A SCENT OF FLOWERS
A Record and Analysis of a Production

by

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B.A., University of British Columbia, 1966

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THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF
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THEATRE

We accept this thesis as conforming to the
required standard

THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA
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Department of Theatre

The University of British Columbia
Vancouver 8, Canada

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ABSTRACT

A Scent of Flowers by James Saunders was produced and directed by Judith Freiman, in partial fulfilment of the requirements for a Master of Arts degree in the Department of Theatre of the University of British Columbia, at the Frederic Wood Studio Theatre from Wednesday, January 31 to Saturday, February 3, 1968.

The following is a detailed record of that production along with the director's analysis and interpretation of the script.

A Scent of Flowers was produced on a budget of $300.00 with a three and a half week rehearsal period and had a run of five performances in a theatre seating one hundred three people. The cast was composed of five students and three non-Equity performers. The set was designed by Brian Arnott; costumes, by Susan Gibson.

This record is divided into three main sections. The first is an essay which begins with brief biographical information about James Saunders and a short discussion of his recurring basic themes and his style. This is followed by a detailed examination of A Scent of Flowers with particular emphasis on the structure of the play as the basis of the directorial concept. The essay concludes with re-emphasis on the play as an image.
The second section is made up of the actual script including inserts and cuts, blocking, significant division into beats, and indicating light, sound, and scenery cues. For each major unit or beat there is a brief analysis which indicates the directorial approach taken in terms of purpose, action, dominant emotions, character dominance, and any difficulties involved.

The third section is made up of various tables, records, and illustrations relating directly to the production. Included are the insertions for the mass in Act II and lists of light cues, music cues, properties, costumes, cost lists, and box office reports. Also included are a sample of the program and copies of the press reviews. The illustrations include colour photographs of the production, costume drawings, and finally, blueprints of the floor plan and working drawings.

Approved by:
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INTRODUCTORY ESSAY
James Saunders was born in Islington, London, on January 8, 1925. He began writing while studying for a degree in Chemistry at Southampton, and to date he has written nine one-act plays: Moonshine ('55), Alas Poor Fred, The Ark ('59), Committal, Barnstable, Return To A City ('60), A Slight Accident (Dog Accident) ('61), Double Double ('62), Neighbours ('64) and two full-length plays Next Time I'll Sing To You ('62) and A Scent of Flowers ('64).

John Russell Taylor, his only historian to date, provides an extremely concise statement about Saunders' work in his book Anger and After. He gives brief plot outlines of the early inaccessible plays as well as a simple appraisal of language, character, theme, and finally states "that Saunders has a talent (though not perhaps so individual a talent) for the Neo-Shavian theatre of ideas and not very much action as well as for the more oblique mode of Ionesco".¹ Taylor implies, then, that Saunders' theatre is basically intellectual and that language is his prime tool. He uses it both connotatively and denotatively to express a consistent theme of human non-communication.

More must be said of Saunders' concern to communicate human despair, his fascination with the depiction of subjective realities, and his interest in dramatic structure.
In all his works Saunders focuses on individual isolation. Instead of confrontations between individuals and their environment, the central conflicts involve psychological and philosophical interpretations of human behavior; that is, subjective views of reality.

Alas Poor Fred is an examination of a marital relationship centered around Fred "who was apparently cut in half at some time in the past, but on whom otherwise there seems to be little agreement, even to the question of what he actually looked like". Taylor's implication is that Fred is the only basis of the couple's relationship. At the outset, then, Saunders is concerned with the complexity of human relationships, the situations which keep people together and, at the same time, apart, and which, again paradoxically, both relieve and create human despair. Taylor points out that Saunders concentrates on the wife's point of view, especially in two specific scenes, "one in which, her husband asleep, she takes off all her clothes (in mime) and performs a provocative dance in front of him, and the other when she builds up an elaborate semi-masochistic fantasy about her husband while he is out for a walk". Presenting one character's point of view towards situations recurs in Saunders' work and the manner in which it is done is an important part of his style.

Double Double takes place in a busman's cafeteria.
The setting, properties, and externals of character (costume, gesture, dialogue) depict the British working class in a very realistic manner. Within this environment, Saunders presents ten purely self-conscious characters (bus drivers, their assistants, waitresses). The people in this group are held together only by environment, and merely pass by each other in their personal dealings. They mentally isolate themselves, thereby mutually excluding each other, and no effective communication takes place. Therefore we virtually have ten monologues, ten purely subjective points of view blended imagistically into a portrait of non-communication more in the manner of Chekov and Pinter than of Ionesco.

Actually, his characters are simply drawn. They usually may be immediately described as one general type, as having one particular characteristic, or as being involved in one specific relationship. Saunders then profoundly investigates the separate entities and finally combines them. The end result is a cubistic view of one central character of one central theme.

Saunders' concern with depicting subjective realities necessitates his experimentation with the fragmented style and structure of films. A distinction must be made here between sequential time based on causality and subjective time based on the structure of mental associations. With film, it is possible to eliminate with facility events in
a causal sequence or to change point of view rapidly. Out of this arises a new method of structuring plot. As Hauser explains:

The most fundamental difference between the film and the other arts is that, in its world picture, the boundaries of space and time are fluid—space has a quasi-temporal, time to some extent, a spatial character. In the temporal medium of a film, we move in a way that is otherwise peculiar to space.... disconnecting the individual stages in the development of events and grouping them, generally speaking, according to the principles of spatial order. The real spatialization of time in the film does not take place, however, until the simultaneity of parallel plots is portrayed. The way in which, in Proust, past and present, dreams and speculation join hands across the intervals of space and time, the sensibility, always on the scent of new tracks, roams about in space and time, and the boundaries of space and time vanish in this endless and boundless stream of interrelations: all this corresponds exactly to that mixture of space and time in which the film moves.

Saunders is utilizing this montage approach to plot based, not on temporal, but spatial, order. It is this structural basis which lends a filmic fluidity to his plays and particularly to his two full-length works, *Next Time I'll Sing To You* and *A Scent of Flowers*.

The basic events of *Next Time I'll Sing To You* are very simple: three actors, an actress, and an author-director meet in a theatre to rehearse a play based on the life of Alexander James Mason, the Hermit of Great Canfield.
The characters, too, may be easily described: Lizzie, naive, unquestioning, confused but uncomplicated; Meff, an epicurian who takes the world only as seriously as his own non-sequiturs; cynical Dust; Rudge, the analytical humanist seeking mere simplicity; and the frightened, paranoid actor-Hermit. Structurally, the play is, as Mollie Panter Downes states, "a kind of fugue on the theme of human solitude and Jimmy Mason". Each of the characters takes up and develops the theme in the voice of his own point of view. The vocal and philosophical counterpoint is virtually spatially related.

With the foregoing as background, it is now possible to deal specifically with A Scent of Flowers.

This play is essentially an image. It is the poem of a life lived, represented by the diminishing scent of the dying funeral flowers, the "trembling of the air" which passes barely perceived, barely perceivable.

The plot itself is minimal. A young girl, Zoe, was in a state of emotional crisis. She was torn between the necessary spiritual security offered by the church and its attitude toward the equally necessary adulterous love affair in which she had become involved. At this time of crisis she returned home hoping to receive comfort and counsel from her family. Instead, a series of confron-
tations occurred which caused her to withdraw farther and farther inside herself until solutions became impossible and she committed suicide. Her family comes to mourn her and three men, an undertaker and two workmen, carry out the various duties of the funeral service and burial.

As in Next Time I'll Sing To You, the characters are easily described. The family: Godfrey, the loving step-brother who provides a sounding-board of reasonability; Agnes, the "wicked" stepmother; father David, self-contained and self-involved; and romantic, irresponsible Uncle Edgar. The other three characters may best be described at this point in terms of their work: Fred, craftsman; Sid, apprentice; and Scrivens, undertaker. These three function far more significantly as structural devices in the play rather than in terms of character relationships. The main character is, of course, Zoe. Saunders describes her only in terms of the conflict in which she finds herself:

Zoe had to embody all that I wanted to express about the necessity of being alive. And so I made her young, I made her a girl, and I made her dead, so that the audience could see at the same time the fullness of her life and the actuality of her death. To make her life as vivid and as intense as possible, I made her first of all in love, involved in an impossible love affair. And then I made her a Catholic, creating this insoluble conflict of loyalties.
The complexity of Zoe's character is created by the presentation of a great many facts about her background and family and snatches of situations from which we may perceive various aspects of her personality and her relationships. By the end of the first act Saunders has presented intimations of a complex individual. Throughout the second act, he develops the conflict between Catholicism and adultery and the charming girl becomes a young woman plagued by anxieties and guilt which alienate her from church and family - former sources of comfort and security. This alienation leads to suicide. With the end of life comes the end of Zoe's growth and, in the third act, she becomes merely a vehicle for Saunders' philosophical meanderings on the subject of death. Her question to Scrivens and gradual acceptance of her grave have little to do with the character created in the first two acts. Her coffin and not her person is the focal point of this act.

The events of the action and the characters, then, are merely individual elements of a complex structure constructed similarly to Next Time I'll Sing To You but using spatial and temporal elements in an even more filmic way. It is primarily through an examination of this structure rather than theme or character analysis that A Scent of Flowers may be appreciated.
Three structural planes (without dogmatic distinction) exist in the play: the first involves the combination of lineal and non-lineal approaches to plot development; the second, the combination of subjective and objective points of view which creates a contrast between transience and permanence; the third, time lapse (that is, crossing the boundaries of past and present) to depict memory.

All the structural planes of the play have the same basic fact in common: Zoe is dead. Firstly in elaborating this fact, Saunders utilizes two methods of developing plot - a lineal and a non-lineal depiction of events. The former may be described in the following manner. In Act I the coffin, the mourners, and those conducting and carrying out the funeral proceedings are assembled in the dead girl's home for the trip to the church. Act II is her funeral mass. Act III is her burial at the graveyard. The latter uses the same pieces of information and characters but is structured by associative pattern rather than causal sequence. For example, in Act I Zoe watches Agnes - her stepmother and mistress of the house - enter and look around the room to make sure that everything is in order and ready. (Agnes is naturally preoccupied with her own grief and is merely going through the motions of her every-day existence.) In the course of making ready she arranges the funeral bouquets which have just been brought in.
She stoops to pick up a bouquet of white roses. **Shift.** Zoe screams, runs over, grabs the bouquet and launches into a monologue explaining that the white roses are from her lover and that:

He once said: When you stop seeing me, as you will . . . I'll send you ten white roses, one for each month we've known each other, and each year I'll send another ten; I'll choose each rose individually to make sure it's perfect, so that in years to come . . . the act of choosing these ten roses will for a moment bring back a glimmer of remembrance.

**Shift** once again. Zoe, having moved across the room, realizes that Granny is there, acknowledges her, and relates an anecdote from childhood which, for Zoe, illustrates the relaxed, firm relationship between them. **Shift** - and so on as the act continues. As I have tried to indicate, the important part of this and of any non-linear structure is the transitions between associations; that is, what new mental or environmental occurrence begins the next chain of thought. These occurrences must be clearly presented in order for the transitions, and therefore the plot, to be properly understood.

The second structural plane involves the presentation of subjective and objective points of view toward the fact of Zoe's death. The subjective points of view are those of the members of the family all of whom are emotionally
tied to the situation; the objective, those of Fred, Sid, and Scrivens who may be detached for not having known Zoe. By presenting these points of view, Saunders obtains a contrast between life's transience and permanence.

After the burial, Zoe no longer exists and the family disperses, but Fred and Sid remain to fill the grave—a job that has always been and will always be done. It is their function and they perform it mindlessly and with mechanical consistency. Scrivens too acquires constancy from his function.

I've attended the highest and the lowest. I can do you simple or I can do you baroque. I can do you a hearse and one, one carriage that is, for anything up to six, not counting the deceased, I can do you a hearse and three, four, seven or eight, if you like, it's all one to me. The common factor is dignity. You can be ugly or beautiful, crooked or straight, rich or poor—even poor. You're all the same to me. What's in the box is not my province, the ritual is the thing. Fill it with peanuts if you like, it makes no difference to me; I shall usher it into its appropriate hole in the ground with all due ceremony.

He is utterly involved with his job and, in fact, has a certain amount of cocksure disdain for the people he must deal with. But Saunders has given Scrivens special significance.

As funeral director Scrivens has learned to deal with all segments of society. People from all classes and all
ages come to Scrivens and this affords him a universality. At the same time, Saunders embues him with a spiritual quality (other than the fact that he doubles as the priest in Act II). Zoe states:

Do you know what Mr. Scrivens is? He's the kind godlike parent who wraps the naked half-asleep child in a woolly blue blanket and flies with it across the seas through the night.  

Scrivens takes care of all the details. He creates ritual from procedure. His job affords him a kind of omnipotence and omnipresence and he is patient and wise enough to deal with Zoe's questioning in Act III.

Saunders is able to present permanent and eternal conditions of human existence through the emotional detachment of Fred, Sid, and Scrivens. Their attitude towards the process of Zoe's funeral represents an aesthetic approach to the process of living. Strict attention to the form of the ritual creates that ritual's meaningfulness. No human interaction need be involved. The ritual remains intact regardless of who performs it. This is in contrast to any subjective viewpoint and it is through the subjective viewpoints of the other characters that Saunders is able to suggest the transience of existence; of the life and relationships of an individual. In this plane of structure,
then, Saunders juxtaposes objectivity and subjectivity to present his main theme — the paradox of human existence.

The transience described above is the result of the creation out of common experiences of mental and emotional states between individuals; that is, human relationships. When an individual ceases to exist, the relationships which he has been involved in cease functioning as well. They can no longer grow because they can no longer change and the relationships and the individual become frozen in memories. The fact that Zoe has died before the play begins is the basis of the third structural plane which may be said to describe memory.

Its elements are temporal: past to recreate Zoe's crisis and present to depict the funeral proceedings. The first act utilizes both of these as well as artistic time to create a cubistic picture of Zoe. Exposition of many facets of her personality and background are provided in order to entirely capture the audience by the charm and vitality of the young girl. Her presence gives the act coherence and focus and one is certainly struck by the "fullness of her life". Act II is a beautifully developed counterpoint between the movement of the mass celebrating Zoe's death and that of the events which led to her suicide. Having provided all the necessary background, Saunders climactically builds to her suicide and succeeds
in producing a tremendous impact with "the actuality of her death". By the end of Act II we have completed the story of Zoe's life. By recreating the intensity of her life and then depicting her death, the story itself has set up its own limitations concerning Zoe. No more growth or change is involved. She belongs to the past. In Act III, Saunders sets about to reinforce the present. For Zoe, this act involves an acceptance of her death and, even in the face of nebulous, unphraseable questions, a growing calm as she willingly goes to her grave. It is a journey to rest. For the members of her family, it is a journey to the present with which they must continue. At the same time as Zoe fades out of the focus of the play, each of them goes through the process of filing her away in their memories. For Fred, Sid and Scrivens, nothing changes. They have never left the present but have continued consistently throughout, doing their everyday duties. The first act gathers together the facts and characters relevent to the memory, the second act plays them out, and the third disperses them.

