--it's nice not to lose concentration, especially when you've got to deliver an address to the Southernmost Branch of the Audubon Society on the vicious, overgrown sea-birds which are called Cocaloones, and are responsible for the name and notoriety of this- OOPS!

(She crouches, throwing the notes into the air. She rises as the sound fades away.)

Particular Key. OK, I'll deliver the address without notes, since the atmospheric turbulerice made me drop them.

(She puts on glasses, crosses to right edge of platform, takes off glasses and addresses right audience.)

Cocaloonies! They never fly off the fish-docks except in hurricane weather.

(She addresses the left audience.)

Except in hurricane weather they just hang around and goof off on the fish-docks, mentally drifting and dreaming till animated by the--

(She whistles between her fingers as if calling a cab.)

--of a fish-boat coming in with a good haul of fish.

(She addresses whole audience and imitates birds.)

Oh, then they're animated, they waddle and flap, flap and waddle out toward where the boat's docked to catch the fish thrown away, the ones not fit for the markets, but delectable or at least cordially acceptable to the Cocaloonies, they flap and waddle out to the boat with their beaks wide open on their elastic gullets to catch the throwaway fish, the discards, the re-jecks, because, y'see,--tell it not in Gath!--the one self-reliant-and-self-sufficient character of this southernmost sea-bird has degenerated to where it could be justly described as a parasitical creature, yes, gone are the days when it would condescend to fish for itself, oh, no, no, no, it--

(Molly enters up right though the screen door of her boarding house with a mop and bucket. She begins to mop the steps. Her back is to Polly and the audience. Polly looks at her.)

--oh, it's her, a vulgar, slovenly bitch with social pretensions, pretending not to see me, because, y'see, she fancies herself very highly as the social leader of Cocaloony Key, and there she is on her front verandah, with mop and bucket like a common domestic. I'll bring her down.

(Polly turns to Molly and yells in a honey-dripped voice.)

HEY! MOLLY!

Molly  
(without turning)  
Who's that shouting my name out like they know me?

Polly  
It's Polly, molly.

Molly  
Aw. You.

Polly  
Yes, me!

(A cocaloony flies over: both ladies crouch: the lights flicker ending the prologue.)

Polly  
(shouting above noise)  
Whacha moppin'up, Molly?

Molly  
(shouting, still mopping)  
Blood.

Polly  
The best time to mop up blood is before daybreak.

Molly  
(simply)  
It wasn't shed before daybreak.

Polly  
Well, the next best time to mop it up's after dark.

Molly  
That's not the policy of a good housekeeper.

(Polly steps towards Molly who is still mopping.)

Polly  
There's been some violence here?

Molly  
Yep. I chopped the head off a chicken.

Polly  
On the front porch, Molly?

Molly  
Nope. In the backyard, Polly.

(Noise of birds subsides.)

Polly

(sing-songy)

It sure did make a long run, all the way 'round the house and up the front steps and right on into the parlor, yep.

(Polly crosses up across steps to right side.)

I know a chicken can run with its head cut off, but I never known one to make such a long run as that with such a good sense of direction. Molly, this explanation that you are mopping up chicken blood don't hold water. There's been some violence here and the victim wasn't a chicken, that I know, as well as I happen to know that you ain't had a live or dead piece of poultry on these premises since that old Rhode Island Red hen you was fatten' up for Thanksgivin' died of malnutrition before Hallowe'en.

(Molly stops mopping and looks at Polly who is on her left.)

Molly

Yeah, well, why don't you go over to your desk at the Cocaloony Gazette and work on your gossip column, Polly, and let me finish this--

(She mops a couple of strokes at Polly's feet.)

--mopping up operation without the nasal monotone of your voice to distract me and annoy me to distraction! Huh, Polly?

(Polly crosses below Molly towards center.)

Polly

(aloof)

How long is it been since you got a favorable mention in my society column?

(Molly turns mop upside down and turns towards Polly firmly planting mop on floor as if it were a mace.)

Molly

Never read it. When a lady's sure of her social position as I am, she don't concern herself with gossip columns.

(Molly goes back to her mopping.)

Polly

You're asking for a bad write-up.

Molly

Couldn't care less, pooh, for you.

Polly

You don't mean that.

Molly  
(unaffected by it all)  
Yes, I do.

Polly  
I see you got a vacancy sign in your window.

Molly  
(flatly)  
What about it?

Polly  
(nodding at sign)  
You got a vacancy sign in your window and you're mopping up blood on your porch.

Molly  
(still mopping)  
No connection, none at all whatsoever.

Polly  
(laughing skeptically)  
Aw?

(Molly gathers up her mop and bucket and sets them inside the house during her speech.)

Molly  
(explaining)  
They's always a vacancy sign in that window since I knocked out the walls of the private bedrooms to make the big dormitory. They's always room for one more. I do a quantity business. Also a quality business but the emphasis is on quantity in the big dormitory because it's furnished with two- and three- decker bunks. It offers accommodation for always one more.

Polly  
Yeah, well, this type of material is OK for the classified ads but not for the gossip column and the society page, so I reckon I'll toddle on.  
Toodle-oo!

(Polly crosses left. She has opened her flight bag and removed a wheat colored cigarette.)

Molly  
(with covetous interest)  
Whacha took outa your Dorothy bag, Polly, a Mary Jane?

(Molly crosses left, leaning over rocking chair.)

Polly  
(gaily)  
Ta-ta, toodle-oo, see you someday...maybe.

Molly

(swinging rocker around)

Polly, sit down in this rocker and rock. I guarantee you material for your column.

Polly

That's mighty nice of you, Molly--

(She lights cigarette.)

--but I really do have to be going, I have to cover--well, something--some-where...

(She starts to leave.)

Molly

(hurrying to Polly)

Polly, I promise you, sweetheart, that in the course of this late afternoon no matter how the sky changes through light and shadow, I'll give you material for the goddamnest human and inhuman interest story you ever imagined, Polly.

(During this time Molly has been leading Polly to the chairs. She stops and looks at Polly's feet.)

Besides, your ankles look swollen,--

(Molly pushes Polly into the rocker.)

--set down in a comfortable rocker and let's rock together while we turn on together. Huh, honey? Wait! Let's synchronize rockers! Hold yours still till I count to three. OK?

(Both women lean over in the rockers positioning themselves like racers waiting for the starting signal.)

Polly

Count away!

Molly

ONE! TWO! THREE! ROCK!

(They rock in unison with pelvic thrust as if having sex.)

Polly

(with abandon)

WHEEE!

Molly

Now we're rocking in beautiful unison, Polly!

(She drags on cigarette, then hands it to Polly.)

Polly  
In tune with the infinite, Molly!

(She drags on cigarette, then hands it to Molly.)

Molly  
In absolute harmony with it!

(She drags on cigarette.)

Together  
HUFF, HUFF, HUFF, WHEE!

Molly  
I love to rock. It reminds me of my girlhood romances, Polly!

(She hands cigarette to Polly.)

Polly  
One of your girlhood romances is still in traction, ain't he?

(She drags on cigarette.)

Molly  
That's a lie, he gets around fine!--On crutches.

(They cackle together.)

Now, Polly about The Big Dormitory, Polly!

Polly  
(throwing up her legs gaily)  
Huff, huff, huff, WHEE!

Molly  
I said about THE BIG DORMITORY, Polly!

Polly  
WHEEE!

(Molly stops rocking, picks up megaphone, and shouts through it at Polly.)

Molly  
THREE, TWO, ONE! STOP ROCKERS!

(She stops Polly's rocker so abruptly that Polly is nearly thrown to the floor.)

Molly (continued)

Let's have a little propriety and some decorum on the front porch, Polly, you're not out back of the wood-shed! I was saying: about The Big Dormitory. The overhead, the operating expenses such as free limousine service, are astronomical, Polly.

Polly

Oh?

Molly

(grabbing cigarette)

So!--I can't afford to buy advertising space in The Cocaloony Gazette,--

(She rises, takes drag, and crosses behind chairs to stage right. As she gets behind Polly, she puts out cigarette.)

--and in the light of this situation which is a mighty dark situation, I could use and would surely appreciate the use of a knock-out feature-story in your next Sunday Supplement, Polly, a two page spread with photos of personages and captions without a word of profanity in them.

(She turns to Polly, excitedly.)

How does that strike you, Polly?

Polly

It don't strike me, Molly, it whistles over my head like a cocaloony.

Molly

(behind Polly)

I'm dead serious, Polly.

Polly

It's natural to be serious when you're dead.--

(She throws herself back against the rocker, cackling and enthusiastically rocking.)

WHEEE!

(Molly stops the rocker so forcibly that Polly slides onto the floor.)

OW!

Molly

COW!--Get back in your rocker and listen to what I tell you.

(Polly gets back into her rocker while Molly sits in her own rocker.)

Molly (continued)

You'd go a long way out of your way to find a richer gold mine of material in the class category than I got here in The Big Dormitory, under the roof-tree of God, I've got REAL PERSONAGES here!

(A fantastically tattered old wino, with fishing pole comes into view far left. He has a clown's grin and is staggering in several directions.)

Polly

(indicating the wino)

Including that one?

Molly

(pretentious)

That's, uh, that's an old family domestic I keep on the premises for sentimental, uh--reasons.

(She calls through megaphone.)

WILLIAM? I want the Rolls to roll me to vespers at sunset.