Saunders is creating a poem for the stage employing emotional tones. The overall impact of the play is in its mood and atmosphere. It is as transiently beautiful and sentimental as the symbolic white roses. In production,
the main goal is to achieve the subtle, delicate, and complex nature of this atmosphere.

My central image for this production was a mobile by Alexander Calder, *Day and Night* ('65). It represented a combination of mood and structure analogous to the play. The lines and minimal shapes of the pieces of the mobile are lyrically beautiful by way of their spatial relationships to each other. Also, the fact that the mobile is suspended and in motion, that all its elements have a virtual volume so that the spatial relationships constantly shift, provides a kineticism that is reminiscent of films. In that *Day and Night* is an exercise in pure form and connotative expression, it retains a timelessness and a universality; that is, it exists in space-time. It is not defined by the space it occupies because it also makes use of the space it does not occupy and its potential for constant and eternal motion exclude it from temporal limitations. The space and time of the perceiver, not the work, create the criterion by which the work may be appreciated.

In conclusion, I chose to produce *A Scent of Flowers* because of its combination of sentimentality and complex structure. Generally, the connotative use of language, the thematic concern with human existence, the preoccupation with a subjective viewpoint - all these aspects of the play
may be related to the structure. Indeed, the play represents, first and foremost, an exercise in form, but without the shadings of mood it would be only a tedious intellectual exercise.
NOTES


2 Ibid., p. 179.

3 Ibid., p. 180.


9 Ibid., p. 17.

10 Ibid., p. 21.

11 This term refers to the actual present of the play's length from the beginning of the first act to the end of the third. I am using artistic time to describe the presentational moments in Act I when the characters virtually address the audience.
BIBLIOGRAPHY


A SCENT OF FLOWERS

by

James Saunders
ACT ONE

A room. Asleep on a settee, centre-stage, her legs curled up, is ZOE.

FRED: 'Course it'll come through, watcha talking about? Look, lower your end a bit... Raise it, then, raise it... Look, you've only gotta ease it round that corner... Get out of the way, then, get underneath it... Oh, Sid... O.K. She puts down his end of whatever it is they are carrying, and backs a few steps, still facing off-stage. He shakes his head as SID enters.

SID: You've made a right mess of that wallpaper, haven't you? Darn great tear right across the Regency stripes. How many times have I told you, watch out for the decor when you're turning the corners? It's bad, Sid, it's amateur - knocking chunks out the walls...

SID: Well, we got it round.

FRED: It's not what you do, it's the manner of doing it.

SID: That's my Betty's favourite motto.

FRED: Sometimes I wonder if you'll ever make a craftsman.

SID: Where we gonna put it, then?

FRED: Well, let's get it in first, shall we?

They go off, come on again with the coffin, which they deposit in front of the settee. They straighten up.

SID: Think I cricked my back out there. Is that her?

They look at ZOE. FRED nods.

FRED: I s'pose. Yes, that'll be her.

SID: She's not a bad-looking kid.
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FRED: Mhm. 1
SID: Looks a bit like someone I used to go around with. A bit. I dunno, though. What, er—happened?
FRED: Does it matter?
SID shrugs.
(To ZOE) Erm . . . He coughs. So does SID. ZOE sits, and makes a sound.
Miss . . . Miss.2
SID: Hey, Miss.
ZOE: No ... no, no, no . . . It's not possible, it's not—She opens her eyes and stares at them.
SID: Where d'you want this then?
She stares at it.
I mean—
FRED: Give her a chance, Sid; she's not with us yet.3
He comes closer to her.
I'm Fred, and he's Sid.
ZOE (still looking at the coffin): How do you do?
FRED: We were wondering where you wanted it put . . .
ZOE: Put.
SID: Put.
FRED: Take your time, take your time.4
ZOE (vaguely): Erm . . . Over there . . . ?
FRED: Over there.
FRED and SID carry the coffin to Stage Left. ZOE stands up and follows them a little way. FRED and SID straighten up.
O.K.?
She nods.
You, erm . . . Anything you want, you let us know. Eh?
SID: We'll get the flowers.6
FRED and SID go out. Left alone, ZOE looks at the coffin, approaches it, touches it . . . GODFREY, meanwhile, enters; he considers ZOE for a moment.
GODFREY: Hallo, Zoe.
ACT ONE

She looks round at him; there is a slight pause, as though they were adjusting to one another from two different worlds.

ZOE: Godfrey Lambkin — how nice of you to come.

GODFREY: Ever the perfect hostess.

ZOE: You may approach and kiss my hand.

GODFREY: Dare I, madam? My heart will burst.

ZOE: Get him.

GODFREY: Withal. (J)

He kisses her hand.

Engineer Godfrey Lambkin at your service.

ZOE: Oh, sir. (2)

GODFREY: Two-stroke combustion engines a speciality; bicycle chains replaced while you wait; ladies attended in bed.

He intones a benediction over her head.

ZOE: Father, I have sinned.

GODFREY: What's that to me, girl? I've got my own troubles.

ZOE: I bet you're terrible in bed.

GODFREY: Madam, I'm an engineer.

ZOE: Do you go to bed with a spanner in case of trouble?

GODFREY: A blueprint; spanners are for mechanics. Zoe, darling ... (5)

They are in each other's arms.

ZOE: Gogo, darling.

GODFREY: Let us dispel misconceptions.

ZOE: O.K. This creature was neither my father, brother, boyfriend, ghostly tutor nor even lover.

GODFREY: Not even that.

ZOE: He was a filthy rotten stepbrother, weren't you, Gogo?

GODFREY:* Neither a relation nor not a relation; a kind of bastard semi-demi-relationship of a most baffling kind was ours.

ZOE: After all, my father fell in love with your mother; why shouldn't I fall in love with you?
GODFREY: We didn't.
ZOE: 'Course we didn't; but then you're an ugly bastard.
GODFREY: And you're an unattractive bitch; otherwise, who knows?
ZOE: Did you ever find it odd, Gogo?
GODFREY: What?
ZOE: I mean, did you ever stop to consider that we could've been exactly the same people, only not step-related, and we could've met, fallen madly in love and even settled by now into the deathlike embrace of matrimony?
GODFREY: Impossible.
ZOE: Why?
GODFREY: We'd not have been the same people.
ZOE: What difference does our parents marrying make to us?
Pause.
GODFREY: None. You're right.
ZOE: Well?
GODFREY: I suppose you were not my type.
ZOE: You made it your business to make me not your type.
GODFREY: Rubbish! I'm a free man; I make my own choices.
ZOE: Exactly; and you chose sister.
GODFREY: More or less. It was a kind of never-ending make-believe. When we romped together with pillows in our pyjamas we were brother and sister—
ZOE: and when we danced in the moonlight at the end-of-term ball we were lovers. If you walk along the pavement without treading on the lines, the bears'll never get you...
I wonder how close behind us those bears really were... Or would we have discovered, if we'd trodden on the line, that there weren't really any bears at all?
GODFREY: You? With a face like a frog? Look at you, you're skinny.
ZOE: And you stink of tobacco and engine oil.
GODFREY: Over that little mix-up when we were twelve, I'll draw a veil.
ZOE: Oh, that; that doesn't count.

*We were having a pillow-fight, and the pillow sort of got lost.
GODFREY: Nothing happened!
ZOE: Why make a thing about it? We're not related.
GODFREY: Who's making a thing about it? Childish experimentation . . .
ZOE: Yeah, yeah . . .
GODFREY: I had to give up, she kept crossing herself.
ZOE: What! You cried off, you coward, Sissy!
GODFREY: Because you were crossing yourself; the perfect defence.
ZOE: I was not!
GODFREY: You were.
ZOE: Wasn't.
GODFREY: Were. In your mind you were.
ZOE: Could you see in my mind?
GODFREY: Yes.
Pause.
GODFREY: End of topic.
ZOE: End of topic. So let's go back and we'll make a more, like, characteristic confrontation.
GODFREY: O.K.
He retreats; turns.
Zoe!
ZOE: Gogo!

She runs the width of the stage, and he catches her in his arms, custard-pie fashion. She begins to tickle him. He collapses howling.

Lights quickly fade, leaving only a white spot on the box; at which SCRIVENS appears immediately with flowers, which he
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arranges on the table; ZOE and GODFREY can still be heard, of course.

Lights back to normal quickly.

ZOE and GODFREY sit up, a little sleepily. ZOE and GODFREY arrange the flowers, or rather throw them on available parts of the table, and proceed to give the box a final buff up with clothes, spit, and brass oil.

Funereal decorum is my business. If you seek a tasteful departure, I'm your man.

He makes a slight bow towards ZOE and GODFREY, who have got up and are brushing themselves down.

SID (as he works): But he can't tell frost from butter.

He and ZOE sing softly together as they work.

SCRIVENS: I've attended the highest and the lowest. I can do you simple or I can do you baroque. I can do you a hearse and one, one carriage, that is, for anything up to six, not counting the deceased, I can do you a hearse and three, four, seven or eight, if you like, it's all one to me. The common factor is dignity. You can be ugly or beautiful, crooked or straight, rich or poor — even poor. You're all the same to me. What's in the box is not my province, the ritual is the thing. Fill it with peanuts if you like, it makes no difference to me; I shall usher it into its appropriate hole in the ground with all due ceremony.

ZOE: How marvellously democratic.

SCRIVENS: Democratic, yes; ritual is a great leveller. Birth, now, this is a terrible thing.

ZOE: Terrible?

SCRIVENS: Oh, yes, most distressing. Head first they come, feet first, even breech-first if you'll pardon the expression. It's —

ZOE: Messy?
SCRIVENS: Untidy, yes. And all conducted by a woman with her sleeves rolled up who might be taking a bun out of the oven. Where's the finesse, Miss, where's the finesse?

ZOE: I've never thought of it like that.

SCRIVENS: No one ever does. Miss, if we could just be born in a little casket, I wonder if I might have a word with the gentleman of the house?

ZOE: You mean Daddy? He's up in his room crying, he'll be down presently; if you could perhaps go out and polish your top-hat or something for a while . . .

SCRIVENS kisses her hand.

GOODFREY: Leave her alone, you cold bastard.

ZOE: He's not cold, Gogo, he's warm; he's as warm as toast, aren't you, Mr Scrivens? And he's only doing his job.

GOODFREY: I'll do him if he comes this way; I'll kick him in the crutch if he comes this way.

SCRIVENS: A standard response.

ZOE: Is it?

SCRIVENS: Oh, yes indeed. Don't let it bother you, I'm quite used to it, it doesn't disturb me in the least. You'd be surprised at the abuse that's been heaped on my head from time to time. People take it personally, you know; also it embarrasses them, and this makes them angry. They forget I'm just doing my job, as best I can. Someone has to do it; it's got to be done. What else would they have?

ZOE: What else would you have, Gogo?

GOODFREY: I'll strangle him if he gets any nearer.

SCRIVENS: People are odd, that's my philosophy, people are very odd. You'd think they'd be glad to know that at least once in this world they were sure of a little spot of dignity, nobility, meaningfulness. Odd they are, Miss. Think of it: they come screaming into the world at all sorts of angles, and with what? What do they have that's, rightly theirs? Tell me: what do they have? Nobility, no; dignity, no;
experience, no; opinions, none at all. Processes, that’s all we are when we’re born, Miss, little wee processes with an instinct or two and a hole at each end, if you’ll pardon the expression. You know what it’s like when you’re just coming out from under the anaesthetic? You do whatever you’re told; breathe deeply – you breathe; spit in here – you spit. Just like that, it is. Walk; recite your four times table; learn your catechism; act like this and think like that – that’s the way it is, that’s the way we grow up, stuck together from outside, if you see what I mean. And where’s the person underneath, where’s the real me, or you, Miss, or him? Ah, that’s a question. Skin a pearl, Miss, skin a pearl, and try to find its prime cause; what are you left with? A little wee speck of accidental grit.

GODFREY: Get him out here!

SCRIVENS: Mind you, it’s all one to me, that’s my point. I’m a craftsman, too, you know. I take the material for what it’s worth and do what I can with it. They come in their boxes, no one’s to know the difference, or if they do know they keep quiet about it. And what do I get for them, these, as you might say, residual specks of grit? Friends weeping for them – real tears, mind you, very often real tears – clergymen praying for them, perfect strangers taking off their hats to them as they pass them, in the street, flowers, music, what more could you want? A dignified passing, and nobody knows the difference.

ZOE: Or if they do they keep quiet about it.

SCRIVENS: Precisely. You take my meaning. Democracy ...

He flicks a speck of dust from Zoe’s dress. GODFREY suddenly flies at him, seizes him by the throat and they fall to the ground.

GODFREY on top. DC.

ZOE: No, Gogo.

GODFREY seems intent on strangling SCRIVENS, who puts up no resistance. After a while GODFREY stops shaking.
ACT ONE

SCRIVENS by the throat, sits up, and looks at ZOE, who shakes her head. GODFREY stands up. He is crying.

GODFREY: I'll... murder him...

ZOE: My gladiator.

SCRIVENS stands up with dignity, takes a folding clothes-brush from his pocket and brushes himself down. ZOE takes GODFREY's hands. GODFREY sinks to his knees, puts his arms round her; she puts her hands on his head.

GODFREY: Zoe... What have we all done to you...?

SCRIVENS (brushing): No understanding, you see, nothing but abuse; but it doesn't bother me, I have the last word. I'll see you later, my dear.

SCRIVENS bows, and withdraws, arranging flowers as he passes.

GODFREY: Hypocrite!

ZOE: He's only doing his job.

GODFREY: Callous, narrow-minded hypocrite. Poncing around in morning suits, the ponce, larding it all over with his bloody gentility, filling the place with his fatuous phrases like laurel wreaths, what does he know about bereavement, what does he know about—!

ZOE: You should think yourself lucky you've got nice dependable Mr Scrivens to look after you. You'd be in a fine fix without him. Can you imagine what it would be like having to make up your grief as you went along?

GODFREY: Hm.

ZOE: Do you know what Mr Scrivens is? He's the kind, god-like parent who wraps the naked half-asleep child in a woolly blue blanket and flies with it across the seas through the night.

GODFREY: You always were of a poetical turn.

ZOE: Engineer.

GODFREY: But I'm no child.

ZOE: Yes you are. All travellers are children, that's why they...
have to have rugs and hot drinks and hostesses to tuck them up. Children with wide eyes – defenceless, vulnerable, and without feelings.

GODFREY: Without feelings! What are you talking about?

ZOE: It's true; that's what Mr Scrivens is here for. To wrap you up in a cloak of ceremony and carry you gently and all unnoticed from one end to the other of this strange, unreal afternoon, until you wake up in a new country, where there isn't any Zoe.

GODFREY: Stares at her.

My child...

She puts her arms round him and kisses him; he doesn't move until she releases him, then sits down and lights a cigarette.

If you could see your face...

GODFREY: He's not so essential.

SID: Where'd his ceremony be without the craftsman?

FRED: It's not made of orange-boxes, you know.

SID: Undertakers? I've shot 'em. They're just the middle-men.

FRED: Seasoned English elm, that is. None of your rubbish, none of your African veneers. Come and look at the joints.

ZOE: Goes over.

SID: Like launching a ship; some tart stands there with a bottle of champagne, no one notices the workers; that's what she's there for. Give her a rivet-gun, she'd try and light her fag with it.