(She snaps her fan open. The wino tips his hat, takes two steps backwards with a hiccup, and then staggers off right.)

I was saying? Oh, personages, yaiss! Take the Gnädiges Fräulein, one instant for an instance, there's a personage for you, internationally celebrated for yea many years on this earth if not on other planets, yes, I've got the Fraulein to mention only a few of the more or less permanent guests of The Big Dormitory under the roof-tree of God.

Polly

How about Indian Joe?

(The parlor, up left, blooms into blue light. We see Indian Joe spraying his arm-pits with an atomizer and patting his pompadour.)

Molly

Yes, how about Indian Joe, that's a personage, Polly, a blond Indian with Caribbean blue eyes, moving in beauty like the night of cloudless climes, and so forth.

(Polly rises. She is overcome with the thought of all that sex appeal oozing from Indian Joe.)

Polly

(in a religious voice)

I catch his inimitable and ineffable aroma somewhere in the near distance: is it outside or in: If I turn around, I'm afraid it would make me giddy, I might lose concentration.

Molly

Sit back down in your rocker but don't rock.--What was I saying?--Oh, The Big Dormitory. Don't be misquided by the vacancy sign. On weekends, Polly, as God's my judge, I hang out the SRO sign for standing room only in The Big Dormitory!

Polly

(surprised)

You sell standing room in The Big Dormitory, Molly?

Molly

You bet your sweet as I do. You take a permanent transient that's ever in his existence had a run-in with the law and--

(She includes the audience in her remarks.)

--show me a permanent transient that hasn't. It's four A.M. No intelligent permanent transient prefers to stay on the street at that desperate hour when even the Conche Gardens closes. Not in a state of the Union where they's eighteen different kinds of vagrancy charges that a lone man on the streets at night can be charged with.

(She turns in chair towards Polly, hanging her leg over arm of chair.)

All right. That SRO sign looks mighty good to a permanent transient, it shines to him like the star of Bethlehem shone to the kings that came from the East.

Polly

(taking notes)

And do they sleep standing up?

Molly

(implying more)

Unless they can find a voluntary bed-partner.

Polly

(knowingly)

Flamingoes can sleep standin' up on one leg, even.

Molly

Anything havin' a leg to stand on can sleep standin' up if it has to.

Polly

(curiously)

Don't they fall down, Molly?

Molly

They fall down and get back up.

Polly

(calculating)

Well, Molly, when one of your standing-up sleepers falls down, don't it disturb the sleep of the horizontal sleepers?

Molly

(patiently)

Polly, a permanent transient is a wonderful sleeper. He sleeps heavy and late in the calm and security of The Big Dormitory, as God is my witness in heaven.

Polly

When is the check-out time?

Molly

They wake up to music which is provided by the Gnädiges Fräulein.

Fräulein

(offstage--singing)

Open wide the windows, open wide the doors, and let the merry sunshine in!

Molly

(satisfied)

There, that's reveille for them. Hear them rising?

(We hear rising noises offstage; groans, howls, etc. The Wino sticks his head out the door.)

Wino

(anxiously)

Bathroom privilege?

Molly

(reluctantly)

Granted.

(She gives key to Polly who tosses it to the Wino.)

Polly

(turning chair towards door)

It'll be fun to watch 'em coming out, Molly.

Molly

They have to go out the back way because it's daylight and they make a better public appearance by starlight on a starless night because of embarrassing subtractions from their wardrobe, like some of them can't find their shoes when they go to get up in the morning and some of them can't find their shirts or their pants when they go to get up in the morning and some of them can't find a goddam bit of their ward-robe when they go to get up in the morning, including their lingeree, Polly. And some of them can't find their equilibrium or concentration or will to continue the struggle for survival when they go to get up in the morning, and some of them don't get up in the

Molly (continued)  
morning, not even when the Gnädiges Fräulein sings the reveille song.

Polly  
(intrigued)  
Obstinate?

Molly  
Nope, dead, Polly.

(Polly breathes out a sound like the wind in the pines,  
rolling her eyes above a wicked grin. Molly gets up  
and walks around her rocker.)

Yep, The Dark Angel has a duplicate key to The Big Dormitory and faithfully  
every night he drops by to inspect the sleepers and check their dog-tags.  
He wanders among the two and three-decker bunks and never leaves without  
company.--

(She sits on arm of her rocker facing Polly.)

--nope, never leaves unattended and no one grieves when he leaves.

Polly  
(lisping, like little girl)  
Between the dark and the daylight--

Molly  
(her head next to Polly's)  
When the gloom of doom is in flower--

Together  
Comes a pause in the night's occupation, which is known as The Dark Angel's  
hour.

(The Gnädiges Fräulein appears indistinctly behind the  
screen door.)

Fräulein  
May I come out?

(Molly ignores the request. Polly puts on her glasses to  
peer at the Gnädiges Fräulein.)

May I come out?

Polly  
(to Molly)  
Molly, a lady in there wants to come out, she's asking permission to come  
outside the house.

Molly  
(sliding into chair)  
I know. I heard her. She can't.

Polly  
Why can't she come out, Molly?

Molly  
(matter-of-factly)  
She's lost porch privilege.

Polly  
Aw. Then let her go in the yard.

Molly  
She's lost yard privilege, too.

Polly  
(sarcastically)  
What privilege has she still got?

Molly  
Lavatory and kitchen. Her kitchen privilege depends on her bringing in something to cook,--

(She glances towards screen door.)

--which don't seem likely today.

Fraulein  
May I come out?

Polly  
Mah-wah-com-ahh.

Molly  
Don't mock her. In spite of her present condition she's still a personage, Polly.

Polly  
Well, let her out, lemme have some fun with her.

Molly  
(skeptically)  
How could you have fun with her?

Polly  
I could interview her, I could ask her opinions.

Molly  
She's long past having opinions.

Polly

(chiding)

Aw, now, let her out, Molly.

Molly

What's the deal if I do?

Polly

A real classy write-up.

Molly

(ignoring her)

Pooh. Don't need one.

Polly

(inspired)

A Mary Jane? All to yourself?

Molly

(greedily)

Tell her to come out.

(She hands megaphone to Polly and grabs match box with cigarettes in it.)

Address her as Gnädiges Fräulein, she comes from Middle Europe and circumstances of genteel circumstances. You got to holler at her, she's got calcified eardrums.

(Polly has crossed to screen door and yells through megaphone into the Fräulein's face. Molly lights cigarette.)

Polly

Come out, Ganniker Frowline.

(There is a pause.)

--Not coming out.

Molly

(smoking)

Give her time, she's preparing.

(The screen door slowly opens and the Fräulein starts her grand entrance.)

Polly

Now she's coming out now. I better think what to ask her.

Molly

Ask her how's fishing today, or which she prefers, a mackerel or a red snapper. Cause if she wants to maintain a residence in The Big Dormitory, after sundown, the subject of fish has got to be kept active in her thought waves.

Polly

She's not outfitted for fishing.

Molly

She's got on the remnants of her theatrical wardrobe.

Polly

(flipping through notebook)

I think I'll ask her some fashion questions and some questions about make-up and hair-styles.

Molly

(turning to Polly)

Let's have some protocol here. The Gnädiges Fräulein is a personage, yeah, but she's still a social derelict, and a social leader like me takes precedence over a social derelict like her, so give her a couple of short sentences, then concentrate the rest of the write-up on ME.

(She crossly turns away from Polly. The Gnädiges Fräulein is now out on the porch. She is wearing a gaudy old tou-tou and opera hose. One eye is covered by a large blood stained bandage. Her hair is bright orange curls, very fuzzy. She sits on the steps up right and opens a big scrapbook.)

Polly

(edging towards Molly)

She sat in a pool of blood, Molly.

Molly

(off-handedly)

'Sall right, it's her own blood.

Polly

(on the alert)

AW! Not a chicken's blood, huh?

Molly

(over-exaggerating)

OOPS! I made a boo-boo, did I ever make a boo-boo!

Polly

(pacing left, like a lawyer)

So the Ganniker Frowline was the victim of violence here.

Molly

Well, I'd be a fool to deny it and you'd be a bigger fool to believe the denial. Yep, her scroll has been charged with a good deal of punishment lately.

Polly

(scribbling in notebook)

Lately as today. Hmm. Ask her if she would like to make a short statement.

Molly

Ask her yourself, you're interviewing the fräulein, I'm not even speaking to her until she re-establishes her credit here with a good catch of fish.

Fräulein

(approaching Polly)

Number, please.

(The Fräulein is holding out a faded sheet of paper Polly crosses down to get away from her.)

Polly

Does she think she's a telephone operator?

Molly

She wants you to pick out a number for her to sing on that program she's holding out to you.

Polly

(leery)

How does she sing?

Molly

(succinctly)

She sings.

Polly

I don't think I'll take a chance on it.

(She crosses to rocker and sits. Then she has an idea.)

However, she might do for a human interest story. Don't you think so?

Molly

She's human.

Polly

(with doubt)

Is she?

(During this time the Fräulein has been standing behind Molly and holding the program in her face.)

Molly

(trying to peer over program)

Take that program from her, she's holding it right in my face so I got to lean over if I want to look out.

(Polly takes the program. The Fräulein then concentrates her efforts towards Polly.)

Fraulein

Number, please.

Polly

Give me time to pick one out that I like.

Molly

She didn't hear that. Not a word.

Polly

Ask her to rotate, Molly

Molly

(to Polly)

Why d'ya want her to rotate?

Polly

(scribbling in notebook)

I'm describing her outfit in the write-up. I want to look at the other side of her costume.

(During this dialogue the Fräulein attempts a few dance steps and theatrical poses, playing to the audience.)

Molly

Walk around her.

Polly

(rocking)

I don't feel like getting up.

Molly

(eagerly)

Read me the part of the write-up where you mention The Big Dormitory.

Polly

I haven't got to that yet.

Molly

That ought to be in the first paragraph of the write-up. Why don't you begin the write-up like this, Polly. "One of our most prominent social leaders..."--No, begin it this way, this is the way to begin it--"The social season got off to a brilliant start when--"

(The Fräulein has slowly begun to pivot on her toes. She rotates down in front of rockers, around Polly's right and ends up behind the women while they continue talking.)

Polly  
(interrupting)

Hold it, she's startin' to rotate. Very gradually, though. She's pivoting majestically toward me. I never gild the lily in my write-ups. Hmm. She's made a full turn now. I've seen all sides of her costume without getting up.

Molly

She's been in show biz for a long time, Polly. Even with calcified eardrums and one eye left in her head, she can smell out the chance of a write-up and she's sucking up to it, naturally, by instinct.

Polly

(looking at program again)

I guess we ought to ask for a vocal selection, but I can't read this old program, it's too faded. See if she can recite it.

Molly

(picking up megaphone)

Remember, it's your idea.

(She shouts through megaphone leaning over the back of her chair.)

GNÄDIGES FRÄULEIN! BITTE! RECITE NUMBERS ON PROGRAM!

(The Fräulein runs to steps, prepares herself, then recites.)

Fräulein  
(to audience)

Number One: "Pale Hands I Love Beside the Shalimar" by the celebrated tune-smith, Amy Woodforde-Finden. Number Two: "I Dream of Jeannie With the Light Brown Hair" by permission of ASCAP. Number Three: "All Alone" by the celebrated tune-smith, Irving Vienna. Excuse me, Berlin. Number Four: "Smiles by Some Long Ago Smiler," and--

Polly  
(cutting her off)

Tell her some number to sing, any number.

(Molly gets up on one knee, leans over back of chair, and shouts through megaphone.)

Molly

Ein, zwei, drei!

(Molly sits. The Fräulein assumes a romantically theatrical pose in front of the door and begins to sing.)

Fräulein  
STARS ARE THE WIN-DOWS OF HEAAA-VEN  
THAT AN-GELS PEEK THROOOOOOGH!

(She stops in mid-gesture, frozen.)

Polly  
--Has she finished the number?

Molly  
Naw, she lost concentration.

(She picks up baseball bat, which is on her left and starts to cross right towards the Fräulein.)

Polly  
(with sarcastic logic)  
If you conk her with that she won't get back concentration or even consciousness till this time tomorrow, Molly, but do you care?

(Molly hands the baseball bat to anyone sitting in the audience first row, then returns to her rocker and sits.)

Fräulein  
(resuming from start)  
STARS ARE THE WIND-DOWS OF HEAAA-VEN  
THAT AN-GELS PEEK THROOOOOUGH!

(She freezes again in mid-gesture but continues to open and close her mouth like a goldfish.)

Polly  
Now what's she up to?

Molly  
(to audience)  
She's demonstrating.

Polly  
What's she demonstrating.

Molly  
Either a goldfish in a goldfish bowl or a society reporter in a sound-proof telephone booth.

(The Fräulein resumes singing audibly again.)

Fräulein

THAT AN-GELS PEEK THROOOOGH!  
WHEN WE ARE HAPPY THEY'RE HAP-PEEE.  
WHEN WE ARE BLUE THEY TURN BLUUUUE!

Polly

(covering her ears)

Enough, enough of that, stop her!

Molly

(pointedly)

You started her, you stop her.

Polly

How do I do that?

Molly

Put her back in the house.

Polly

And how do I do that?

Molly

(impatiently)

Turn her, she can be turned, then shove her, she can be shoved.

Polly

(irritably)

I can't shove her through the screen door.

Molly

(louder)

You open the screen door for her.

Polly

(relaxing)

I don't want to get up.

Molly

(mad)

Well, stay on your fat ass, you slob.

Polly

(also bickering)

Shut your fat mouth, you fink.

(There is a loud swoosh as the cocaloonies fly over. Both women lean over in their chairs and cover their heads with their hands.)

Oops!

Molly  
Cocaloonies!

(The Fräulein hits an unexpected high note and dashes into the house through the screen door. A cocaloony stalks onto stage. It struts around stage left, looking at the audience, then sees the two women.)

Polly  
(with hands over her eyes)  
HORRIBLE!

Molly  
(agreeing)  
HIDEOUS! SCAT!

Polly  
(frightened)  
Make conversation, say something casual, Molly.

Molly  
(not about to talk to it)  
You say something casual and I'll answer.

Polly  
I'll say something reminiscent.

Molly  
(insisting)  
No, casual.

Polly  
(yelling)  
Reminiscent!

Molly  
Have it your way, a casual reminiscence.

(Polly loses concentration and freezes, staring off into space. Molly observes this and grabs megaphone.)

Oh, God, she's lost concentration.

(She yells at Polly through megaphone.)

POLLY!

(Polly regains concentration abruptly and both run for the door. They find it has been locked by the Fräulein, so both stand rigidly with backs flat against the door watching the bird. The cocaloony stalks to Molly's rocker and sits with his legs crossed, making himself very much

Molly  
at home.)  
Don't move: keep on talking.

Polly  
I wasn't talking. I'm going to throw something at it.

Molly  
What?

Cocaloony  
(ominously)  
AWK.

Molly  
(aside)  
I think it heard you plotting to throw something at it.

Polly  
Pooh. I have behind me the power of the press.

Molly  
It would be more useful in front of you, right now, ducks.

Cocaloony  
AWK.

Polly  
(politely)  
Awk.

Cocaloony  
(severely)  
AWK!

Polly  
(to audience)  
The power of the Fourth Estate is behind me, and in front of me too, it's like the air that surrounds me, it surrounds me completely as the grace of God, you know that.

Molly  
(flatly)  
Your voice has got a funny vibrato sound to it, a sort of a shrill vibration like you had a tin larynx with the wind whistling through it.

(The cocaloony rises from rocker and flaps down left.  
The women crosses rapidly towards rockers.)

Polly  
Well, let's go back to the rockers before I collapse.

Molly  
(grabbing Polly's arms)  
You take this rocker.

Polly  
(sweetly, as she removes Molly's hands)  
No, no, I wouldn't dream of it, that's your rocker, and I know how important it is to feel the familiar beneath you.

(She forcefully pushes Molly into rocker.)

Molly  
(after a pause)  
Shall we rock or just sit? With our teeth in our mouth saying nothing?

(During this time the cocaloony has bent over with head between legs, down left.)

Polly  
I'm going to say something.

Molly  
(irritably)  
Well, SAY it, don't just say you're going to say it!

Polly  
(holding nose with fingers)  
PHEW! I never knew a cocaloony bird had such a powerful odor. It smells like that mysterious old sea-monster that washed up and rotted on Dizzy Bitch Key after Hurricane Lulu.

(Both women hold their noses turning outside, then inside, then front on the following words.)

Together  
Ugh! Oof! Phew!

(The bird, now insulted jumps up and struts far right showing off and playing with audience.)

Polly  
It's stalking and strutting around like Napoleon on the ramparts. It's certainly a hell of a three-sheet to have in front of The Big Dormitory. It's not a status symbol by any manner of means.

Molly  
(threateningly)  
Mention this in the write-up and you will find yourself featured in the obituaries next issue.

Polly  
Pooh.

Molly  
(snobbishly)

No pooh about it, I got connections with the Mafia and with the syndicate, too, so roll that up in your Mary Jane and smoke it.

Cocaloony

(to Polly)

AWK. AWK.

Polly  
(sociably)

Awk.

Molly

Will you quit talkin' back to it?

Polly

(defensively)

I wanted to pacify it.

Molly

(knowingly)

Wrong policy, Polly. Take your hands off your eyes and stare straight at it return its furious stare, and go it one better.

Polly

How?

Molly

By stamping your foot.

(During this conversation the bird has crossed left until it stands in front of Molly.)

Polly

(incredulously)

A vulgar, petulant action? Also provocative action? Not me, I'm not about to, you stamp your foot at it.

Molly

Okay, scaredy-cat.

Polly

Well, go on, stamp it.

(Molly raises her foot. As she does so, the bird also raises its foot. They set their feet down together soundlessly. The bird gives a triumphant gesture.)

You call that stamping your foot? You raised your delicate slipper and set it back down like you were outside of all gravity, Molly, in weightless ozone.

Cocaloony

Awk.

(It begins to hunt for something in the audience.)

Polly

(behind its back)

Awkward, an awkward creature, as awkward a creature as--

Molly

(cautiously)

shh.

Cocaloony

AWK. AWK. AWK.

(The bird advances toward Molly's left.)

Polly

(to audience)

What a limited vocabulary it's got! It's strutting up closer, Molly!

(She turns to Molly in alarm.)

Molly

Don't report the obvious to me, Polly.

Polly

What's obvious to me is it's looking for someone or something.

(During this time the bird has been poking around behind them and then sticks its head between the two women.)

Molly

(sagely)

Who in hell isn't, Polly?