FRED: Dovetailed throughout. Precision-machined, no plastic wood in there; cut through that joint anywhere, you won't find a crack in it. That's a snug joint; what they call an intimate joint. Here, come here; feel it. Go on, run your fingers along it.

She does so.

What d'you think of that?

ZOE: Mmm...
ACT ONE

FRED: You won't find a better joint than that; experience, that is; craftsmanship. Feel it this side...

She does so.

Here, what, crm... What are you doing after the show? FRED coughs. 2

Oh, blimey...

ZOE: D'you really want to know, Fred? Are you interested? FRED: Look, I crm...

ZOE: Do you fancy me, Fred? D'you find me attractive? FRED: Forget I spoke, cr—?

ZOE: I think you're rather nice, too; you're alive all the way through, you know what I mean? How would you like to take me home after the show, Fred? Something could be arranged. How would you like to take me home and spend the long, long, long night with me?

FRED: I—

ZOE: I love you, Fred, I love you, I love you, I love you...

She puts her arms round him. His hang by his sides.

FRED: I don't know you!

She kisses him fairly passionately.

But you're... You're...

ZOE, who has released him, takes his hand and raises it to her eye. She releases it; he looks in bewilderment at his finger.

ZOE: A tear, Fred; shed by a dead girl for a stranger. Go and make a little box to keep it in, with an airtight lid and your special dovetailed joints, your beautiful dovetailed joints, and next time you're lying in the grass with your girl-friend on a warm summer evening with the sound of traffic far off in the distance and that special smell on her breath—think of me, Fred, alone in the cold ground; think of me, and of all the infinite possibilities that never happened.

FRED has edged upstage, the door; his hand still raised.

FRED: We've crm... We're gonna get a cup o' tea. 4

He goes out, after SID, wiping his finger on his trousers, just

FX BEHIND COFFIN TO SR SIDE.

S EXITS LC.

Z X DS OF COFFIN TO F.

F EXITS LC.
A SCENT OF FLOWERS

before he goes. Into the room comes the GRANDMOTHER, wheeled in a chair by EDGAR. EDGAR is approaching middle-age, red-faced, with the kind of face whose natural lines are laugh-lines, so that when the laugh slips off the face has a look of intense, almost tragic concentration.

The GRANDMOTHER is about a hundred and fifty, motionless, and invisible except for one hand. EDGAR declaims as he enters.

EDGAR Vanity, vanity!

He laughs.

ZOE: What are you laughing at, Uncle Edgar?

EDGAR: Say hallo to all the nice people, mother; they've all come to see you; give them a sign, break a little wind for them. The old woman, symbol of the wisdom of the ages - only between you and me, she suffers from the malady of the times - failure to communicate. Can you hear my watch, mother? Can you see my hand? Maybe she can and maybe she can't, but I assure you, she's in there somewhere - I think.

He laughs, as he arranges the GRANDMOTHER in a convenient position. He sings, in quite a good bass-baritone.

'And I love her, yes, I love her . . .'

ZOE: Uncle Edgar.

He turns to her for a moment, serious-faced; then he laughs again. ZOE catches it.

What are you laughing at?

EDGAR looks down at the GRANDMOTHER, and sings softly in a minor key.

' Though her hair has turned grey . . .'

ZOE: 'He never tells me.

That's granny, she's about a hundred and fifty.

She lives upstairs in the past -

EDGAR Lives? Our servants can do that for us.

ZOE: Her room is full of daguerreotypes and wax fruit in glass domes and rust-coloured plush and an unworldly smell . . .
ACT ONE

EDGAR: And a shrunken head or two, of course, and lots of obscene literature. Annals of the South African War; the Ladies’ Companion in twenty-nine volumes; Thoughts by the Wayside; dummies, of course, inside are dirty pictures.

ZOE: She insisted on coming down against protests from all the family.

EDGAR takes up the GRANDMOTHER’s hand.

She’s so used up that all she’s got left is perversity; she’s a sort of spirit of cantankerousness; she really ought to be dead. I think one day she’ll forget herself and do as somebody tells her; and out she’ll go like a candle; there’ll be nothing left but a crinkled up shell as light as a feather, a husk you could put on the palm of your hand and—

She blows her palm.

—blow to the wind.

EDGAR: At the moment of my conception, my parents both bellowed with laughter; the result was that the homunculus was born with a joke instead of a soul. Thus, as the soul informs the body, so did this joke-soul spread forth its tentacles every which way like a jolly cancer until this changeling, this man-bladder was transformed into a single, simple, complex, never-ending, profound, ridiculous, excruciating joke. He laughs.

Too long to tell, of course, and suffers in the telling; but allow me to cut you off a slice: There was this couple, you see, and they booked in at this hotel, the first night of their honeymoon you understand, newlyweds they were though mind you they were not altogether innocent, not without blemish you might say, neither with respect to themselves considered separately nor themselves considered in relation to each other if you follow me; the long and the short of it being that after the necessary preliminaries and finding themselves five years later unable to bear the sight of each other, the inevitable happened and they got this divorce;
upon which he, this fella, whether the same fellow or by
now another it's impossible to say, casting his mind back
to this other fella or was it the same fella, remembered, or
thought he did, though he wasn't at all sure one way or the
other, a feeling as of transport; a sensation as of the fluttering
of angels within the breast! -- which he linked, rightly or
wrongly, with a memory, real or imagined, of a teardrop,
shining on the lash of this same girl, or some other, as viewed
sideways-on from the self-same pillow of this bed of this
room of this honeymoon hotel I just mentioned the odd
thing being that at the same time this same remembered or
imagined sensation as of angels fluttering within the breast
called up another and quite different memory; viz: one or
another of these fellas, gazing upon the figure of Our Lord
on the Cross, comes first to realize with a blinding flash
his true vocation, a vocation, needless to say, left unfilled
owing to the sight of the teardrop upon the face of one or
other of these aforementioned girls. Payoff: gently releasing
his mother's hand he took from his pocket a packet of
Burma cheroots—

He does so.
—lit one up— ①
He does so.
—and pondered on the fact that this same parcel of antique
parchment and brittle bone, author by dint of passionate
conception, brutal labour and Caesarian section of this same
or another fella, gazed fixedly at him from eyes which held
neither resemblance nor understanding and from which
crept two, passionless teardrops as the old lady, unable to
contain her own moisture, dried slowly out until she would
be nothing but a crinkled-up shell, a husk he could put on
the palm of his hand and—

He blows his palm.

① Z X UL
BEHIND COFFIN

LQ 12
—blow to the wind.
He laughs. Zoe goes up behind him and puts her hands over his eyes.

Don't tell me; it's my Snow Princess; my Ice Maiden; my little monkey-face.

She removes her hands. He turns, but she slips to one side, and goes behind the Grandmother's chair. He looks round.

Now where's she gone? Where's my captive Princess? The Big Bad Wolf is hungry, he wants his supper.

He performs a mock search for her, she following close behind him; he looks round now and then, but she skips to one side each time.

The pot's on the fire, the water's in the pot, the salt's in the water, and onion and potato and peas and beans, bubble bubble goes the stew and all it needs is some nicy juicy meat. And I think I know where I can find some.

He steals up, followed by Zoe.

And... I've... got you!

He is confronted by the box. A pause. He laughs.

Uncle Edgar - buffoon, extraordinary!

Agnes comes in. Godfrey My stepmother.

Edgar My sister; Agnes of the iron heart.

They watch Agnes as she goes across the room - ignoring Edgar - and stands next to the box, looking in. Agnes remains looking in the box for a moment, then rather fussy straightens and examines the flowers, reading the card on each bunch. The others still watch her. Meanwhile Edgar da-da's to the tune 'Hearts and Flowers', loudly and with exaggerated irony. Agnes picks up a bunch of white roses.

Zoe: Leave that bunch alone!

Agnes raises her head.

My white roses! Leave them alone!!!

She runs across and snatches them from Agnes' hands, holds...
AGNES turns away; GODFREY, whose attention had left AGNES, looks sharply round; EDGAR, to whom ZOE's back is turned, puts his hand on her arm. She almost screams:

No!!!

EDGAR drops his hands, Tableau. ZOE walks with her roses slowly across the room. GODFREY watches her; AGNES and EDGAR do not.

He once said: When you stop seeing me; as you will – I put my hand on his mouth but he went on – when you stop seeing me I'll send you ten white roses, one for each month we've known each other, and each year I'll send another ten; I'll choose each rose individually to make sure it's perfect, so that in years to come, even if I've forgotten everything and can't even remember what you looked like or how your voice sounded or how your skin felt to my fingers, the act of choosing those ten roses will for a moment bring back a glimmer of remembrance. We were in bed at the time. And of course this possibility didn't occur to him.

She is now near the GRANDMOTHER.

What do you think of things, granny?

Granny used to come into the bathroom when I was having a bath; it was a kind of understanding between us. She watched me grow up in that bathroom.

Why do they grow up, why do they?

She'd say: Stand up, child, and let me look at you. I was like Gretel in the cage, with the witch outside waiting till I was fat enough to eat. Only I never did grow fat, and

granny's a vegetarian.

God, she was skinny, that kid. Like a stick insect.

AGNES: Do you think you should smoke, Edgar?

EDGAR: Why not?

AGNES: Because I wonder whether this is the right time for it.

EDGAR: Godfrey's smoking.
AGNES: He's not smoking cheroots, Edgar.
EDGAR: Are cigarettes more holy than cheroots?
AGNES sighs.
Are they, Agnes? Are cheroots less spiritual than cigarettes?
Is it that they come from pagan Burma rather than the United Christian States?
ZOE: Uncle Edgar's a lapsed Methodist.
AGNES: It's possible they might give offence, that's all I meant.
EDGAR: To you, or to Zoe?
AGNES: You're abominable.
EDGAR laughs, looking round at ZOE, who gazes solemnly back at him, her head on one side.
ZOE: The day I decided to lose my virginity the only thing that really worried me was the thought of granny looking at me in the bathroom next morning. It was silly really, because it was — well, nothing; I got much more of a kick when Gogo taught me how to Charleston.

GODFREY: No, you see, it's dead easy; you wiggle on the ball of your foot and kick backwards, look.
He demonstrates.
That's right; wiggle and kick, wiggle and kick.
He Charleston, singing the tune.
Relax, kid; you're all tensed up.
ZOE: I am relaxed.
GODFREY: Are you hell! Look at you, you're like what's-his-name, one of those puppets. You take everything too seriously.
ZOE: Hark at the man of the world.
GODFREY: Come on, your priest can't see you—
ZOE: Oh, shut up, Gogo—
GODFREY: Start it slow – like this, like this...
He dances; ZOE follows. The music in the background gets louder. They go faster.
That's it, that's it!
They dance, vigorously, laughing.

Watch this.

He does a step.

I tell you, Zo — if your Saint bloody Augustine — had been able to Charleston — he wouldn't have had to write all that crap.

She stops dancing.

Crap-crap, crap-crap, da da dada da da...

Zoe: Oh, shut up, Gogo, for God's sake! Some things are serious!

Pause.

Godfrey: Nothing's serious, honey; what the hell...

Zoe: Oh, Gogo...

Godfrey: Oh, Zoe...

He kisses her.

Zoe: Did you have to goad me, right up to the end?

Godfrey: You know what, kiddo? You were a mixed-up kid, kiddo.

Zoe: Did we have to quarrel all the time?

Godfrey: Quarrel? What're you talking about? We didn't quarrel.

Zoe: Have you forgotten—?

Godfrey: We argued; it's a different thing altogether. We had intellectual arguments, we got on very well together considering what a neurotic bitch you were.

Zoe: Intellectual arguments, at eight years old?

Godfrey: Who's talking about eight years old?

Zoe: That's when it started, when I arrived. We started quarrelling the first day.

Godfrey: Nonsense.

Zoe: Pyjamas.

Godfrey: What?

Zoe: We quarrelled over whose pyjamas were the best colour and whether you spelt it with a 'y' or an 'a'. And you hit me.
I suppose that was an intellectual argument.
godfrey: That was an orthographic and chromatic argument. Anyway, kids always quarrel, it's how they express themselves; I'm talking about now.
zoe: Now?
godfrey: You know what I mean. We had intellectual arguments, we never quarrelled; we were very close to one another.
zoe: Like the time you were mending your bike and I threw a spanner at you and broke the garage window?
godfrey: You'd have broken my head if I hadn't ducked.
zoe: I meant to.
godfrey: Yes, well, you were making your point. Women are sometimes a bit short on logic, the odd spanner or two levels the odds.
zoe: Crap.
godfrey: Crap yourself.
It was a contretemps over Confession, if I remember rightly.

Pause.
Anyway, you were - you were overwrought that day... I didn't realize...
zoe: You never did.
godfrey: I don't think you need have brought that up

Pause. godfrey is by the box.
Some fool's been dropping ash on these flowers...
zoe: Gogo.

Pause. Spot on box. tableau.
zoe: My mother was American; it's said this side of the Atlantic that she was a bitch. Anyway, Daddy caught the night plane back to England; I think I was more or less smuggled out. I left behind my kitten and my dolls and my jumbo-size paint-box and Buster my turtle and a lot of other
things. And my mother. And picked up a fresh kitten and an even bigger paint-box and another turtle, I mean a tortoise, over here. And her, Agnes. I didn't bother over dolls any more. [1]

AGNES: She was a difficult child.
EDGAR: She was a sweet child.
AGNES: Edgar, I had to bring her up, I should know. It wasn't just a matter of sitting her on your knee and reading her fairy stories.
EDGAR: All I'm saying is—
AGNES: Any child would have been difficult in the circumstances; I don't blame her—
EDGAR: How can you blame a child?
AGNES: I've told you I don't.
EDGAR: She was a lovely kid.
AGNES: I knew exactly what I was letting myself in for. When I first met David and he told me her history I was appalled. I told him he was seven kinds of fool to create a rift like that in the life of a child who in any case must be introverted by nature—

ZOE: Get her! Why?
AGNES: An hysterical mother, an only child, and David for a father, what else could she be? Thank God, just after he came over the mother went into a nursing-home, otherwise there would have been the most dreadful legal tug-of-war. The cruelty involved in some judicial processes is almost incredible; can you imagine what it does to a child waiting while the courts decide which parent it should love?
EDGAR: What else could he do, with a wife like that?
AGNES: Like what?
EDGAR: For God's sake, Agnes, by all accounts she was a—
AGNES: All what accounts? You've only had one account: David's. You've never seen the woman, neither has anyone else.