Polly

If I should hazard a guess as to what or whom, and I guessed correctly, would you admit and confirm it?

(The bird stalks right, looks in door, around right stage, into the audience and keeps searching for something during the following speeches.)

Molly

(hesitantly)

--Well....

Polly

What?

Molly

(deciding to tell all)

Under God's roof-tree there's no room for successful prevarication. Yep. He's looking for something that's someone and this something-someone is the Gnädiges Fräulein I shamelessly, blamelessly admit it.--Continue interrogation: you can't hide a cat when the cat's out of the bag, as way out of it as the Gnädiges Fräulein is out of the bag and into the lacy fronds of that fern potted in the parlor. So, all right, take it from there. I'm too straightened out, now, to care about any outcome except my income.

(She slides down in chair with legs outstretched in front of her.)

Polly

(stopping her notetaking for moment)

Well, I'm not a star in the mathematics department, but I do know that two plus two makes one less than five and one more than three:--the Frowline has provoked the vengeful enmity of the cocaloonies, Molly. And what provokes enmity under the roof-tree of God is competition, huh, Molly?

Molly

I shamelessly, blamelessly admit that the Gnädiges Fräulein has gone into competition with the cocaloonies for the thrown away fish at the fish-docks.

Polly

(making notes)

Why and wherefore, Molly?

Molly

Well, having passed and long passed the zenith of her career in show-biz and as a B-girl at the Square Roof and Conch Gardens, the Gnädiges Fräulein has turned her attentions and transferred her battle-ground for survival to the fish-docks, Polly. She's shamelessly, blamelessly, gone into competition with the cocaloonies for the throw-away fish. When a fish-boat whistles and the cocaloonies waddle rapidly forward, out she charges to compete for the catch. Well, they got a closed shop, the cocaloonies, they seem to be unionized, Polly, and naturally regard the Gnädiges Fräulein as a wild-cat operator and take a not-so-bright view of her dock activities, Polly. Nothing is more intolerant, Polly, than one parasite of another. So dimmer and dimmer became the view they took of her, till, finally, today, there was a well-organized resistance movement against her. Yep, they turned on her today and she returned from the fish-docks in a damaged condition, no fish in her bucket and no eye in one eye-socket.

(During this speech, the cocaloony has been standing behind the rockers, with one wing cocked to it's head, listening. It occasionally nods in agreement with what Molly is saying. Then it moves around Polly's right and starts scratching at the floor where something has caught it's attention. Its back is to the left entrance.)

Polly  
 (wide-eyed)  
 Gouged?

Molly  
 Yes, out!

Polly  
 (extremely excited)  
 Oh-oh, ho-HO!

(She immediately begins to scribble notes furiously.)

Molly  
 I'm not at all happy about this situation because the Gnädiges Fräulein is required to deliver three fish a day to keep eviction away and one fish more to keep the wolf from the door, and now that the cocaloonies have turned against her, will she have guts enough to fight the good fight or will she retire from the fish-docks like she did from show-business, under pressure!?

(Indian Joe enters from far left carrying a tomahawk. His hair is bright yellow and his bronze skin is glistening. He is dressed like a Hollywood Indian...wearing a breechclout covered with sequin decorations, a flower painted on his chest, and a red feather in his hair. He over-exaggeratedly creeps up behind the cocaloony.)

Polly  
 (jumping up)  
 Indian Joe!

(The bird whirls around and advances on Indian Joe, flapping his wings and becoming more vicious with each awk.)

Cocaloony  
 Awk, awk, awk, awk, awk, awk, awk, AWKKK!

Indian Joe  
 (feebley)  
 Ugh.

Cocaloony  
 AWK!

Indian Joe  
 (forcefully)  
 UGH!

(The two women have run to opposite corners: down left and up right, while the bird and Indian have squared off and begin to circle. They challenge each other with

occasional ughs and awks.)

Polly

(yelling over turmoil)

Reminds me of the Lincoln-Douglas debates. Don't it remind you of the Lincoln-Douglas debates?

Molly

No.

Polly

What's it remind you of then?

Molly

(abstractly)

Nothing reminds me of nothing.

Polly

You mean you're stoned on one stick?

Molly

Concentrate on the action.

Polly

What action, it's just a stand-off. They squared off to a standoff.

(During this incongruously desultory dialogue on the porch, Indian Joe and the cocaloony have continued to menace each other, Indian Joe waving his tomahawk over his head with steady, pendulum motions and the cocaloony poking it's gruesome head backward and forward in spastic rhythm.)

I guess this is what they say happens when the ~~unmovable~~ object meets the irresistible force: that's a stand-off, ain't it?

Molly

(arguing)

Nope, that's a collision.

(The bird begins to retreat, backing right.)

Polly

Let's call it a stand-off collision and quit the argument, Molly.

(The bird suddenly wildly flaps it's wings and flaps left across stage.)

Molly

(seeing the bird)

Look. Action.

(The bird races off far left. Molly runs up left to get out of its way. There is a swoosh over the scene as it gets out of sight and takes off. Everyone watches it's flight from left to right. Indian Joe then shrugs and stalks onto the steps. He stops near Polly.)

Polly  
(all smiles)

HOW.

Indian Joe  
POW.

Molly  
WOW.

(Indian Joe jerks open the screen door and exits into the house.)

Polly  
(starry-eyed)  
Strong character!

(Molly crosses right and sits on the right edge of the steps.)

Molly  
Devastating.--But lazy.--Indolence is the privilege of great beauty, yep, great beauty wears indolence like the stripes on a four-star general at a state banquet. Look at him in here, now.

(She nod towards parlor where the blue light reveals Indian Joe kneeling with one knee off floor admiring himself in a hand mirror. The Fräulein is fluttering about with enchantment making him up for his next entrance.)

Polly  
(observing all this)  
The Frowline has eyes for Indian Joe?

Molly  
Eyes is plural and she's just got one eye.

(She snaps her fingers; the parlor dims out.)

--Have you got eyes for him, Polly?

Polly  
(to audience)  
Let's just say I got eyes.

Molly

Well, then, don't compete with the cocaloonies for the throw-away fish and don't compete with the Gnädiges Fräulein for the Viennese dandy.

Polly

(turning toward Molly)

Did you say Viennese dandy?

Molly

If I did, I must have lost concentration for a moment. Didn't we synchronize rockers?

Polly

I'm standing, not rocking but rocked.

(A fish-boat whistle sounds in the distance.)

Molly

(jumping up excitedly)

Crocked! Oh! A fish boat whistle!

(Polly crosses to Molly at the steps.)

Polly

Why do you mention it like a thing unheard and unheard-of before?

Molly

(looking through screen door)

I'm anxious to see if the Gnädiges Fräulein will sally forth to meet it or if she's reconciled to eviction from The Big Dormitory.

Polly

I never would have dreamed--

Molly

(distractedly)

What?

Polly

(emphatically)

Dreamed...

(Molly runs down the steps, grabs Polly and pulls her to right of the steps.)

Molly

(yelling)

WATCH OUT, I HEAR HER COMING, SHE COMES OUT FAST! DON'T BLOCK HER, MAKE WAY FOR HER, POLLY!

(The Fräulein charges out of the house with a tin bucket to center stage and crouches listening for the next whistle.)

Molly (continued)

Bravo, she's back in action! That's the Spirit of The Big Dormitory for you! Encourage her, applaud her, don't sit on your hands!

(The fish-boat whistles twice more. The Fräulein strikes a "charge" pose then rapidly exits far left, flapping her skinny arms like the wings of a sea-bird and making harsh cries.)

My God, her scroll has been charged with so much punishment lately I thought her spirit was vanquished!

(Polly crosses to center following the exit of the Fräulein and whipping out her notebook.)

Polly

This is material for a human interest story. Should I phone it in for general release or wait till I know the outcome?

(Molly crosses left to the rockers.)

Molly

(sitting)

Outcomes don't always come out quickly, Polly. Let's just sit here and rock on the spacious verandah of The Big Dormitory. And synchronize rockers.

(polly crosses to rocker and sits, starting to rock.)

Hold your rocker still till I say rock and then rock. ONE. TWO. THREE!  
ROCK ROCKERS!

(They rock together.)

You can occupy this quiet interlude by working on the write-up. Describe me in it. Me, me, me, me, mee!

Polly

(making notes)

I've already described you.

(Molly turns to her throwing one leg over arm of rocker.)

Molly

How?

Polly

(sweetly)

I mentioned your existence.

Molly

How about my position?

Polly  
(observing her unlady-like position)  
Position in what?

Molly  
Society. My pre-eminence in it.

Polly  
(aloof)  
You can't gild the lily without a lily to gild.

(Molly slams her foot to the floor and grabs Polly's rocker.)

Molly  
Balls!--Synchronize rockers again: you're rocking too fast. I have to over-exert to keep up with you.

(There is an outcry, far off.)

Polly  
(sitting erectly)  
A human outcry?

Molly  
(undisturbed)  
Distant, still, too distant.

(There is another outcry and sounds of commotion.)

Polly  
Closer.

Molly  
Still fairly far.

(The commotion increases in volume.)

Honey, get up and practice your profession. Report on whatever is visible from the walk.

Polly  
(grandly rocking)  
Not me, old rocking-chair's got me.

(There is another outcry.)

Molly  
(looking left towards the docks)  
Another outcry, still human. The Gnädiges Fräulein is on her way back from the fish-docks.

Molly (continued)

(She rises and crosses to the left edge of the platform and peers through telescope which she takes from her pocket.)

It buggers description, Polly. Oh, God I think I better go in and check on the check-outs in The Big Dormitory.

(She starts for the door but Polly grabs her arm as she passes and tries to get to the door first.)

Polly

Let me help you.

Molly

Help yourself, God help you!

(At this moment as they start for the door, the Gnädiges Fräulein comes stumbling rapidly back from the left. An oversize fish is protruding tail-first from her bucket. She is hard-pressed by the cocaloonies. We hear them flapping violently above her. The cocaloony appears, and as the Fräulein makes a mad dash off right, it darts off left to head her off. As the noise subsides Polly peers off right.)

Polly

Out!

Molly

(starting to the door)

In?

Polly

Out!

Molly

Still out?

Polly

(triumphantly)

In!

(Molly rushes into the house and rushes right back out.)

Molly

A cocaloony bird has got in with her!

(Indian Joe rushes out on the porch, imitates the cocaloony birds and points inside.)

Polly

What's he telling you, Molly?

Molly  
He's complaining about the cocaloony, Polly!

Polly  
Phone the police.

Molly  
Phone's in the house and I don't intend to go in till the cocaloony comes out.

(A cocaloony bird appears in the parlor.)

Cocaloony  
AWK. AWK.

(Indian Joe shakes tomahawk at the bird. The bird runs out the screen door with a fish in its beak. It flaps off far left.)

Indian Joe  
Ugh.

(He spits disgustedly and stalks off right. The Fräulein appears at the door.)

Fräulein  
May I come out?

(Molly turns her back to the door and thrusts the telescope toward Polly. Polly takes the telescope and crosses to screen door.)

Molly  
Take a look at her, Polly. Describe her condition to me.

Polly  
(with telescope pressed against screen)  
She's still alive, still in the land of the living.

Molly  
(crossing to rocker)  
Please be more specific about her condition.

(Polly turns to audience and snaps telescope in.)

Polly  
Her vision is now zero-zero.

(Molly sits and picks up megaphone.)

Molly  
(shouting through megaphone)

Molly (continued)  
COME ON OUT HERE AND REPAIR THIS FENCE, FRAULEIN!

Polly  
(pleading)  
Aw, no, Molly, give her time to come out of shock and stop bleeding.

Molly  
I don't tell you how to run your society page and I'll thank you not to interfere with the management of The Big Dormitory.

(The Fräulein begins to sing "All Alone".)

She thought I requested a number.

(Polly crosses behind Molly and turns Molly's rocker so that it faces the door. Molly quickly turns her face away from the door and covers her eyes with her hand.)

Polly  
If you open the door for her she'll come out.

(Polly turns her own rocker to face door and sits.)

Molly  
What would you call her voice? A lyric soprano?

Polly  
(conversationally)  
She flats a little in the top register, Molly.

Molly  
(still covering her eyes)  
I think her recent experience has upset her a little.

Polly  
(eagerly)  
I think she's coming out, now. Yes, she is. Coming out.

(The Fräulein is appearing gradually on the steps. She sings as she appears, hands clasped spiritually together. A bloody bandage covers the whole upper half of her face and is tied in back in a large butterfly bow. Her costume is spattered with blood and is torn and tattered, but she sings like a song bird as if nothing had happened. Her motions are slow, very slow. Now and then she extends a thin arm to feel her way as she is still moving forward. She is transfigured as a saint under torture.)

Molly  
Is she or isn't she OUT, now?

Polly  
(getting angry)  
Why don't you see for yourself?

Molly  
(yelling)  
You're a reporter, ain't you, Miss Society Reporter? Then report! Report, for Chrissakes, is she or isn't she out on the front porch, now!

(Polly grabs the back of Molly's rocker and stands.)

Polly  
(at the top of her lungs)  
SHUT UP! SHE'S SINGING, GOD DAMN IT!

Molly  
(yelling back)  
I know she's singing! I didn't ask if she's singing. I asked is she out or in!

(Polly joins in singing with the Fräulein. The Fräulein stops singing. Polly sings a few more words then stops when she realizes that she is singing alone.)

Polly  
--I think you scared her. She's quit.

Molly  
She always quits when somebody else chimes in, she will only sing solo.

Polly  
(complimenting herself)  
Can't stand the competitish?

(Molly takes her hands from her eyes, turns and stares at the Fräulein who is on the steps. Then she turns her rocker forward again. Polly does likewise.)

Molly  
Yep. She's out again, now. I didn't want to look at her till my nerves was prepared for the shock of her appearance.

Polly  
I think she's remarkable. I'm going to call her remarkable in the write-up.

Molly  
Don't overdo it.

(The Fräulein is slowly shuffling along the edge of the steps, clutching her scrapbook to her bosom.)

Polly

Watch her: she's about to walk off the steps.

Molly

(exasperatedly)

She's not gonna walk off the steps. She's gonna nearly walk off 'em: then stop short;--intuition takes over when the faculties fail. I'm willing to make book on it.

Polly

(leaning forward)

She's shuffling along with caution.

(The Fräulein stops and slowly begins to sit on the steps.)

Molly

Yep. That's what I told you.

Polly

Look. She's stopped and set down. Let's shout bravo, applaud her, intuition or caution, she stopped at the edge of the steps.

Molly

Don't turn her head. I don't want self-satisfaction to become the cornerstone of her nature.

(The Fräulein opens her scrapbook and looks through it.)

Polly

(stunned)

Oh, God, look, do you see what I see?!

Molly

(not looking)

I don't know what you see so I can't be expected to say if I do or I don't.

Polly

She's picked up a book and--

Molly

She has picked up her scrap-book, her album of press-clippings. What about it? She put it down and now she's picked it back up. People do things like that. What's peculiar about it?

Polly

(ironically)

It just occurred to me, Molly, that unless her scrap-book is printed in Braille, the Frowline is not going to make much out of her old press-clippings.--it she?

Molly

She's reading them out loud, now.

Fräulein

(In a high, sing-song voice, like a priest saying mass.)

"The talented young soubrette astonished her audience as well as her fellow performers when she cleverly intercepted a rather large mackerel in her own lovely jaw!"--Ahhhhhhh! Ahhhhhh.....

(She sighs in a voice that is a blend of triumph and regret.)

Molly

(pleased)

Polly? From memory: perfect!

(She turns to the Fräulein and gives her a little round of applause. The Fräulein tries to bow: totters forwards and backwards. Then resumes incantation.)

Fräulein

"Veritable-dressing' room--afterwards" ahhh....

(She places hand to her forehead.)

Polly

She's stuck! Her memory's failed her!

Molly

Temporary amnesia resulting from shock...

Polly

(in bewildered amazement)

Take a look at her now.

Molly

What for?

Polly

I want you to see what she's doing, it buggers description, Molly.

(Molly turns and looks.)

Molly

All I see is she's holding up her lorgnon.

Polly

That don't seem peculiar to you?

Molly

(to Polly)

Not in the least. She always holds up her lorgnon when she reads her press-clippings.

Polly  
Bust she can't read her old press-clippings.

Molly  
(getting louder)  
That's not the point.

Polly  
Then what is the point in your opinion, Molly?

Molly  
(jabbing Polly with her finger)  
Habit! Habit! Now do you get the point?

Polly  
(bickering)  
You mean it's a habit with her to hold up her lorgnon when she is reading her scrap-book?

Molly  
Absolutely. It's a custom, a habit, a--

(The Fräulein folds her scrap-book and prepares to lament her past.)

--now, look! Now, look. And listen! She is expressing the inexpressible regret of all her regrets.

Fräulein  
(regretfully)  
AHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHH!

Polly  
(sympathetically)  
Saddest soliloquy on the stage since Hamlet's.

Fräulein  
--AHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHH...

Molly  
I hope she don't repeat it.

Fräulein  
AHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHH...

Molly  
(hearing enough)  
Tell her not to repeat it.

Polly  
(politely, to Fräulein)  
Don't repeat it.

(The Fräulein is still moaning so that the women have to yell to be heard.)

Molly

(to Polly)

Aw, shoot. You think she overheard that little whisper?

(She picks up megaphone and shouts at the Fräulein.)

FRÄULEIN! DON'T REPEAT IT!

(The Fräulein stops.)

--I do believe she heard me.

(During the following, the Fräulein does what the other two women are describing.)

Polly

--She's putting her lorgnon away.

Molly

She put it in her bosom.

Polly

She's taking it out again, now.

Molly

(with more excitement)

She's rubbing the lenses on her white tulle skirt.

Polly

(continuing the play-by-play description)

She's holding it up again, now.

Molly

She's still dissatisfied with it. She's putting it down again now.

Polly

(very excitedly)

She's raising it up again, now.

Together

SHE'S THROWN IT AWAY. NOW!

(Both women rise and patty-cake hands together. The Fräulein rises when she throws lorgnon away and joins in on the last ahh.)

AHHHHHHHHHHHHHHH!

Fräulein

(with the women)

AHHHHHHHHH...

(The Fräulein crosses toward Molly who has sat down again with Polly, and holds out her scrap-book.)

Polly

She's holding her scrap-book out.

Molly

I'm looking at her. I'm observing her actions.

Polly

I think she wants you to put her scrap-book away.

Molly

It will be interesting to see what she finally does with it when she discovers that no one is going to accept it from her hand, Polly.

(The Fräulein suddenly tosses the scrap-book upstage in a dramatic gesture.)