[1] Z X D R TO PROSCENIUM

[2] A X C

[3] A X DC, ADDRESSES AUDIENCE
ACT ONE

EDGAR: If you doubt your own husband's word—
AGNES: Don't be ridiculous, Edgar—
ZOÈ: Agnes is a woman without love. She reeks of understanding, but she hasn't any love. I don't need you to stick up for my mother.
EDGAR: You said yourself she was hysterical.
AGNES: I said she was hysterical, in the medical sense.
EDGAR: Medical sense or any other sense, Agnes, a woman who could—
AGNES: What are you trying to prove, Edgar?
Pause. EDGAR laughs.
Are you trying to make me into some kind of tyrant? (1)
Pause. EDGAR shakes his head, his shoulders, helplessly, capitulating in an argument which has become too difficult for him. He turns away and moves towards the box, singing to himself, lighting another cheroot.
ZOÈ: I was eight when I arrived in Agnes's big, cold house. I got locked in the lavatory, I couldn't work the bolt, I was in there for ages afraid to cry out, waiting for Daddy to come and rescue me. Then she came. I heard that cold, reasonable voice and I died inside. When I finally got the bolt open I couldn't breathe. I was martyred. I'd died on the wheel.
AGNES: The fact is, you're romantic; you class ZoÈ as a sweet kid and her mother as a hysterical bitch and that's that. I'm sure it makes life deliciously simple for you. Only like all romantics you have no roots and no sense of responsibility. You think one can choose which people to regard as people and which to write off as bitches and fools and lunatics. Your wife was a bitch, so you divorced her—
EDGAR: Let's keep the books straight; she divorced me.
AGNES: After you'd run away to Canada for ten years; just like David. And I'm an insensitive idiot, so you write me off. I don't think you see people at all, you see your relation—

(1) E X D TO A.
ship with them, and if the relationship isn't to your liking,
you assume the person no longer exists—
EDGAR: Haven't you written me off?
AGNES: I have too much respect for reality to write anyone
off, least of all a person I've never met who was obviously
suffering in her soul.
EDGAR: Her soul, is it?
AGNES: Whatever you'd call it. What do you think happened, then?
EDGAR: Happened?
AGNES: David did marry her.
   Pause. ZOE moves closer, to listen.
EDGAR: Yes, he married her. That was his mistake.
AGNES: Out of which came Zoe.
   ZOE looks at AGNES.
Would you rather he hadn't made that mistake?
   ZOE looks quickly at EDGAR.
Would you, Edgar? 1
   Pause. EDGAR da-da's 'Hearts and Flowers', then suddenly
   breaks off. Pause. He looks at the box.
ZOE: Agnes? 2
   Pause.
AGNES
   AGNES moves to look at the coffin for a moment, then she
   picks up the bunch of white roses.
Leave those roses alone—
AGNES (breaking in) 3 That's the trouble with being a romantic;
you select what you want, and never notice how much you
destroy in the process.
ZOE: Agnes, my stepmother; she has no heart.
   AGNES moves towards the box, where she eventually deposits
   the roses.
AGNES: Once the mistake is made it no longer is a mistake,
   but a fact that has to be lived with.
ZOE: Like me? Like I was a fact that had to be lived with?

AGNES: David did marry her. I call him a fool not for that, but because he didn't treat it as a fact but as you do, Edgar, as a mistake he could somehow, eventually, wriggle out of . . .

ZOE (meanwhile): Words, words, words, words, words, words . . .

AGNES: Human relationships aren't bits of string, to be cut when they begin to get too many knots in. When you cut the string the person at the other end doesn't disappear.

... What happened to Zoe . . .

GODFREY: What happened to Zoe is that she's dead.

Pause.

The string's cut now.

EDGAR: She was a lovely kid, a sweet kid, she was like an angel made out of matchsticks. She had no weight, none at all, it was only the weight of her clothes that kept her on the ground. When she sat on my lap I had to hold her in case a sudden draught would blow her away like a dandelion seed.

Once upon a time . . .

It's a funny kind of sympathy you can show, Agnes, for a woman who used to knock hell out of her own child.

ZOE: But he only had my word for that.

EDGAR: What else would I ask but the word of a child?

ZOE: Romantic Uncle Edgar.

EDGAR: What else can one depend on but children?

ZOE: And uncles. We told each other fairy stories so beautifully. We dwelt together in a fairy grotto . . .

EDGAR: Once upon a time, as you sat on my knee in your Catherine-blue pyjamas—

ZOE: —surrounded by a magic cheroot-smoke cloud which made us invisible to the world of mortals, your smiling magic red face close to mine, your rough gentle magician's hands turning my hair to gold . . .
A SCENT OF FLOWERS

EDGAR: There was a mighty wizard and a magic prince with magic powers—
ZOE: And a stepmother.
EDGAR: —and a princess, who went to sleep for a hundred years—
ZOE: —covered over with leaves in the enchanted forest—
EDGAR: —covered with rose-petals which floated from heaven into the enchanted garden . . .
ZOE: Your eyes are full of tears, Uncle Edgar.
EDGAR: All the better to see you with, said the wolf.
ZOE: Why do you kiss me like that?
EDGAR: All the better to gobble you up, said the wolf.
ZOE: My mother used to hit me, it was the least I could say to justify the tears in Uncle Edgar's eyes. And she almost did, once.
EDGAR: And the wolf . . . gobbled her up!
He laughs, and choking.
ZOE: Poor Uncle Edgar. Into what dark jungle did your romanticism take you?

Scrivens and David enter; Scrivens is talking, David listening with a kind of vacant intensity.
ZOE: My father.
Scrivens: Now there's the question of the floral tributes . . .
ZOE: His heart is broken.
Scrivens and David are still talking, by the box.
Scrivens: You, of course, must decide on that.
David: Yes, yes, of course . . .
Godfrey: He always struck me as a bit of a dope.
Agnès: I hope to God he doesn't break down.
Zoe: Daddy's that unfortunate combination, a sentimental Englishman; he's always very correct, of course; when necessary he switches himself to automatic, and runs like clockwork on his breeding. Like now.
EDGAR: The story goes he was once invited to a party which turned out to be an orgy. Picking his way past the discarded brassieres, he sought out the recumbent hostess, thanked her with impeccable politeness, and left with all his dignity intact.

ZOE: Inside the barriers are broken; there's no logic any more, no cause and effect, just a surging and lapping of his grief across the broken barriers, splashing against the shell of his breeding, looking for a way out.

SCRIVENS: There are those tributes which will be carried on the roof of the carriage, and the chosen few which you will consider more seemly should be disposed along the upper surface of the coffin itself... A position usually reserved for the tributes of the nearest and dearest...

DAVID: Nearest and dearest, yes...

He looks at the box helplessly.

GODFREY: He's a dead loss at organization. When Aunt Claire kicked the bucket me and Zoe more or less took over. We spent a whole day in the British Museum reading-room, permutating all known forms of the ceremony until we got what we wanted. We even squared off a scale diagram of the graveside to work out the most effective positioning of the mourners. That funeral went like a bomb.

ZOE: Though it was only a Protestant one.

DAVID: Kith and kin...

SCRIVENS: Kith and kin, yes... Erm... This...

He takes up some flowers.

ZOE: Uncle Edgar's. In memory of my Monkey-face.

EDGAR: Whom I destroyed.

ZOE: No, you didn't. Hold on, Daddy, just a few minutes.

DAVID: These...

ZOE: His lilies, in loving memory; so correct... Hang on, hang on.
SID and FEED enter; they begin to screw the top on, singing to
themselves.

D A V I D: Th—  .
Z O E: We're leaving in a moment, it's not time for that yet.
D A V I D: —
He is on the point of disintegrating. He picks up GODFREY'S
flowers.

G O D F R E Y: For Zoe. From Gogo.
He turns away.
This inadequate bunch of flowers. Which you will never see.
SCRIVENS puts his hand on DAVID'S shoulder.

SCRIVENS: One more, perhaps.
DAVID looks round blindly, picks up some carnations, which
SCRIVENS takes.

Z O E: No, not those, not her carnations.
SCRIVENS: That suffices, I think.

SCRIVENS signals to F, S, and SID to come in.

Z E I D: OK.
They lift the box.

Z O E: I want the roses. I want my white roses!

She comes up to DAVID.

D A D D Y, WE'RE LEAVING IN A MOMENT.
DAVID turns his head, puts his hand over his eyes. SID and
ZOE are just going. DAVID is holding the box. Tableau.

SCRIVENS holds out his hand to ZOE. The others file out.

G O D F R E Y, the last to go, hesitates at the door, and looks back at
ZOE.
I'm coming.

G O D F R E Y goes. ZOE takes SCRIVENS' hand. As they go
out she says:
Your hand is cold.

Q U I C K C U R T A I N
**ACT TWO**

**UPSTAGE** is a representation of the High Altar of a Catholic Church. The action of this Act is played against, and orchestrated by, the Burial Service, which is performed sometimes almost in silence, sometimes audibly, and sometimes ‘frozen’ at a particular point; in Latin, except for certain sentences, which appear in the text. The effect is partly ritualistic, partly ironic; it acts as a background of ritual death against which the ‘live’ dialogue is played; but it also represents one horn of the emotional dilemma which destroyed ZOE, the other horn of which is indicated by the bunch of white roses, which is placed somewhere downstage. Apart from the passages in the text, to what extent the Burial Service is brought in is left to the Director.

**SCRIVENS** in this act is the priest, and dressed accordingly. He conducts the service, of course, but also at points becomes part of the action; downstage there is a number of platforms at wide steps. Vertically behind one of these, Stage Right, is a grille or lattice. On one of them, Left, is a glass of water and a bottle of tablets.

Lighting is dim; spots are used extensively; there are no ‘Black-outs’. As the Curtain Rises, ZOE enters Centre to Centre, genuflects to the altar, then crosses to Downstage Left. She picks up the bottle. All this very slowly, almost in ‘slow motion’.

**BEAT 19**

**SQ 5**

**LQ 30**

**LQ 30 A**

**F ENTERS.** Dressed as an Altar Boy, X to Altar, genuflects, lights altar candles & exits.

**BEAT 20**

**SQ 6**

**LQ 31**

**LQ 32**

**ZOE:** Fred?
FRED makes no sign that he has heard her.

PRIEST: My soul hath rested on His word, my soul hath hoped in the Lord.

EDGAR enters wheeling his mother. During the following he crosses the stage, until he finally goes out on the opposite side.

EDGAR: At the moment of my conception my mother bellowed with laughter. Difficult to imagine now, I grant you, both the bellowing and the conception.

You'll know this place, mother, you'll feel at home here. Notice the tracery of the windows, the characteristically Early English rib-vaulting, the foliate carving of the corbels, and the scratch on the finely carved oaken door made by the corner of the coffin of your husband, or was it your father, or was it my brother? Are you receiving me? Pass wind once for yes, twice for no.

And where is my Snow Princess, where is my Ice Maiden...

Well, what shall we take as the text for today? Do you have any fancies, any special requests? Our only aim is to please. What about St John of the Sonnets: 'Consider not for whom the bell tolls— as long as you can hear it, it must be for somebody else.' You like that one? I know lots more. I was a wow in the vestry. 'But I am carnal, sold under sin!' It's not the text, you understand, it's the way you tell it. I was meant for the Church, wasn't I, mother? Jesus called. And left a message. But I had a previous engagement. How mysterious, O Lord, are thy ways, and how wonderful the works of thy hand! What more proof can you want?

He goes out, reciting Latin, as the Burial Service continues.

GODFREY appears, dressed as in Act One, scarf round his neck, wheeling a bicycle.
ACT TWO

BEAT 22

CODFREY: Zoe!

ZOE: Gogo, my lost love!

She stretches out her arms melodramatically, runs to him, and they embrace.

CODFREY: You're skinnier than ever.

ZOE: The perfect gentleman.

CODFREY: We weren't expecting you for another week; you been sent down, you naughty girl?

ZOE: Would it surprise you?

CODFREY: Well, I don't know. It takes skill; I did my damnedest and I never managed it; I don't know that you'd be up to it.

ZOE: Mr Big.

CODFREY: Have you seen the parents?

ZOE: Not yet, they were out when I arrived. They all right?

CODFREY: Depends what you mean by all right. They're as usual. Slowly bleeding each other to death.

ZOE: Who's bleeding who?

CODFREY: Well, anyway. Oh yes, mine sprained her wrist.

ZOE: Big deal.

CODFREY: Opening a tin of sauerkraut. Keep tuned for further bulletins. And how are your studies progressing? You still a virgin, my child?

ZOE: Get him!

Pause.

You still ticklish?

She tries, CODFREY collapses howling; the bicycle falls.

CODFREY: Lay off!

ZOE sits astride him, tickling.

CODFREY: Do you surrender?

ZOE: I'll get mud all over my jacket!

CODFREY: Do you surrender?

ZOE: I never surrender.

She renew the tickling.
A SCENT OF FLOWERS

I surrender!
She sits up triumphantly.
Look what you've done to my coat, you bitch.
ZOE: Hard lines, old man.
She sits observing him in a childlike way.
I lost that old thing ages ago. I told you.
GODFREY: Did you? Get off then.
ZOE: Don't you like this position, darling?
GODFREY: Get off, you slut!
She gets up. GODFREY sits up, brushing himself down.
Well, why are you so early?
ZOE: You been to the library?
She is looking at the books which have tumbled out of his saddlebag.
GODFREY: Deduction. Or is it a secret?
ZOE: Would I keep secrets from my dear bro?
GODFREY: You must be having a pretty dull time if you don't.
ZOE: I do all right, mate.
She examines the books.
I just felt like it, that's all.
I never knew engineers could read.
'Ultimate Load Analysis of Reinforced and Prestressed Concrete.' Is it dirty?
GODFREY: What d'you mean, you just felt like it?
ZOE: 'At the junction of any number of yield lines the sum of the nodal forces is zero.' Disgusting.
GODFREY: Have you got trouble?
ZOE: Look, I've come down a week early, that's all. You don't have to be pregnant by the Director of Studies to come down a week early!
GODFREY: O.K.
'Slight pause. He giggles.
What a marvellous picture that conjures up.

BEAT 23

① Z. X. R. SIDE OF BICYCLE.

② G. RISES.

③ G. X. TO. Z. BICYCLE IS BETWEEN THEM.
ZOE: 'Down the Nile in a Canoe.' A prestressed concrete one, I take it.
GODFREY: That's right.
ZOE: I just felt I'd go bonkers if I stayed there any longer. They're— they're all so callow . . .
GODFREY: Who?
ZOE: The students . . . and everyone . . . Why do I feel so much older than my contemporaries?
GODFREY: Auntie Zoe . . .
ZOE: Give me a cigarette.
GODFREY: I thought you'd given up.
ZOE: I'm smoking for Lent.
GODFREY gives her a cigarette and lights it. She blows out smoke noisily.
GODFREY: You're erm . . .
ZOE: What?
GODFREY: You're a bit tensed up, aren't you?
ZOE: Am I?
GODFREY: Don't you know?
ZOE: Do you know, I've only found two people I can really talk to. I mean who really seem to understand about—things, you know? Instead of always skating on the surface—making stupid jokes.
GODFREY: Isn't two enough? Who are they?
ZOE: Oh . . . Well, there's this Priest—
GODFREY: Oh, God!
ZOE: He's been very helpful . . . You don't have to tell me what you think.
GODFREY: I should hope not. I thought I'd got you shot of that crowd a couple of years ago.
ZOE: Honestly, you're so narrow-minded. Just because I say he's a Priest rather than a—
GODFREY: No wonder you look a nervous wreck. With that gang working on you again—
zoe: Oh, don't be ridiculous!
godfrey: They say lightning never strikes the same place twice... So you're back in the fold. After all the work I put in on you—
zoe: All I've said is I've been seeing this Priest—
godfrey: Yeah, yeah, yeah...
zoe: I was... too young last time.
godfrey: Yes, O.K.
zoe: There were a lot of things I didn't understand.
godfrey: Come on, let's go in. I've got a new disc I want you to hear. Zoe, you look terrible.

he picks up the bicycle and prop it up; buckles close the

zoe: What does it matter to you what I do...?
godfrey shrugs his shoulders, his back to her. She is tense, defensive, too tired to be really belligerent... She waits, knowing he'll say something else.
godfrey: Only Zoe, darling, if you're going to take up that lark again for God's sake be honest about it, huh? I mean, don't come out with that being too young to understand stuff. Most people give up that racket when they reach puberty, but if you want to twist your mind up in knots at least say so: I want to believe a lot of baloney.

zoe... zoe: What's the record?
godfrey: What record?
zoe: Your new record.
godfrey: Oh. Monk.
zoe: What?
godfrey: Not what, who. Thelonious Monk. He's a jazz pianist.
zoe: I know he's a jazz pianist... They stand looking at each other, pause.