Polly

Sudden.--Action.

Molly

(agreeing)

Yes.--Sudden.

(There is the sound of a Fish-boat whistle. The Fräulein cups an ear with a trembling hand, runs to the center and crouches eagerly. Molly jumps up, picks up bucket from up left, whispers to Polly.)

Molly

Polly, Give her this bucket!

Polly

Don't be silly! Don't be absurd! She ain't going back to the fish-docks!

Molly

Oh, yes, but she is! I assure you! Look! She's in starting position.

Polly

Yeah, but she ain't started, Molly.

(A second whistle is heard.)

Molly

She never takes off till the fish-boat has whistled three times.

Polly  
How many times has it whistled?

Molly  
Twice!

Polly  
Only twice?

Molly  
Just twice!

(At this moment the fish-boat whistles a third time and the Fräulein jumps up and screams as loud as she can.)

Fraulein  
BUCKET, BUCKET, FISH BUCKET!

Polly  
(profoundly)  
I think she wants her fish-bucket.

Molly  
(shoving bucket at Polly)  
Here, take it out to her, Society Reporter.

Polly  
Take it out to her yourself, Society Leader!

(Molly lifts bucket over her head and threatens to hit Polly with it. Polly at last takes the bucket and attempts to give it to the Fräulein who is wildly flapping her arms. After several attempts, Polly succeeds in grabbing an arm and forcing the bucket into the Fraulein's hand. The Fräulein starts off but is confused and heads right. She stops, gets her bearings and flaps off to the docks left.)

Polly  
Pooh to you, Social Leader.

Molly  
(just as snobbishly)  
Pooh to you, too, Society Editor.

(Polly ambles right.)

Polly  
A bad write-up in a society column has been known to wreck a brilliant social career.

Molly  
(throwing a leg onto the chair)  
My social position is unassailable, ducks.

Polly  
A social position is unassailable only when the holder of the position has retired without violence or disorder to a plot of expensive ground beneath a dignified monument in the Protestant cemetery. Not until--

(Indian Joe kicks the door open and appears on the steps.  
He drums his chest and exclaims.)

Indian Joe  
I feel like a bull!

Polly  
(cow-eyed)  
MOOOO!

(Molly in the meantime has crossed to Polly and now cuffs her warningly with the back of her hand.)

MOOOOOOO!

(Indian Joe goes back into the house and Polly immediately follows repeating her lovelorn "moo". Molly runs after her, but Polly has locked the door and Molly struggles to open it and peers inside as the lights dim. There is a blackout for four seconds so that Molly can get off stage, then the house lights fade up on an eight second count.)

TEN MINUTE INTERMISSION

(Stars have appeared in the sky (and tender is the night, etc.) when the house lights fade out revealing the screen door spotlighted on the dark stage. Molly comes in from left and sits in her rocker. The stage lights come up while Molly sits calmly rocking and looking at the door. As the music ends, Polly staggers out of The Big Dormitory in a fantastic state of disarray and disequilibrium. Her skirt is removed and she drags it on the floor behind her. She is wearing brightly striped bloomers and her hat is on backwards. Giggling and gasping, she moves two steps forward, then two steps back, as if she were on the promenade deck of a ship in heavy seas. Molly regards her with a coldly objective eye.)

Molly

She's lost concentration and equilibrium, both, and her taste in lingerie is influenced by Ringling Brothers Circus. It wouldn't hurt to preserve a pictorial memento of the occasion--

(She rises and crosses left to the parlor wall where she picks up a camera which is hanging there.)

--in case she gets a bug in her bonnet about an expose' of the moral conditions in The Big Dormitory reflecting corruption in The Administration.

(She runs to Polly who is standing center right, holds the camera in Polly's face and takes a flash photo. She triumphantly returns the camera to where it was hanging.)

A glossy print of that informal photo, dispatched in plain cover to the Society Department of the Cocaloony Gazette will insure a better tone to the write-up.

(Polly, who was blinded by the camera, calls out for assistance.)

Polly

Molly?

Molly

(leaning on rocker)

Yes, Polly?

Polly  
(child-like)  
Is my hat on crooked:

Molly  
(sweetly)  
No, just backwards, ducks, and I do have to admire the elegant, negligent grace in the way you carry your skirt.

Polly  
(starting toward Molly)  
The zipper broke. Have y'got a safety pin?

Molly  
(removing a large safety pin from her blouse)  
Naw, but I have this solid platinum brooch which'll do just as good, so step back into your sweet little checkerboard skirt and I'll pin it on you.

(Polly staggers about trying to step into her skirt.)

Ready, ready, now! Steady!

(Molly jabs Polly with the pin. Indian Joe charges out of The Big Dormitory.)

Indian Joe  
POWWW!

Molly and Polly  
(together)  
WOWWW!

(Indian Joe does a dance step and goes off right whistling "Indian Love-Call". The women sink together into their chairs.)

Molly  
Now...

Polly  
(dreamily)  
Angels are peeking through the windows of heaven, as the Frowline would put it. I wonder if she made it back from the municipal fish-docks or if she decided to set up residence there, till something better opens up for her, career-wise?

Molly  
(sympathetically)  
All of us, Polly, sally forth once too often. It's an inexorable law to which the Gnädiges Fräulein seems not to be an exception.

Polly

Shall we have a silent moment of prayer or just synchronize rockers?

(They both arrange their rockers and lean over for the  
rocking start.)

Molly

One, two, three, rock rockers!

(They rock for a couple of rocks in silence.)

Polly

(stopping Molly)

Three, two, one, stop rockers!

Molly

Now what bug have you got in your bonnet?

Polly

I just thought, to look on the bright side of things, the fact that the Frowline never came back from the fish-docks gives a little more topicality to the write-up, Molly. You must've heard of the newspaper file-case which is known as "the morgue". It's where the historical data, the biographical matter on a mortal celebrity is filed away for sudden reference, Molly. I mean the hot-line between the mortuary and the gazette sounds off, and instantly you leaf through the yellowing, mellowing files and jerk out the copy of the lately no longer so lively.

Molly

(rising)

OK. Now open your notebook and spit on the point of your pen.

(She crosses above rocker, picks up a large bass drum,  
crosses down right, sits the drum down and sits on the  
drum facing the front audience.)

I'm gonna give you the historical data on the Gnädiges Fräulein, I'm going to belt it out with my back to you and the face of me uplifted to the constellation of Hercules toward which the sun drifts with the whole solar system tagging along on that slow, glorious joy-ride toward extinction.

(She beats drum.)

--"The Gnädiges Fräulein!"--Past history leading to present, which seems to be discontinued!

(She beats drum.)

--Upon a time, once, the Gnädiges Fräulein performed before crowned heads of Europe, being the feminine member of a famous artistic trio!

(She beats drum.)

Polly  
 (businesslike)  
 Other two members of the artistic trio?

Molly  
 Consisted of a trained seal and of the trained seal's trainer.

Polly  
 (stopping her note making)  
 This don't sound right, it don't add class to the write-up.

Molly  
 (to Polly)  
 The trained seal trainer was a Viennese dandy.

(She beats drum.)

Imagine, if you can, a Viennese dandy.--can you?

Polly  
 (making notes again)  
 Continue!

Molly  
 This was in the golden age of Vienna, the days of the Emperor Franz Josef and the trained seal trainer, the Viennese dandy, was connected collaterally, with the House of Hapsburg, a nobleman, a young one, with a waxed blond mustache and on his pinkie a signet ring with the Hapsburg crest engraved on it. Now!

(She beats drum.)

Imagine, if you can, the Viennese dandy...

Polly  
 Figure?

Molly  
 (to audience)  
 Superb.

Polly  
 Uniform?

Molly  
 (enjoying describing him)  
 Glove-silk: immaculate: gold epaulettes, and, oh, oh, oh, many ribbons, all the hues of the rainbow. Eyes? Moisture-proof, but brilliant. Teeth? Perfect. So perfect you'd think they were false, as false as the smile that he threw at his admirers. Now can you imagine the Viennese dandy?

Polly

(sighing)

Sure I can, I know him.

Molly

Everybody's known him somewhere and sometime in their lives,--if they've lived!--In their lives.

(She beats drum)

(She addresses left audience.)

Now hear this!

(She beats drum.)

Scene: a matinee at the Royal Haymarket in London? Benefit performance?  
Before crowned heads of Europe?

Polly

(unbelieving)

The Gnädiges Fräulein?

Molly

(to right audience)

The Gnädiges Fräulein!--The splendor, the glory of the occasion, turned her head just a bit. She overextended herself, she wasn't content that day just to do a toe-dance to music while bearing the paraphernalia back and forth between the seal and the trainer, the various props, the silver batons and medicine ball that the seal balanced on the tip of his schnozzola. Oh, no, that didn't content her. She had to build up her bit. She suddenly felt a need to compete for attention with the trained seal and the trained seal's trainer.

Polly

How beautiful was the beautiful Viennese dandy!

Molly

(exasperatedly)

I described him.

Polly

I lost concentration during the description.

Molly

(turning to Polly)

Imagine the Viennese dandy like Indian Joe.

(Polly gasps and scribbles frantically for a few moments.  
Molly turns back to the audience.)

Molly (continued)

Now then...the climax of the performance.

(She beats drum, then holds the beater to her mouth as if it were a microphone. She whispers into it describing the event. In the meantime, Polly has taken a wine bottle from her bag and takes periodic swigs from it throughout Molly's long speech.)

The seal has just performed his most famous trick, and is balancing two silver batons and two gilded medicine balls on the tip of his whiskery schnozzle while applauding himself with his flippers.

(She imitates the seal, then beats drum.)

The audience bursts into applause along with the seal.

(She beats drum.)

Now, then. The big switcheroo, the surprising gimmick. The trained seal trainer throws the trained seal a fish. What happens? It's intercepted. Who by? The Gnädiges Fräulein. NO HANDS.

(She imitates the seal.)

She catches the fish in her choppers!

(She beats drum.)

Polly, it brought down the house!

This switcheroo took the roof off the old Royal Haymarket, and she's got clippings to prove it! I seen them in her scrap-book.

Polly

Why's she do it?

(Molly turns around on the drum to face Polly.)

Molly

Do what?

Polly

Intercept the fish that was thrown to the seal.

(Molly rises and crosses to Polly, picks up megaphone.)

Molly

Why does a social leader like me, in my position, have to defend her social supremacy against the par-venu crowd, the climbers and Johnny-Come-Latelies?

Molly (continued)

(She shouts at audience through megaphone.)

HANH? HANH? ANSWER ME THAT!

Polly

(innocently)

I figured that maybe she had a Polynesian upbringing and dug raw fish.

(Molly throws the megaphone into Polly's lap. Then she crosses left in front of the parlor.)

Molly

You're way off, Polly. Y'see here's how it was, Polly. Always before when he threw a fish to the seal, he would throw to the Gnädiges Fräulein an insincere smile, just that, a sort of a grimace, exposing white teeth and pink gums, while clicking his heels and bending ever so slightly in an insincere bow.

Polly

Why?

Molly

(really exasperated now)

WHY!--He regarded her as a social inferior, Polly. A Viennese dandy? Elegant? Youthful?

(She is standing in down left corner facing the audience.)

Ravishingly attractive? Hapsburg crest on the signet ring on his pinkie? What could he throw to the Gnädiges Fräulein but an insincere smile with a very slight insincere bow that broke her heart every time she received it from him. He couldn't stand her because she adored him, Polly. Well, now. A gimmick like that, a switcheroo, a new twist as they say in showbiz, well, it can't be discarded, Polly.

(She crosses right talking to the audience.)

If the public buys it, it's got to be kept in the act, regardless of jealous reactions among the rival performers. Well--

(She beats drum, then walks around it left talking to Polly and audience.)

There was, of course, a hell of a hassle between the trained seal's agents and the Gnädiges Fräulein's. There was complaints to Equity and arbitrations and so forth. But it was kept in the act because it was such a sensation. The trained seal's agent threatened to break the contract. But popular demand was overpowering, Polly: the new twist, the switcheroo, had to be kept in the act. The trained seal's agent said: Sit tight!

(She squats and beats drum.)

Molly (continued)

Bide your time!

(She beats drum.)

And it appeared for a time, for a couple of seasons, that the trained seal and the trained seal trainer would accept, acquiesce to force majeure, as it were! However,--Now herethis!

(She beats drum.)

At a gala performance before crowned heads in Brussels, no, no, I beg your pardon, before the crowned heads at the Royal in Copenhagen!

(She beats drum.)

--Tables were turned on the Gnädiges Fräulein!

(She beats drum.)

--When she made her sudden advance, her kangaroo leap, to intercept the fish that was thrown to the seal, the seal turned on her and fetched her such a terrific CLOUT!!

(She beats drum, then swings beater left and right during the following.)

Left flipper, right flipper!

(She beats drum.)

--To her delicate jawbone that her pearly whites flew from her mouth like popcorn out of a popper.

(She beats drum.)

Honest to Gosh, sprayed out of her choppers like foam from a wild wave, breaking!

(She beats drum.)

--They rang down the curtain.

(Molly flops over the drum with her body conforming to the curve of the drum.)

--The act was quickly disbanded...After that? She drifted.

(On each of Molly's "drifteds" Polly takes a swig from the wine bottle.)

Molly (continued)

The Gnädiges Fräulein just drifted and drifted and drifted...--She lost her sense of reality and she drifted...--Eventually she showed on the Southern-most key. Hustled B-drinks for a while at the old Square Roof.

(She rises from the drum and continues with amusement telling the story to Polly.)

Celebrated Admiral Dewey's great naval victory in the Spanish-American War, by mounting a flag-pole on the courthouse lawn in the costume of Lady Godiva but with a GI haircut.

(Polly joins her in laughter.)

All this while she was running up a big tab at The Big Dormitory. However--

(She beats drum then picks it up and returns it to up right of her rocker.)

--In business matters, sentiment isn't the cornerstone of my nature. I wasn't about to carry her on the cuff when her cash gave out. Having read her press-clippings, I said, OK! Hit the fish-docks baby! Three fish a day keeps eviction away. One fish more keeps the wolf from your door.--All in excess of four fish do as you please with!--

(A sudden increase of disturbance down at the fish-docks catches her attention.)

POLLY! TELESCOPE, PLEASE!

(Molly crosses left and Polly gives her the telescope. Molly poses, looking off left through the telescope.)

Polly

--Any sign of her, Molly?

Molly

(still looking)

Yep, she's on her way back.

Polly

Alone?

Molly

No. With a cocaloony escort.

Polly

Is she making much progress?

Molly

Slow but sure. I admire her.

Polly  
(sentimentally)  
I admire her, too.

Molly  
(turning to Polly)  
I hope you'll give her a sympathetic write-up.

Polly  
(making notes)  
I'm gonna pay tribute to her fighting spirit.

Molly  
Don't forget to mention The Big Dormitory.

(Molly turns her attention back to the fish-docks.)

Polly  
I'll call it The Spirit of The Big Dormitory.

Molly  
Hold the door open for me. I'm going in fast!

(She starts back to the door, but Polly enters the house before her and slams and latches the door. Molly crouches way over, peeking between her fingers, as the Gnädiges Fräulein appears from the left in terrible disarray but clinging tenaciously to her bucket containing a large fish. There is a great noise of cocaloonies in pursuit. She disappears around the side of the house, off right. Polly comes back out as the hubbub subsides, knocking Molly off the steps with the screen door as she enters.)

Polly  
Something came in the back way.

Molly  
(looking off right)  
Yep. I think she made it.

Polly  
(crossing toward center)  
I don't hear a sound, do you?

Molly  
(peering through door)  
I hear some kind of activity in the kitchen.

Polly  
Cocaloony or human?

Molly  
(turning to Polly)  
I'm not positive, Polly, but I think the cocaloonies have gone back to the fish-docks.

Polly  
(with a sigh of relief)  
Wouldn't that be lovely.

Molly  
I heard a boat-whistle blow; then swoosh! Flap, flap, then swoosh!--Then silence, and a light turned on in the kitchen.

(Polly picks up some bright orange fuzz.)

Polly  
What's this?

(Molly crosses to Polly in alarm.)

Molly  
Oh, my God, they scalped her!

Polly  
This is human hair, Molly?

Molly  
It's hair from the head of the gnädiges fräulein.

(Polly ambles right.)

Polly  
She must be a blond Hottentot.

Molly  
Results from staying too long and too often under electric dryers in second-rate beauty parlors. OH! GOD BLESS HER SOUL!--

(She runs to the door.)

I hear the sizzle of deep fat in the kitchen.

Polly  
She must be frying a fish.

(Molly sits on the right side of the steps.)

Molly  
Yais, I would make book on it.

(Polly sits on left side of the steps)

Polly

Is this fish number four? For her personal consumption?

Molly

Fish number one. She ain't even paid for kitchen privileges yet.

Polly

You gonna carry her on the cuff?

Molly

I don't have a cuff. She's got to pick up where she left off in show-biz.

Polly

Or else?

Molly

Go on drifting, drifting, away from The Big Dormitory, away from everywhere maybe.

Polly

Losing a sense of reality as she drifts?

Molly

(philosophically)

Losing or finding, all according to how you interpret it, Polly.

(The Fräulein appears behind the screen door.)

Fräulein

May I come out?

(There is no answer.)

May I come out?

(She very, very slowly appears on the steps. The two women are awed by her appearance. All of her costume, except for a few scraps have been torn away. She is covered with blood and wounds. Patches of her hair are missing. She carries, before her, a skillet containing a fish with a big kitchen fork sticking in it. As she jumps up, Polly seizes the handle of the fork and removes the fish from the skillet; the Gnädiges Fräulein is unaware of this action. She calls out.)

TOIVO! TOIVO!

Molly

She's calling him to supper.

Polly

Who?

Molly

Indian Joe.

(Polly keeps the fish out of Molly's sight and keeps touching it with her finger, but it is hot and she licks her finger.)

Polly

Why does she call him Toivo?

Molly

Toivo was the name of the Viennese dandy.

Polly

That threw her the fish before the crowned heads of Europe?

Molly

He threw the fish to the seal. To the Gnädiges Fräulein he threw an insincere smile. She bored him because she adored him!

(The Fräulein slowly crosses right and continues calling during the following speeches.)

Fraulein

TOIVO, TOIVO!

Polly

But she intercepted the fish to the surprise of the seal and the Viennese dandy, you told me.

Molly

(philosophically sympathetic)

Yes, I think she imagined, fondly, that it would alter the smile, that it would give a touch of sincerity to it, but emotional limitations cannot be coped with, Polly. You got to accept them or give up the ghost in this world. However, under the flattering shadow of memory, smiles are sometimes transfigured. Possibly now she remembers the smile as sincere.