0 2 x to q.
1 q x to bicycle.
2 z x to foot of coffin.
3 g wheels bike around. stops beside z.
4 g x with bike ur.
5 g stops, stands bike, turns to z.
Just lay off me, Gogo. For a while...

Pause.

O.K., if you like, it's a lot of baloney; I just need—something I can't get elsewhere. I need it...

Pause.

GODFREY: It's your mind, honey... I'll read 'Down the Nile in a Canoe' and you can read St John of the Cross; and St Thomas Aquinas... I just wish we could all drag ourselves into the twentieth century and put all those mystic nutcases where they belong. I mean, it wasn't your fault they sent you to convent school, but religion and the pox, they are curable, you know—

ZOE: Shut up, Gogo, shut up, shut up...

Pause.

GODFREY: Who's the other one?

ZOE: Other what?

GODFREY: The other one you can talk to.

ZOE: Oh... He's... Just one of the, one of the lecturers is quite interesting...

GODFREY: Anyone I know?

ZOE: No, I don't think so.

GODFREY: What's his name?

ZOE: I tell you you don't know him; he's new.

Pause.

GODFREY: Married?

ZOE: Takes a draw at the cigarette, exhales.

ZOE: Yes.

GODFREY: Serious.

ZOE: Smokes.

Oh... And which came first?

ZOE: Which what?

GODFREY: Him or the priest.

Pause.

This is what they call having your cake and eating it, isn't it?
Slight pause.
Isn't there a certain conflict here?
ZOE: You could put it that way.
GODFREY watches her.
GODFREY: You always did have a great sense of the dramatic.
And what does your understanding priest say about all this?
ZOE: I haven't told him.
GODFREY: I thought you said he was helpful.
ZOE: Not about that.
GODFREY: I suppose you know what you're doing.
ZOE: Of course I know what I'm doing... D'you want to give me some advice?
GODFREY: You've got your priest for that, haven't you?
Pause.
Yes, O.K. Let's keep off the melodrama. Write this man a letter; you've got the whole of the vacation to get over it—
ZOE shakes her head.
Presumably, you know his address. Look, Zoe, your fun's over—
ZOE: I tried it. I tried it last vacation... Pause.
GODFREY: You'll have to give one of them up. I know you—you'll tear yourself in half, honey. Let's go in...
DAVID: Trust?

Am I–making any contact with you, David? (D

DAVID says nothing. ZOE walks, meanwhile, across the stage, thinking, pauses, idly picks up the flowers, and finds herself by the grill.

I don't suppose she's told you anything.

DAVID: No, she hasn't told me anything. (D

AGNES: Well then, I'll tell you. As you know, I have some friends living down there. They have a son at the University. He told them, they told me, and now I'm telling you.

DAVID: So now everyone knows.

AGNES: Everyone doesn't know; it's just fortunate that we know; this boy happens to be a very good friend of Zoe's, in a platonic sort of way; she confides in him.

DAVID: A very good friend, to tell all and sundry.

AGNES: He told his parents because he was worried, David. Because he thought something should be done about it, and knew his parents would pass it on to me.

DAVID: I've never yet interfered with Zoe's private life—

AGNES: David, you interfered with her private life when she was conceived. Do you want to disclaim responsibility for that too?

DAVID: You know quite well what I mean—

AGNES: You've interfered with her private life with everything you've ever done. You're her father, you've made her private life, you've made her. The responsibility is yours. Are you going to evade it again as you did with her mother?

DAVID: Thank you very much.

AGNES: If I were in a position to do anything other than make you do something, I would.

DAVID: What's stopping you?

AGNES: You know very well what's stopping me. Unfortunately common sense isn't enough. She needs to get it from someone she can—
A S C E N T  O F  F L O W E R S

D A V I D  l o o k s  a t  A G N E S ,  b u t  s a y s  n o t h i n g .
A G N E S :  A s  y o u  w e l l  k n o w ,  s h e  d i s l i k e s  m e .
D A V I D :  Y o u ' v e  a l w a y s  s a i d  t h a t —
A G N E S :  I ' v e  a l w a y s  s a i d  i t  b e c a u s e  i t ' s  a l w a y s  b e e n  t r u e .  I  t r y
to  f a c e  f a c t s ,  D a v i d ,  a s  I ' m  t r y i n g  t o  m a k e  y o u  f a c e  f a c t s  n o w .
I  d o n ' t  b l a m e  h e r  f o r  n o t  l i k i n g  m e ,  I  b l a m e  h e r  c i r c u m­
staces;  I ' v e  t r i e d  a l l  a l o n e  t o  u n d e r s t a n d  h e r  a n d  c r e a t e
s y m p a t h y  b e t w e e n  u s ,  a n d  I ' v e  f a i l e d ;  t h i s  i s  a  f a c t .
D A V I D :  H a v e  y o u  e v e r  s h o w n  a n y  l o v e  f o r  h e r ?
A G N E S :  I ' v e  d o n e  m y  b e s t  t o  u n d e r s t a n d  h e r !

P a u s e .

T h i s  i s  b e s i d e  t h e  p o i n t ,  D a v i d .

P a u s e .

D A V I D :  W e l l ?
A G N E S :  Z o e  i s  h a v i n g  a n  a f f a i r  w i t h  o n e  o f  t h e  l e c t u r e r s .

P a u s e .

Y o u  t h i n k  t h i s  i s  n i c e ,  n i c e  a n d  r o m a n t i c .  L i k e  a  c h i l d  w i t h  a
r u s h  o n  h e r  t e a c h e r .
D A V I D :  I t  s e e m s  t o  m e  t o  b e  Z o e ' s  b u s i n e s s .
A G N E S :  A n d  i s  i t  Z o e ' s  b u s i n e s s  t o  h a v e  a  n e r v o u s  b r o k e d o w n ?
D A V I D :  H m ?
A G N E S :  H e ' s  m a r r i e d .  H i s  w i f e  k n o w s  a b o u t  i t .  A n d  Z o e
k n o w s  t h a t  h i s  w i f e  k n o w s  a b o u t  i t .  T h i s  m a n  h a s  e x p l a i n e d
e v e r y t h i n g  t o  b o t h  o f  t h e m .
D A V I D :  K n o w s  w h a t ?
A G N E S :  T h a t  t h e y  s l e e p  t o g e t h e r ;  t h a t  t h e y  s p e n d  w e e k e n d s
t o g e t h e r  i n  t h i r d - c l a s s  h o t e l s ;  w h a t  d o  y o u  w a n t  m e  t o  s a y ?

P a u s e .

H e  i s ,  a c c o r d i n g  t o  m y  i n f o r m a t i o n ,  r a t h e r  l i k e  y o u .  C h a r­
m i n g ,  a t t r a c t i v e ,  q u i e t l y  u n h a p p y ,  a m a n  w h o  i n v i t e d  c o m­
p a s s i o n .  A n d  u n r e l i a b l e ,  a n d  s e l f - c e n t r e d ,  a n d  i r r e s p o n s i b l e .
D A V I D :  T h a n k  y o u .  Y o u r  f r i e n d ' s  s o n  i s  v e r y  o b s e r v a n t .
A G N E S :  I ' v e  p u t  t w o  a n d  t w o  t o g e t h e r .
D A V I D :  I  s e e .
Pause.
'Well, now you've told me.

AGNES: And you won't do a thing about it.

DAVID: She's my daughter, Agnes; I'll have a talk with her about it.

AGNES smiles.
That is, if she wants to. You hate the unconventional, don't you?

AGNES: David, you are the most conventional man I know.

DAVID: Is that why you married me?

AGNES: I married you because I was strong enough to marry you. And not be sucked under.

DAVID: Not because of love?

AGNES: I married you. Isn't that enough for you?

Slight pause.

And so the conversation turns back to you as it always does.

DAVID: I suppose I am conventional; but I don't condemn other people who happen to—

AGNES: I am not condemning her! They are not my conventions, David. But they exist as facts. They exist as facts in Zoe's life.

DAVID: She's obviously not too worried about them.

AGNES: Oh, God, David, you are a fool . . .

DAVID: That's what I like about you - you keep the conversation so general.

AGNES: Do you think we could talk about Zoe for once and not about ourselves.

Pause. DAVID sighs, and puts his hand over his eyes.

I must disillusion you. Your daughter is not a Bohemian.

PRIEST: Wash me yet more from my iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin. For I know my iniquity, and my sins is always before me.
AGNES: Much as you'd like her to be.

DAVID: I'd like her to be an individual.

AGNES: And what do you mean by that? Someone able to enjoy being egotistical in a way you've never quite managed?

DAVID: If you want to talk about Zoe, talk about Zoe...

AGNES: David, Zoe is tearing herself apart. She's no bohemian; she's a conventional person, she has only the conventional ways of justifying herself.

DAVID: You think Zoe worries about justifying herself?

AGNES: Do you really not understand that this is the mainspring of everything she does?

Pause.

DAVID: One doesn't choose whom one falls in love with.

AGNES laughs.

All right; now you've told me; now I know...

He turns and goes. AGNES leaves at the other side of the stage.

ZOE has closed her eyes; she raises the back of her head gently and slowly against the wall; her hand, still holding the roses, rests on the platform beside her.

BEAT 28

ZOE: Do you know what's happened?... A most unusual thing; I am completely... and utterly... happy... Suddenly, I'm not hungry, I'm not thirsty, I don't care what's to become of me... I don't desire you... You may even be asleep... I can just feel your arm touching the back of my fingers... But I don't have to raise my hand to stroke your skin... It's as though I'd found my way inside a little crystal ball... somewhere outside it's all still going on. People are hurting one another and crying out... Only just for a moment they've forgotten about me... I'm complete... I'm at rest... And afraid to move...

Pause.

Darling? (2)

Slight pause.

Are you asleep?
The Priest comes down to the steps, Stage Left, and sits, waiting.

Hm...?

Pause. She shakes her head violently.

Darling, I don't want to talk about it... No, no, no, no, no... Please, darling, not now... We'll talk about it later... Please...

The Priest stands up as though to receive someone, stretches out his hand.

**BEAT 29**

Priest: I'm glad to see you again, Zoe. Please sit down...

Yes, I was beginning to wonder what had become of you...

For lost, you mean? No, we never give anybody up. We can afford to wait. I don't need to tell you I've been praying for you.

Slight pause.

You look unwell. Is there something you want to talk about?

Zoe chuckles.

Zoe: You know, I think you've got something of the ape in you... Your arms are too long for one thing... They are, darling. It was the first thing I noticed about you, I saw you leaving the Union Building, I didn't even know who you were but you looked just like an ape... You were even holding a banana in one hand—... You were. It was the funniest thing I've ever seen.

Priest: You say this happened to a friend of yours. Does she belong to the Church?

Zoe: Because I was just pointing you out to this friend I was with when (she laughs) you stopped, with this banana in your hand and—scratched yourself.

She laughs.

Priest: Don't you think it might be best if you were honest with me?

Zoe: Oh, darling, have I hurt your feelings? Have I damaged your male esteem?
PRIEST: Or do you think you can deceive God?

He nods, listening.

ZOE: Also, you've got hair growing on your back. Did you know? Did anyone ever tell you? ... Who's complaining?

PRIEST: Yes ... Go on ... I want everything.

ZOE: Darling ... Does your wife know about me?

The PRIEST nods.

PRIEST (coldly): I see ... Are you unwell? Shall I bring you a glass of water?

PRIEST (coldly): I sec ... Are you unwell? Shall I bring you a glass of water?

ZOE stands up.

ZOE: I'm sorry ... I can't stay long today ... I know I said I could, but I'm ... I'm not, I'm not very well ... I can't sleep ... Days and days ...

She sits down, ON COFF/N.

I just don't sleep any more ... You know, there's no more lonely time than that - awful moment, at the end of a sleepless night, when your thoughts have been up all night, like nasty little animals, chasing each other through the darkness, scratching and gnawing and scuttling about like little blind animals shut up in your head - and then you open your eyes and you see the dawn's come ... And you realize you've had it for that night, there's no - escape from the next day ...

This must be how a fox feels when it's had the hounds after it all the afternoon, circled and back-tracked and done everything and finally makes a last despairing dash to its earth ... with foam coming out of its mouth and the hounds baying just behind ... and finds someone's - blocked up the hole ...

Pause.

PRIEST: I see ... You realize, of course, what you're doing. You're putting yourself outside the Church.

ZOE: This is what loneliness really is - to have no way, no way of stopping your thoughts ... This is terrible; frightening; you begin to feel as though you're possessed ...

Slight pause.
I used to love fox-hunting...

She takes a quick indrawn breath, and puts her hand over her
eyes. Agnes comes out and stands not far off, watching her.
No, darling... No, no, no... It's not possible... It's not possible... It's not possible... Realistic?... No, darling, please-please, please don't do anything like that. I am being realistic, believe me; I beg you, believe me. My God, I never before realized quite what it meant, to — to be realistic. You mustn't do anything... Difficult for you?...

Priest: There's only one possible choice to make. Well, if you like, one choice is no choice at all. But what would you have me say? You must know what I must say.

Zoe: No... No, no, no... I can't, it's not possible... I can't do it. Do you think I'm not being realistic? My God, I've never before realized what it meant, to be realistic. You're the one who's not facing facts. You think there's still a way out. There isn't. When I lay awake at night, I used to tell myself 'Things will get better, things will look better in the morning.' I don't any more, there isn't light and day for me any more, it's... it's all the same... It's what they call the dark night of the soul... And I'm — in it — all the time... Except for just a few minutes now and then when I'm in your arms and it—it goes... And then... I'm so used to this — feeling that when it goes for those few minutes it's — as though there's nothing left to take its place... as though I've died...

Beat 30

Agnes: Zoe, do you think we might have a talk?

Zoe looks round at her, with dull eyes. She inclines her head slightly.

Zoe: What about? The weather?

Priest: I can only tell you what you know already. It isn't meant to be easy. Do you think it's easy for anyone? For me? All one can say is that for those with faith it's possible. Do you have faith or not? Do you or not?
Pause.

Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For our wrestling is not against flesh and blood, but against the principalities, against the powers, against the... Zoe? Take up the shield of faith...

And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the spirit... With God, the choice is never impossible.