(Seeing the fish, Molly jumps up.)

WELL! I see you have intercepted a fish!

Polly

Am I invited to supper?

(Molly snatches the fish.)

Molly

I'll mail you the invitation in the morning.

(Polly crosses to rocker, picks up the wine bottle and waves it.)

Polly

Evening, duckie.

(She starts off left.)

Ta ta! Toodle-oooo!

Molly

(stopping and eyeing the bottle)

A chilled white wine is de rigeur with a fish course.--Chow-time, Polly.

Polly

Oh, I've already gotten the invitation! Hold the door open for me, my hands are full!

(Molly opens the door and Polly does a grand Loretta Young sweep into the house. Molly follows her.)

Fräulein

(searching)

Toivo, Toivo!--Toivo? Toivo?

(She twists her head about nervously as if looking for him in various directions, including the sky, as Indian Joe ambles up to her from the left. She draws a long, loud breath, inhaling the aroma of his close presence. He looks in the skillet.)

Is it all right? I can't imagine how I happened to catch it, it was so dark at the fish-docks. It just landed in my jaws like God had thrown it to me. It's better to receive than to give if you are receiving to give: isn't it, Toivo, mein liebchen?

(Indian Joe give the audience a "What is this dumb broad talking about" look.)

Indian Joe

(shouting)

NO FISH IN SKILLET!

(He takes the skillet and crosses right.)

Fräulein

(tenderly)

Watch out for the bones in it, darling.

Indian Joe

NO FISH IN SKILLET!

(He crosses to door and exits into the house. As the Fräulein hears his shout she thinks it is a request for

a number and bursts into song-- 'Whispering Hope.' As Indian Joe crosses to the house, Molly and Polly appear lighted in the parlor. Indian Joe joins them there and stops their fight over the fish by taking it himself. They pass the wine bottle back and forth. As the Fräulein gets about five words into the song, a fish-boat whistles. She stops singing, abruptly and cups a hand to an ear. She crouches in starting position. It whistles twice more. The parlor lights dim out and the Fräulein is spotlighted flapping her arms for a moment, then starts a wild, blind dash for the fish docks and the stage is dimmed out.

All lights come up for a curtain call.  
The stage lights blackout as final person exits.  
The house lights come up immediately.)

Rehearsal data

## CAST MEMBERS

Name	Address	Telephone number
Jan Allred	452 Goodnow	9-5486
Jeffrey Danielson	138 Goodnow	9-2281
Jan Fent	611 Goodnow	9-2281
Carolyn Foote	1516 McCain	9-7647
Joyce Furney	1860 Elain	9-3017
Diane Gaede	2315 Grandview Ter.	9-3483
John Jagger	1830 College Hts.	9-2321
Dennis Karr	908 Bertrand	6-6063
Kirk Lovell	1115 Bluemont	9-7328
Patt Tarry	421 Ford	9-8261

## REHEARSAL RECORD

<u>Date</u>	<u>Place</u>	<u>Time</u>
December 2	Denison Hall, Room 215	3:30-4:30 p.m. 7:00-9:00
December 3	Denison Hall, Room 115 Room 215	2:30-3:00 7:00-9:30
December 4	Denison Hall, Room 215	7:00-10:00
December 5	Denison Hall, Room 115 Room 215	3:30-4:30 7:00-8:00
December 6	Denison Hall, Room 215	8:00-10:30
December 8	Purple Masque	7:00-9:00
December 9	Purple Masque	7:00-9:45
December 10	Purple Masque	6:15-8:00
December 11	Purple Masque	7:00-10:00
December 12	Purple Masque	7:00-9:00
December 13	Purple Masque	6:30-10:00
December 14	Purple Masque	5:00-5:30
December 15	Purple Masque	6:30-9:00
December 16	Purple Masque	7:00-8:00
January 6	Purple Masque	7:00-10:00
January 7	Purple Masque	8:00-10:30
January 8	Purple Masque	7:00-11:00
January 9	Purple Masque	6:30-10:30
January 10	Purple Masque	6:30-9:30
January 11 (technical)	Purple Masque	2:00-7:00
January 12 (dress)	Purple Masque	2:30-6:30
January 13 (dress)	Purple Masque	6:30-9:30
January 14 (dress)	Purple Masque	6:30-10:00

Performance Data

The Case of the Crushed Petunias and The Gnädiges Fräulein were given on January 15, 16, 17, and 18 in the first semester of the 1968-69 school year. All performances were given in the Purple Masque Experimental Theatre, Gate 2, East Stadium at Kansas State University.

	Call	Performance
First Dress Rehearsal January 12, 1969	2:30 p.m.	3:30 p.m.
Second Dress Rehearsal January 13, 1969 (open)	5:30 p.m.	6:30 p.m.
Third Dress Rehearsal January 14, 1969 (invited)	6:30 p.m.	8:00 p.m.
First Performance January 15, 1969	7:00 p.m.	8:00 p.m.
Second Performance January 16, 1969	7:00 p.m.	8:00 p.m.
Third Performance January 17, 1969	7:00 p.m.	8:00 p.m.
Fourth Performance January 18, 1969	7:00 p.m.	8:00 p.m.

## PERFORMANCE TIME SHEET

January 15, 1969

Pre-show music	25 minutes
"Petunias"	20
Intermission	4
"Fräulein," sc.1	43
Intermission	10
"Fräulein," sc.2	20
	<hr/>
	2 hours 2 minutes

January 16, 1969

Pre-show music	25 minutes
"Petunias"	20
Intermission	5
"Fräulein," sc.1	43
Intermission	10
"Fräulein," sc.2	18
	<hr/>
	2 hours 1 minute

January 17, 1969

Pre-show music	27 minutes
"Petunias"	20
Intermission	5
"Fräulein," sc.1	42
Intermission	10
"Fräulein," sc.2	16
	<hr/>
	2 hours

January 18, 1969

Pre-show music	25
"Petunias"	20
Intermission	5
"Fräulein," sc.1	40
Intermission	10
"Fräulein," sc.2	16
	<hr/>
	1 hour 56 minutes

Budget

## INCOME

Basic amount allowed for Thesis production by the Department of Speech.....	\$150.00
Box office ticket receipts.....	<u>244.50</u>
TOTAL INCOME.....	394.50

## EXPENSES

Royalty.....	85.00
Scenery.....	00.00
Costume	
Rental.....	14.54
Fabrics, Trim.....	3.28
Cleaning.....	8.70
Make-up.....	3.02
Props.....	4.26
Advertising	
Poster Board.....	10.37
Box Office	
Tickets.....	17.83
Programs.....	59.37
TOTAL EXPENSES	<u>\$206.37</u>

## BALANCE

Total income.....	\$394.50
Total expenses.....	<u>206.37</u>
FINAL BALANCE	\$188.13

List of Works Consulted

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- Clurman, Harold. review of "A Streetcar Named Desire," in "Lies Like Truth," Theatre Reviews and Essays. New York, 1958.
- Falk, Signi Lenea. Tennessee Williams. New York, 1961.
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- Tishler, Nancy Marie. Tennessee Williams: Rebellious Puritan. New York, 1961.
- Williams, Edwina Dakin. Remember Me to Tom. New York, 1963.

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- Booth, John E. and Lewis Funke. "Williams on Williams," Theatre Arts, 46(January 1962), 17-19, 72-73.
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- Reid, Desmond. "Tennessee Williams," Studies, (Winter 1957), 431-446.
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- Baby Doll. New York: New Directions, 1956.

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Orpheus Descending with Battle of Angels. New York: New Directions, 1958.

The Roman Spring of Mrs. Stone. New York: New Directions, 1954.

The Slapstick Tragedy: The Gnädiges Fräulein and The Mutilated. Esquire, 64(August 1965), 95-97, 131-133.

A Streetcar Named Desire. New York: New Directions, 1947.

Suddenly Last Summer. New York: New Directions, 1958.

Summer and Smoke in Two Plays by Tennessee Williams. New York: New Directions, 1964.

27 Wagons Full of Cotton and Other One-Act Plays. Connecticut: New Directions, 1953.

THE CASE OF THE CRUSHED PETUNIAS AND  
THE GNÄDIGES FRAULEIN: A PRODUCTION BOOK

by

LEANNA LENHART

B. S., Kansas State University, 1965

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AN ABSTRACT OF A MASTER'S THESIS

submitted in partial fulfillment of the  
requirements for the degree

MASTER OF ARTS

Department of Speech

KANSAS STATE UNIVERSITY  
Manhattan, Kansas  
1969

The Case of the Crushed Petunias and The Gnädiges Fräulein were presented in the Purple Masque Theatre, at Kansas State University, January 15, 16, 17, and 18, 1969. The production book contains a detailed discussion of Tennessee Williams, the author of these two one-act plays. The discussion includes the author's purpose in writing the play, the style of the play, the director's approach to the production, and thematic and biographical material pertinent to these two plays. A detailed description of each character and his relationship to the play, costumes used in the production, color scheme of the production as a whole, makeup worn by the actors, properties required by the script, lighting that was used and problems which were overcome, and sound effects used in the production are recorded in depth. Technical considerations are also discussed. Complete rehearsal, performance, and financial data are listed. A play from the conception of the production to the finished product is analyzed from every standpoint.