The priest goes back to his place in the Church, and the service resumes.

ZOE: No?

AGNES: I would appreciate it, Zoe, if you could believe that I want to do something for you.

ZOE: Like what?

AGNES: I understand that you are— in difficulty.

ZOE: You understand? Do you?

AGNES: Zoe, I think you are old enough now to stop treating me as something out of a fairy tale.

ZOE: I don't know what you're talking about.

AGNES: We don't live in fairyland, Zoe; the world isn't divided into good fairies and bad fairies, or even good people and bad people. There are people we have to live with and people we don't. It's a very hard world, Zoe. There are no easy ways out. There are no allowances made for difficulties in our childhood. There are no enchanted castles we can escape to when our relationships get too difficult. There are people we have to live with and people we don't, and we have to do the best we can. I am not a wicked stepmother, I'm the woman your father married after he left your mother, and this fact has made it necessary for us to accept each other as people and try to understand each other and try to help each other.

ZOE: What a cold woman you are, Agnes.

AGNES: I try to understand, Zoe.

ZOE: You do everything in your head, don't you? You don't
have any heart; have you ever loved anyone? How can you understand?

Pause. DAVID enters, stands apart, uncertainly.

ZOE: Daddy... I'm in trouble... I'm in trouble, Daddy...

Her voice is that of a terrified child locked in a dark room.

AGNES: Zoe, will you listen to me?

ZOE looks at her with wide, empty eyes. AGNES bites her lip.

Pause.

I know what's happened.

ZOE: Really?

AGNES: I should like to try to help.

ZOE (in the same tone as before): Really?

She holds herself very upright, as though keeping control of every muscle; her voice has a cold, ironical lightness.

AGNES: I don't think you can afford any longer to choose where help is to come from.

Slight pause.

I'm trying very hard to make some kind of contact so as to help you. I've stopped expecting anything but dislike from you, but you can at least assume that my intentions are good: There's a way out, Zoe, if you'll listen to me. I know what you're going through. But it's in yourself. Do you understand? It exists only in you. It isn't something apart from you. However beautiful and profound and important you think it is, it's no bigger than you are, because it's part of you and you're small, Zoe, like everyone else, small and insignificant. Zoe, you've got to grow up very quickly. You've got to stand outside yourself for the first time in your life and see yourself in retrospect— an emotionally unbalanced child who's got herself into an affair with a married man. Just another. It's happened before. It happened to me. It's unimportant. Nobody gives a damn about it.

Pause.

You've got to get it out of your system, Zoe.
A SCENT OF FLOWERS

Slight pause.
You're only another immature child opening her legs to just another married man.

ZOE makes a sound, turns away, picks up the flowers.
You have to make a decision. Why don't you stop playing the tragic soul at the mercy of the fates, and grow up. No one's at the mercy of the fates unless they want to be. Make a decision, Zoe.

ZOE is facing the grille, looking down at the flowers.
Do you understand what I'm saying?

AGNES grips her by the lower arm; ZOE cries out as though in pain, tears her arm away, and nurses it, her face contorted. The flowers have fallen to the ground. AGNES stares at her, and steps back.

What have you done to your arm?

ZOE: Daddy - I'm in trouble.

AGNES shakes her head, DAVID is looking at ZOE, but doesn't move from his place. AGNES turns to him.

AGNES: Why don't you do something?

Long tableau. Meanwhile.

PRIEST: Et no nos inducas in tentationem.

RESPONSE: Sed libera nos a malo.

PRIEST: A porta inferi.

RESPONSE: Et non dabitur nobis tentationem super quam poterimus resistere.

PRIEST: Amen.

PRIEST: Domine, exaudi orationem meam.

This far back to the background.

LQ 44 AGNES: I shall write to the University. (She leaves)

ZOE: Daddy... (She goes up to DAVID) Say something to me...

DAVID says nothing. Holding her arm, ZOE slowly turns away towards the grille. DAVID leaves.

LQ 45 GODFREY enters. (She enters, whistling) He drops the tools he has in his hand, and deftly turns the bicycle upside down.

1 Z X L OF COFFIN.
2 A TURNS, X TO Z.
3 Z STEPS TOWARD D.
4 A EXITS LC.
5 Z X TO D.
6 D LEAVES DR.
7 Z X DL.
8 G ENTERS UR.
9 G X DR.
ZOE looks round at him, as though she doesn't recognize him.

GODFREY stops whistling.

GODFREY: Hallo, Zoe; come and talk to me.

She slowly walks across to him. He whistles again as he sets to work on the bicycle. ZOE stands watching him.

Hand me that spanner, honey.

She picks it up and gives it to him. He takes it without looking, tries it.

Not that one, the other one.

She gives him the second spanner, keeps the first one in her hand.

He puts the spanner to the wheel, whistling.

Hold the wheel, then.

She takes hold of the wheel. He whistles.

Bloody punctures... You know what it is; it's all these milkmen.

He works, whistling.

What they do, you see... they drop an empty milk bottle in the... in the road... glass everywhere... Pull.

They remove the wheel.

Kick the big bits into the gutter... Leave the small bits. For poor bastards like me to run over. I tell you, the cyclist today has become an oppressed minority... Look at that.

He takes a bit of glass from the tyre.

Milk bottle glass.

He lets the air out of the tyre. Whistles.

Tyre levers.

She doesn't move.

Tyre levers, honey.

ZOE: Where?

GODFREY: Never mind, I'll get them myself.

He gets them.

Good thing you're not a surgeon's assistant; the patients would all bleed to death.

He inserts a tyre lever.
A SCENT OF FLOWERS

The fact is, there's a conspiracy to clear cyclists off the roads. Make them all buy cars. Hold that.

She holds the tyre lever. He inserts another.

Good for the economy. And Morris Motors. Get in . . .

There's only about three of us cyclists left in England . . . The others have capitulated . . . Hold it, hold it . . .

He strips off the tyre.

Or been run down by hired assassins in cars . . . I tell you, they worry about preserving things like widgeons and, and peregrines. Meanwhile cyclists are almost extinct. Maybe they'll round the three of us up one day and put us in a reserve.

Cycle tracks everywhere and trees oozing with rubber solution. Cyclist hunting strictly forbidden . . .

He finds the gash in the tube.

Look at that . . . Rubber solution.

ZOE doesn't move. GODFREY examines her face for the first time.

Are you feeling all right, Zoe?

Meanwhile the Absolutions have begun. The PRIEST "Puts on a black cope. Then, standing at the foot of the coffin he says the following prayer:

"Nunc incertum est . . ." etc. INSERT 5

The Responsory is then sung:

"Libera me, Dominæ de morte aeterno . . ." etc.

While this Responsory is being sung, the PRIEST, assisted by the ACOLYTE or DEACON, puts incense into the thurible. All this during the dialogue between GODFREY and ZOE.

ZOE says nothing. GODFREY picks up the rubber solution, spreads it on the tube.

Patch.

She picks up a patch.

Bigger one.

She gives him a bigger one. He talks while he fixes it.

There's a film on at the Academy that might be worth
ACT TWO

seeing. I'm going this afternoon. You want to come? (He looks up.) Zoe? Take you out of yourself. As they say:

She makes no response

Pump.

She hands him the pump. He pumps the tyre a little, examines it. He looks up again.

Zoe, honey.

ZOE: What?

GODFREY: Get with us.

ZOE: What do you mean?

GODFREY: You're in another world, honey.

ZOE: Is it all right?

GODFREY: What?

ZOE: That - the . . . tyre, the—...

GODFREY: Seems O.K. . . .

Pause. He looks at her searchingly.

ZOE: It's all right; you don't have to worry. It's all over.

GODFREY: Who's worrying?

Pause.

What have you done then?

Pause.

I mean which - which have you - given up?

Pause.

Zoe.

She doesn't answer; he bends over the wheel again.

ZOE: I've been to Confession.

GODFREY looks up at her. He has by now replaced the tyre, and is pumping it up. He goes back to his pumping for a moment, looks up again.

B E A T  3 4

GODFREY: That makes everything all right, does it? (PTURNS, comes down to coffin head, sprinkles 3 times. Returns to altar.)

Meanwhile the priest goes round the bier, and sprinkles the coffin thrice on each side, namely, at the feet, at the middle and at the head, with holy water; returning to his place, he receives the censer and goes round the bier, incensing the coffin in like
On returning to his place he says (at this point in the dialogue):

PRIEST: Et ne inducas in tentationem.  
RESPONSE: Sed libera nos a malo.
PRIEST: From the gate of Hell.
RESPONSE: True, Domine, animam ejus.
PRIEST: Requiescat in pace.
RESPONSE: Amen.
PRIEST: Domine, exaudi orationem meam.  
RESPONSE: Et clamor meus ad te venit.  
PRIEST: Dominus vobiscum.  
RESPONSE: Et cum spiritu tuo.

GODFREY has finished pumping. He bounces the wheel on the ground a few times, to take kinks out of the tube. ZOE waits, passively, emotionally spent.

GODFREY: Does it?
ZOE: What?
GODFREY: Make everything O.K. now . . . I mean you can carry on seeing him, can you, and confess every now and then?
ZOE: Be kind to me, Gogo . . .
GODFREY puts the wheel down, goes to her and kisses her: then goes back to the wheel, which he fits back in its place.

I'm not very well . . . I was sick all last night.

GODFREY: Why don't you go to bed?

She shakes her head. He wakes again for a moment.

ZOE: What?

GODFREY: I'm not trying to get at you, honey, I just don't understand these things. Does it make it all right now?
Pause.
ZOE: Yes. They said it would, yes.

Slight pause.
ACT TWO

GODFREY: And you can—go on seeing him?
ZOE: Who?
GODFREY: Oh, Zoe—
ZOE: Of course I can't. What are you talking about, of
course I can't!
GODFREY: Well O.K., I just—
ZOE: Of course I can't. What a stupid thing to say.
GODFREY: Look, Zoe—
ZOE: What do you think Confession is?—
GODFREY: Well, I don't know, do I? I'm just a heathen!

Pause, while they look at each other.

GODFREY: (fiesto his wheel, takes the spanner.
ZOE: Be kind to me...
GODFREY: Hold the wheel straight while I tighten it up.
She does so.
You'll get over it.
He spins the wheel.
A fatuous thing to say, but the best I can offer.
Slight pause.
Not being a priest...
ZOE closes her eyes.

There we are, good as new. Well...Erm—d'you
want to come to the cinema?

He turns the bicycle the right way up.

You know, Zoe, the odd thing about all these heartaches
and soul-searchings and God knows what else we humans
like to inflict on ourselves, is that looked at from any scientific
point of view they have absolutely no validity.

ZOE: Validity...?
GODFREY: Just making conversation. Take for instance this
fellow—what's his name?
ZOE closes her eyes. GODFREY continues. His mood is
ambiguous; he might be trying to cause her to break down for her
own good, or this might be only his private reason for his cruelty.
Perhaps he doesn't know himself. But he watches her as he talks, and there is a hardness in his voice.

He presumably has a name; let's call him Harry. Well take Harry. As far as I'm concerned, he's what? A hypothesis; a bit more than a hypothesis. I postulate the existence of Harry on secondhand evidence. Not very convincing from a scientific point of view, however... So, assuming Harry exists, for the sake of the argument, what have we got? I mean what have I got, as a scientist? A postulate living in Bristol; O.K. Stage two—

ZOE: Gogo...

GODFREY: Stage two is more difficult. What is the connection between you, the existence of whom I can vouch for, and this hypothetical Harry in Bristol? Connection? You say, I was his mistress. What more do you want? More than that, much more, says the scientist: present connection is what I'm after, past associations are of no interest to me, they just don't exist.

ZOE: Stop it, Gogo, please...

GODFREY: I love him, you say. What, says the scientist? Love, you say, Would you mind taking it out, says the scientist, so I can examine it more closely? What is it, electromagnetic or gravitational?

ZOE: Gogo, please, what are you trying to do?

GODFREY: I'm trying to find out, honey. I'm interested. I'm interested in how this Bristolian bloody postulate can be knocking the hell out of my Zoe from a hundred and twenty miles away. When my Zoe herself has only just returned from demonstrating that he means nothing to her.

ZOE: You don't know what you're talking about—

GODFREY: Isn't that what it means? Confession. As I say, honey, I'm just a simple twentieth-century pagan, it's all a closed book to me, but isn't that what it means? Isn't that what it's all about? Proving that what you feel about some-
one is nothing, and what you’ve done with someone is less than nothing?

ZOE: Leave me, Gogo, leave me alone...

GODFREY: How does it go? Father, I have sinned, isn’t it?
And what the hell sin have you been up to, child? Adultery, Father. Who with, my child? Somebody called Harry or something, Father. How many times, my child? Times without number, Father. Are you in love with this man, my child? Of course I am, Father, what the hell do you take me for? Do you want to go to Heaven or Hell, my child? Heaven, Father. Then repeat this after me: This man means nothing to me. I wish I’d never met him. I spit on all my past experiences. My love was dirty. My lovemaking was ugly. My lover was sent from hell to tempt me and all those beautiful things we did were disgusting, and my lover who—maybe doesn’t feel like tossing into the dustbin any of his mortal life and then spitting after it, will roast in hell forever more—

ZOE throws the spanner. GODFREY ducks; the spanner flies 
offstage, and there is the sound of breaking glass. ZOE picks up 
another tool; GODFREY seizes her arm. ZOE cries out.

ZOE: Leave go my arm!

He lets go. She holds it in the other hand. Slight pause.

GODFREY: What have you done?

She says nothing.

GODFREY: What’s the matter with your arm?

ZOE: I burnt it.

GODFREY: How?

ZOE: With a cigarette.

GODFREY: How the hell did you do that?

ZOE: With a cigarette.

GODFREY: Let me see.

She says nothing, but looks at him. He lifts her sleeve. There 
is a bandage.
A SCENT OF FLOWERS

A cigarette? What have you done, Zoe?

He removes the bandage, takes away the plaster. On her arm is burnt a cross.

Oh my God...

They remain motionless for a moment.

PRIEST: Deus, cui proprium est misereri semper et pareat to supplicis oraculis tuo anima famulae tuae Zoe quam hodie de hoc...

INSERT 7 etc. He fades into the background, ZOE turns away from GODFREY, replacing the bandage. GODFREY picks up his tools, and goes off, wheeling the bicycle.

EDGAR: My Snow Princess.

ZOE: Tell me a fairy story, Uncle Edgar...

He puts his arm round her. They walk together over to the steps, right where they sit. EDGAR begins talking as they walk.

EDGAR: Which one would you like?

ZOE: The enchanted castle.

EDGAR: Once upon a time there was a great forest that stretched as far as the eye could see, covering the whole of the land, a forest so dark and thick that down below among the old ugly gnarled trunks of the trees nothing lived except the tiniest creatures, which scuttled about in the everlasting twilight. And no birds ever nested in the treetops but the owls. In the middle of the forest was a great silver lake full of shoals of golden fish, and from the middle of the lake rose up the great grey towers of an enchanted castle, where nothing ever stirred, but in the very topmost room of which

...a beautiful young Princess lay sleeping an eternal sleep...

What is it, Zoe?

ZOE: Make me forget, Uncle Edgar; make me a child again.

EDGAR: But you are a child. A child asleep in a wood, warm and snug and unseen among the leaves, so that nothing can ever hurt you.

ZOE: Go on with the story. Why was the Princess asleep?
ACT TWO

EDGAR: She was enchanted until the Prince could find her and cut through the forest and undo the spell.

ZOE: Where was the Prince?

EDGAR: Lost in the forest. Lost.

ZOE: What was he like?

EDGAR: He was just a man, like everyone else...

He looks down at ZOE.

ZOE: Uncle Edgar, I don't know what I'm going to do.

Pause.

EDGAR: My poor... child...

He bends over her; after a moment she begins to struggle. Both become frantic, until she tears herself away; he grabs her arm. She draws in her breath, and goes rigid. He releases her.

[INSERT 8]

My Snow Princess...

[BEAT 20G]

[BEAT 39]

[BEAT 40]

Quick Curtain.
Preset:
Grave opened over which is coffin resting on 2 coffin supports. Ropes through coffin handles.
1 white rose on floor or coffin.

ACT THREE

A cemetery or graveyard, again represented very simply. There is an open grave, on which the coffin rests on boards. Fred and Sid are sitting on the coffin, playing cards on its top. (Fred and Sid look around the graveyard.)

Fred: Twist me one.

Sid does.

And another.

Sid does.

I'll stick.

Sid: Pay twenties.

Fred: Psh!

He throws down his cards.

Sid: Two and eight you owe me.

Fred: A small price to pay for my enjoyment.

Sid: As the Bishop said.

Fred: Especially on ten thousand a year.

Sid: What?

Fred: Bishop's pay.

Sid: How d'you know?

Fred: I'm just naturally knowledgeable.

Sid: Good luck to them.

Fred: Why not? They have to crawl up the hard way, you know.

Sid: You want another game?

Fred: Listen:

Sid: What?

Fred: What is he that builds stronger than either the mason, the shipwright, or the carpenter?
ACT THREE

SID: What are you on about?
FRED: Who am I?
SID: Are you all right?
FRED: Forget it. Deal 'em out.

They play on, in silence, for a while.

SID: So I said, I know, Betty, I know all about that. I said. I just don’t like the idea of taking Arthur along, I said, that’s all. He’ll pay his way, she said, I never said he wouldn’t, I said, I wasn’t thinking of the money...

Meanwhile Zoe enters. She listens with interest to what SID is saying.

Nothing against Arthur, I said, you know that. I just don’t like the idea of it... Bringing your husband along... I mean it’s not as if it was a Butlin’s we’re going to... Like last time... It’s a respectable boarding house in the best part of Eastbourne... And anyway it’s a matter of principle.

FRED: Wha’d she say?
SID: Said I was too conventional. Me... It’s him who’s conventional; won’t go anywhere without his wife. I mean to say, what kind of a relationship is that?... Pay pontoons... Arthur’s had his heart set on this holiday, she said... Look, Betty, I said, why can’t Arthur find himself a nice friend and go off on his own holidays, for once? He’s got a friend, she said, who, I said, you, she said... I mean a girl friend, I said...

FRED: Wha’d she say?
SID: Said I was disgusting... It’s time Arthur realized, I said, that marriage brings responsibilities. If he didn’t want the responsibilities, I said, he shouldn’t have got married. Now I don’t want to criticize my friends behind their backs, I said, but anyone with any sense of what’s right and what’s wrong would’ve at least talked about divorce; at least once. As a matter of form. Has Arthur? Not once, I said. Not a syllable. If he wasn’t a friend of mine, I said, it’d be down-
right insulting. He's never even hit me. Just invites me
to play rummy twice a week and goes on holiday
with us every summer. Pay nineteen... Trouble is, you
see, he's sweet on me.
FRED: Arthur?
SID: If Betty ever finds out, there'll be hell to pay; very jealous
woman. Things can get very complicated sometimes, in
this life...
ZOE: Would you rather they weren't?
    They look round at her.
SID: Have you been listening?
ZOE: Would you?
SID: What's it matter to you?
ZOE: I'm interested.
FRED: She's interested.
SID: I don't have to give an account of myself to her, she's
just a—
FRED: Politeness costs nothing, Sid. The lady's only making
conversation; being pleasant; killing time. Would you care
for my seat?
    He stands up.
ZOE: Thank you.
    She sits in his place.
SID: What was the question?
FRED: The lady wants to know if you'd like things to be not so
complicated.
SID: You mean like Betty and Arthur?
FRED: Do you mean like Betty and Arthur?
ZOE: Yes, for instance.
FRED: Yes, for instance.
SID: We can hear each other you know.
FRED: You can hear each other — Oh, I see, yes.
    Pause.
    Well?
SID: I'm thinking.
FRED: He's considering his reply.
SID sits looking into the grave. The other two wait.
Ever since he started philosophy at night school he's been a man of great deliberation... When he's in the mood, the simplest questions are a torment to him.

A pause. ZOE sits swinging her legs. FRED stands looking at her. She senses the look, and looks up at him.

You wouldn't think me, like, er, necrophilic if I said you had nice legs?
ZOE: Not at all.
FRED: Hin...

He sits down with his legs in the hole.
ZOE: You can say what you like to me, Fred.
FRED: Oh, not, not really...
ZOE: Yes, you can.
FRED: No, I can't. No one can do that... I mean even supposing I know what I want to say...
ZOE: Not even to me?
FRED shakes his head.

FRED: Well I mean, what do I say? 'You got nice legs.' I mean, when you think about it, it's a pretty bloody funny remark to make to anyone, isn't it?
ZOE: I suppose it is.
FRED: I mean if you just change it a bit to... You got a nice right ear... you got a smashing pair of index fingers... I adore the X-ray photo of your liver... then you can see it's a pretty bloody pointless remark to make. Fatuous, you might say—
ZOE: But I—
FRED: What?
ZOE shakes her head.
ZOE: Nothing... FRED: And anyway, what's it to me if you got nice legs?
A SCENT OF FLOWERS

ZOE shakes her head, her eyes intently on him. What's it to you?

ZOE looks down.

Your legs, you might say, are irrelevant. See what I mean?
Pause.

ZOE: What's relevant then?

FRED: takes out cigarettes, gives one to

ZOE and lights both. A pause.

ZOE: Fred.

He looks up at her. Say something, Talk.

FRED: What?

ZOE: Anything.

FRED: Don't you like the quiet?
Pause.

ZOE: Are you crying?

FRED: She shakes her head. He considers her for a moment.

I love you.

ZOE: It's not necessary to say that.

FRED: Thought it might cheer you up.

ZOE: That's irrelevant too, isn't it? Whether I'm what you call cheered up or not . . . And love, is that irrelevant?

Slight pause.

Love to me, anyway . . .

FRED: I might've done though . . . If things had been different. If I'd've met you earlier on. I might've fallen for you in a big way . . . No one can prove otherwise . . .

ZOE: Tell me about it.

FRED: What?

ZOE: Our might-have-been love affair.

FRED: What for?

ZOE: I'm interested.

FRED: Nothing much to tell really. (A pause as he takes a drag

F SITS, LEANS AGAINST SR. COFFIN.

F TURNS TO Z.
ACT THREE

(at his cigarette) Well . . . for instance . . . That night in the barn.

ZOÉ: What barn?

FRED: This barn in France; where we were on that cycling holiday . . .

ZOÉ nods.

The day we got lost; and then as it got dark it started pissing with rain. Pitch dark it was. And we were dead beat. We'd tried to go too far, you see . . . And then we found this barn . . . And made some cocoa, and got out the old sack, and curled up together. And went straight to sleep . . .

Slight pause.

ZOÉ: That was somebody else; wasn't it?

FRED: Mm . . .

ZOÉ: Who?

FRED: Some tart . . .

ZOÉ: Is she dead?

FRED: Not as far as I know . . . I dunno, she might be . . .

ZOÉ: Is that irrelevant too?

Pause.

ZOÉ: But what's the difference if it did happen?

FRED looks at her.

ZOÉ: What's the difference, Fred?

Pause.

FRED: I would've liked to've known you.

ZOÉ: But you did; you met lots like me . . . You looked at their legs and thought: I wouldn't mind taking that one. And they looked at you and thought, he's not bad-looking for a prole; pity about his accent . . .

FRED: You . . .?

She nods. Pause.
ZOE: One day you're going to die, Fred.
   *Long pause.*
FRED: I'll think about that when the time comes.
   *Long pause.*
ZOE: It'll be too late.
   *Long pause.*
FRED: Good.
   *Pause.*
SID: What was the question again?
   *The other two look at him.*
O.K., I got it. Now, as I see it, this is an unreal question.
FRED: For Pete's sake—
SID: Not in the sense of having no existence; since the question has been put, ergo the question has come into existence, that is to say, exists, that is to say—
O.K., O.K.
SID: But in the sense of being incapable of logical justification, that is to say, absurd. Now, what are the necessary concomitants of a real question?
   *That it's a question, assuming a number of possibilities and demanding a choice.*
   *FRED: All the lady wants to know—*
SID: Put it this way; suppose I say yes.
FRED: Yes what?
SID: Yes I would like things to be not so complicated.
FRED: You would.
SID: No I wouldn't. Because if I say yes it means I'd like my life to have been different, which means I'd like myself to be a different person.
FRED: Well?
SID: Well I ask you.
FRED: I don't get your point.
SID: How can I—wish that I were not myself?
Slight pause.

It's logically untenable.

FRED: Is it?
SID: It stands to reason.
FRED: So it's no.
SID: No what?
FRED: No you wouldn't like things to be not so complicated?
SID: It's an unreal question. Put it this way—
FRED: So you're satisfied.
SID: What with?
FRED: Your life.
SID: Are you kidding? Put it this way—
FRED: Skip it, Sid, you're getting boring.
Pause.

BEAT 45

ZOÉ: Say something. Talk.
SID: Do you want to know about Aristotle?
Pause.
FRED: Are you crying?
ZOÉ: No.
FRED: Don't want to let it get you down... Never let anything get you down.
SID: That's a craftsman's observation.
ZOÉ: I'm cold.
FRED: You're shivering.
SID: Donkeys on your grave.
FRED: It comes out of the ground; the cold does. Being cold down there, you see, you dig a hole and the cold comes out. I've often noticed it.
SID: It's a scientific fact.
ZOÉ: I'm... c-cold... Fred...
FRED: Borrow my jacket.

He takes his jacket off.
ZOÉ: I'm cold right through.
FRED puts his jacket over her shoulders.
Is that better?

We're missing our tea-break.

Shut up, Sid.

My lips are cold, Fred.

kisses her.

Sid.

Sid kisses her.

Better now?

Fred; I'm...

What?

I feel like a child again; I feel like I felt that first cold night at Agnes's...

Who's Agnes?

What does it matter?

All alone in that strange room with the big cold empty bed...

Close your eyes.

Now imagine you're in a nice warm bed. A big square bed with plenty of blankets on you. Are you warm?

I'm afraid of the dark. Come in with me, Fred...

I'm in with you; I'm on one side and Sid's on the other - there's no room for the bogeyman.

I'm still cold; make me warm; make love to me...

We're making you warm, we're making love to you.

Aren't we, Sid, we're making love to you like anything...

Keep me warm; don't leave me...

We won't leave you, we won't never leave you; we'll keep you warm for ever, won't we, Sid? You never been so warm in your life...

He takes his jacket carefully off her shoulders.
Warm and snug and safe, so nothing can ever happen to you—

He gets up, and does the same.

The fire's on, and the curtains are drawn, and the door's locked to keep out the nasty bogeyman, and the light's out, and you can feel the warmth of your two warm lovers, Sid on one side and Fred on the other... Your two faithful lovers...

He signals to Sid. They tiptoe out. She remains with her eyes closed. Scrivens enters. Zoe opens her eyes, and they look at each other for a long moment.

Scrivens: Twenty minutes, my dear.

Zoe (emotionally): Damn you, Mr Scrivens. I'm not afraid of you.

He nods, approaches her, flicks a speck of dust off the coffin, and goes.

Mr Scrivens!

He stops, almost off.

I... I...

Scrivens: Yes, Miss.

Zoe: I want to ask you a question.

Scrivens: A matter of etiquette?

Zoe: Erm...

Scrivens: Leave the form to me, Miss, don't you worry your head.

Zoe: No it's not a matter of etiquette.

He waits, almost offstage.

Zoe: I can't talk over this great distance.

Scrivens: I can hear perfectly well, Miss.

Zoe: I didn't say you couldn't hear, Mr Scrivens, I said I couldn't talk. Will you kindly remember you're in my service and do as I tell you.

Scrivens bows slightly, and comes closer.

Closer, closer. It'll be a difficult enough question to put...
A SCENT OF FLOWERS

... together in the first place, a fragile question, a delicate, ethereal question, like, let's say, a shape made for a moment by the smoke of a cigarette in a still room...

SCRIVENS: Yes, Miss.
ZOE: I'm not going to ask you to pass the butter, you know. I mean it's not a...
SCRIVENS: Factual?
ZOE: Factual question, it's not—... I don't think it is...
SCRIVENS: If I may mention it, I have another client, three plots along, I'm a little pressed for time... This is the busy season, I'm having to run you concurrently—
ZOE: Let him wait—
SCRIVENS: He's ninety-four.
ZOE: All the better, he'll be used to waiting. Now I've forgotten where I was.
SCRIVENS: Question, Miss.
Pause.
Question—
ZOE: I know... How - long—?
SCRIVENS: Nineteen minutes.
ZOE: It was twenty.
SCRIVENS: Minus one is nineteen.
ZOE: Can't you help me?
SCRIVENS: It's your question, Miss.
ZOE: It's like trying to remember a face.
SCRIVENS: Very difficult.
ZOE: Please don't humour me. It's like trying to remember a face I once knew so well that it was as though I were looking in a mirror. And now, it's gone... Whose face, what question, what do I want to know?
SCRIVENS sighs slightly.
SCRIVENS: If you'll forgive me saying so—
ZOE: It must be somewhere in there.
SCRIVENS: Where, Miss?
ZOE: In what happened, in my life. Of course. It's tucked away somewhere in my life, all I have to do is . . . think back over everything that ever happened to me, take out all my memories from the time I was born and sort them all through like a bag of buttons . . .

SCRIVENS: Eighteen.

ZOE: No, it must be simpler than that. It must be terribly simple. As simple as—looking into someone's eyes . . . Agnes . . .? Supposing I were to go back and look into the eyes of everybody I ever met—would it be there, in one of them?

_She looks at SCRIVENS. He looks impassively back._

I'm not crying . . . Can't you give me a clue?

SCRIVENS: If you'll forgive my saying so, are you quite sure there is a question?

ZOE: Of course there is, what a stupid thing to say! Of course there is! . . . At the end of all that . . . There must be . . .

_Slight pause._

It's all I've got left . . .

_Pause._

You are humouring me, aren't you?

SCRIVENS: Oh, Miss.

ZOE: I'm not so exceptional. They must all—they must all . . . ask the same thing . . .?

SCRIVENS: Miss?

ZOE: Mustn't they?

SCRIVENS: What thing, Miss?

_Pause._

If I may say so . . .

ZOE: What?

SCRIVENS: If I may say so, you can't have everything. Or to put it another way, a little wee something is better than nothing.

ZOE: Or to put it another way?
A SCENT OF FLOWERS

SCRIVENS: Or to put it another way, it's quite true, they do all ask.
ZOE: What?
SCRIVENS: The same thing you asked, Miss.
ZOE: What—?
SCRIVENS: What the question is, yes. Funny question, really, not one at all really, a sort of question once removed or a step-question, you might say.
ZOE: They all . . .
SCRIVENS: But as I say, a little wee something is better than nothing. Even if it's only — if I may be poetical — a trembling of the air as a question passes by.

*Long pause. Zoe begins to laugh.*

Yes, they all liked that; they appreciate the poetry of it.
ZOE: A trembling of the air — as a question passes by . . . Oh, Mr Scrivens, you are a devil.
SCRIVENS: Oh, Miss, I really should be getting on with the gentleman in plot thirty-five.
ZOE: Don't let me keep you, Mr Scrivens; don't be detained by a question mark.

He goes right.
Mr Scrivens?
He stops, almost off.
Where would you be if I hadn't stopped you?
SCRIVENS: Have your little joke, Miss. Seventeen minutes.

He goes right.

EDGAR enters, wheeling his mother as usual, and dressed in black, as will be the others when they arrive. He passes across upstage.

EDGAR: Here we are; I told you I'd take you for a trip to the country. Do you like the aspect?
ZOE: Uncle Edgar — I'm over here.
EDGAR: D'you hear that, mother, the distant sound of a child calling? No, of course you don't, you're as deaf as a post.

OZ RISES, X TO STAND SL COFFIN.
ZOE: Please...
EDGAR: You remind me—I don't want to stick my neck out; it may well be pure imagination, and let me add that I'm not in the habit of accosting little girls in gardens of remembrance; but you have a faint resemblance to a memory I once had. I used to carry it around in my pocket, but unfortunately it's no more.

ZOE: Uncle Edgar...
EDGAR: Expunged. Delightful word. I left it in my pocket when the suit went to the cleaners, and it dissolved away in the pyridine and petroleum ether, leaving nothing but a slight blotch on the material classified by the cleaners as ineradicable.

ZOE: Don't you remember me?
EDGAR: You remind me of a memory, what more do you want? Introductions? My name is Edgar; the buffoon with the heart of gold. How d'ye do? What next? Would you care to sit on my knee on a gravestone, while jolly Edgar tells you a dirty fairy story? Don't worry, nobody is here—but us cadavers, is there, mother? Listen, I have a peach. Once upon a time, it goes, there was a great forest stretching as far as the eye could see—

ZOE: No, please, please...
EDGAR: Beautiful young princess lay sleeping, it goes. Make me forget, Uncle Edgar, it goes, make me a child again. Are you sitting comfortably? Unseen among the leaves so nothing can ever hurt you. Then you have to say—

ZOE: Where was the prince, Uncle Edgar?
EDGAR: Ah, you know it. Uncle Edgar: Lost, my child, lost in the forest, my child, lost.

ZOE: What was he like?
EDGAR: You say. Uncle Edgar: He was... just like everyone else. Go on. Zoe: Uncle Edgar, I don't know what I'm going to do. A pause, as slowly she upturns her young, pale, trust-
A SCENT OF FLOWERS

ing, stricken face to his, nestles in his arms like a wounded bird and waits for her kind magician to wave his magic wand, blot out the nasty world and change it into fairyland.

Kind Uncle Edgar bends over her. Edgar: My poor child, my poor stricken, suffering, delightful, desirable child. His kind hands grope for mutual comfort, his kind blood rises, his kind fingers clench. Yes, a faint resemblance. The nose is not quite right, of course. How do you do? What next? When the introductions have to stop, when we've introduced ourselves and seduced each other, which comes to the same thing, what then, little girl? What then, mother mine? Fart me a word of wisdom. Do we know any other tricks? Rhetorical question, asked of a deaf mute.

ZOE: Is this all you have left of me?

EDGAR: I'm here to witness a passing, as you probably guessed. Perhaps you were acquainted with the corpse? She's in there, so the story goes; conjecture, of course, you'd need a screwdriver to be sure.

He wheels his mother.

ZOE: Don't you remember anything?

EDGAR: Oh, lots, lots, I'm stuffed full. What do you think keeps me in the upright position? I'm like a Woolworth's Christmas stocking bursting at the seams with paper memories in two colours, cheap tin memories with sharp edges, celluloid memories, bakelite memories, they come by the gross from Hong Kong. What else do you think I am? Listen, little girl, do you like guessing games? Listen, then, what do we represent? Look again. No? Answer: a cello without strings propelled to a junk yard by a tone-deaf idiot.

He laughs. ZOE turns away.

GODFREY enters from UR, turns away from him.

GODFREY: Zoe?

ZOE: She turns towards him.

Oh. I'm so sorry.
ACT THREE

ZOE: Sorry?

GODFREY: I — mistook you for somebody ... You are rather alike from the back. I know this sounds like a line, but honestly, it's true. Were you, er ... a friend?

She nods.

GODFREY: Your face is familiar; perhaps we met once at a party.

ZOE: Yes, perhaps we did.

He takes her hand.

GODFREY: Godfrey.

She opens her mouth to speak, but says nothing.

ZOE: I don't think so; yours is hot.

GODFREY: I don't think so. But if you say so we'll have it that way. (He gives a faint smile.) Is this the ...?

ZOE: Yes. Mon repos.

GODFREY: I don't think that's quite ... ZOE: No, it isn't, is it — quite?

Slight pause.

GODFREY: You're shivering.

ZOE: No, I'm not.

GODFREY: If you'd care to borrow my coat ... ZOE: No thank you ... But it's very kind of you.

GODFREY: Not at all.

Pause. GODFREY moves to the graveside.

ZOE: You remember her well?

GODFREY: I was her brother.

ZOE: Stepbrother.

GODFREY: If you like. I don't know how you can ask such a question.

ZOE: You have vivid memories of her ...?

Pause.

GODFREY: It's as though she'd just gone out of the room. It'll always be like that.
ZOE: You were very close.
GODFREY: You're quite right, we were stepbrother and sister. This made us closer than if we'd been related. In effect we were siblings, you see, and in effect we were lovers, too.
ZOE: What colour were her eyes?
GODFREY: We were very close. She used to tell me everything.
   Pause.
ZOE: Why did she die?
GODFREY: Surely you know the story?
ZOE: Yes...
GODFREY: Then why do you ask?
   Slight pause,
   She was very—... She was an impressionable kid... Her heart was too big; you know what I mean?
ZOE: No.
GODFREY: She loved too much.
ZOE: Is that why they took her out of existence?
GODFREY: They? I don't understand you.
ZOE: Why she's dead.
GODFREY: You know the story.
ZOE: Yes.
GODFREY: Then why do you ask?
   Slight pause.
   Her eyes were brown.
ZOE: Were they?
GODFREY: Surely you know. (He goes closer to her.) They were like yours. Only brown. Are you sure you won't borrow my coat?
   She shakes her head.
   You're shivering.
ZOE: No.
GODFREY: Very well, if you say so.
They stand looking at one another for a moment; then Agnes and David enter. Godfrey stands by and goes up to them. They all now behave conventionally, making conversation in low, unemotional voices. Zoe stands apart.

Godfrey: The service was effective, didn’t you think?

Agnes: Yes, I suppose it was. I’m no connoisseur of such things.

Godfrey: She would have liked it. Don’t you think?

Agnes: Would have?

Godfrey: Don’t you think so?

Agnes: But she isn’t here, is she? To like it or not. She isn’t here, is she? She’s dead.

Godfrey: I only said she would have liked the service. You never loved her, of course...

Agnes: Does it matter?

Godfrey: Does it matter!

Agnes: Does it matter? She’s dead.

Godfrey: It matters to me, that I loved her.

Agnes: To you. Not to her. She’s dead.

Godfrey: She’ll always be in my thoughts.

Agnes: I hope you find that satisfactory.

Slight pause.

David.

David turns a blank face to her. She holds out her hand, which he takes. He gives an odd little broken bow with his head. There was nothing you could do.

Edgar wheels his mother over to the rest of the group.

There was nothing anyone could do, more than they did. She’s dead, she’s dead.

Slight pause.

David: Who’s that over there?

Godfrey: She was a friend.

Agnes: Ask her to come over.

Godfrey goes across to her.
GODFREY: My mother wonders whether you'd care to . . .

She shakes her head slowly. GODFREY returns to the group. She'd rather not.

AGNES looks across at ZOE, who looks back at her. SCRIVENS enters, with FRED and SID. AC.

SCRIVENS: Very well. If I may make so bold, ladies and gentlemen, I think we may now perform the final closing stage of this little ceremony with reverential brevity. Nothing to do with the client still waiting in plot thirty-five, you understand, but I'm sure you'll agree there's nothing to be gained in drawing out the proceedings. Dignity has triumphed, we all feel the better for it I'm quite sure, and if the point hasn't been made by now a few minutes longer won't help. If you'll therefore all gather round we shall bring the proceedings to a close with all due decorum.

FRED: O.K.

SCRIVENS: Lower away gently.

They lower the coffin into the grave. SCRIVENS shakes hands all round. She looks across to ZOE.

Goodbye, my dear.

He exits. EDGAR remains still, looking at the grave. AGNES comes up to ZOE; DAVID follows her, but stands a little back.

AGNES: We met once. Briefly, I'm afraid. I'm afraid we didn't get to know each other very well. But I tried. It doesn't matter now. I shall go home with the thought that there was someone I tried to know, and failed; but that it doesn't matter.

She holds out her hand. ZOE takes it. AGNES moves away to leave. She waits for DAVID.

David?

DAVID and ZOE have been looking at one another. DAVID comes forward; he takes ZOE's hand. He has difficulty in speaking, as though he has forgotten the meanings of words.
ACT THREE

DAVID: I... had... a... daughter...
AGNES (softly): David.
DAVID: She... crm...
   He seems to have forgotten what he was saying. He puts his hand to his forehead for a moment.
EDGAR: In then, mother?! In now?!
   He pushes the wheelchair suddenly up to the edge of the grave.
The others look round. A pause. EDGAR is still. He suddenly bursts into laughter; but the laughter is silent. DAVID goes over to EDGAR, puts a hand on his arm. They exit. EDGAR wheeling the chair. US.
AGNES (as she goes): Are you coming?
GODFREY: It’s beginning to rain. Yes, I am coming. 2
FRED whistles to ZOE. She looks round. He jerks his head at her. She approaches them.
FRED: If you don’t mind...
SID: We got a couple of other jobs, you see.
FRED: It’s a matter of schedule.
SID: We don’t want to miss our tea-break.
FRED: Like to leave a job shipshape.
SID: Professional pride, you might say.
FRED: Anyway, it’s coming on to rain.
SID: Don’t want to be left out in the rain, do you?
FRED: So if you’d be so good...
   ZOE nods. FRED begins to help her into the hole. She pauses, and looks at GODFREY.
GODFREY: No!! (He moves towards them.) No!! Take your hands off her, leave her alone.
   He has reached them, and attempts to take ZOE back.
FRED: Oh, now, sir.
GODFREY: Zoe, Zoe... (He goes onto his knees and puts his arms around her.) What have they done to you? (He cries.)
ZOE: Keep it, Gogo; it’s for later. I’ve got nothing left to give you. This girl who stands here stroking your hair and...
talking softly to you, it means nothing to her. She’s going through the motions, that’s all. You can’t share grief; you’re on your own. Go home and cry into your pillow; your pillow will comfort you.

Pause.

Cry then, it’s good to cry. Get angry, it’s good to get angry; it never changes anything, but you can pretend it does, and it’s good to pretend. I envy you your tears; however short-lived they may be.

GODFREY crouches with his arms on the coffin, his head on his arm, sobbing. She goes behind him, puts her hands on his shoulders.

Can you feel my hands on your shoulders, Gogo?

GODFREY raises his head.

What do I look like? Do you remember?

He turns his head to one side to see her, but she moves out of his sight; he turns the other way, and again she keeps out of his sight. She chuckles.

Don’t you remember?

GODFREY: Of course I remember you; you’re that skinny bitch with the face like a monkey. You were the sister I romped with—

ZOE: And when we danced in the moonlight at the end-of-term ball we were lovers. If you walk along the pavement without treading on the lines—

GODFREY: You look at you, you’re skinny—

ZOE: And you stink of tobacco and engine oil—

GODFREY: We were having a pillow fight and the pillow sort of got lost—

ZOE: Nothing happened.

GODFREY: Nothing happened.

ZOE: And it makes no difference in any case, does it? If it happened, or might have happened, or you think perhaps you can vaguely remember something of the kind happen-
ing once upon a time with you, or someone else, and me, or was it some other girl...  
Slight pause.
GODFREY: I remember you very well.
Slight pause. They are both smiling.
ZOE: It's all over, you see; the ritual is finished. No more formalities; no more Zoe. Just a little silence, a light rain falling from a colourless sky, and a slight scent of flowers. You can go home now.  
He turns away. UL  
Goo luck.
He takes no notice, but wanders off a little.
Gogo.
He stops.
Gogo?
GODFREY turns, but doesn't see her. He walks to the grave.
He pauses at the graveside, then goes UL.
SID coughs. FRED offers her his arm. She takes it, and disappears into the hole. FRED and SID peer into it. FRED offers a cigarette. They light up. Pause.
FRED: We can fill it in now, or we can fill it in later.
Slight pause.
SID: Cup o' tea first?
FRED notices a rose lying on the ground, picks it up.
FRED: You ever thought of jagging this job in?
SID: It's a job, i'nit?
FRED: It just seems, er... you know... a bit pointless sometimes.
Slight pause.
SID: That's why we get paid for it, i'nit?
Slight pause.
FRED: Yeah. O.K. Cup o' tea first.
SID goes out. FRED follows him, throwing the rose idly into the grave. CURTAIN
1) S I D F X D S T O  
2) S I D F X DR, TAKE OUT CIGARETTES, LIGHT.  
3) U L. A. F  
THROWS ROSE INTO GRAVE. EXITS UL.
BEAT ANALYSIS

ACT I

Beat 1

Introduction to the play and its main character, Zoe. One spotlight slowly dims up to reveal Zoe sleeping on the settee surrounded by a soft other-worldly glow. The music contributes a quality of tentativeness - the wind through the recorder. The purpose of this beat is to introduce both Zoe and the dominant mood of the play - a mysterious sadness.

Beat 2: Where do you want this then?

Fred and Sid enter, squabble, and bring a coffin into the room. Their attention is drawn to Zoe. They awaken her, introduce themselves, and leave to get the flowers.

Fred is obviously the leader of the twosome as far as their work is concerned. He is the craftsman. Sid is the imprecise, somewhat bumbly apprentice. They totally dominate the beat. We learn nothing of Zoe except the questions which surround her. What does it mean that "That's her"? Whose coffin? How do these things relate?

This beat introduces Fred, Sid and the coffin.

Beat 3

Zoe slowly moves to the coffin and touches it. The
mood of mystery dominates and we have the first juxta-position of Zoe and the coffin which will be repeated so often in the play.

**Beat 4: Let us dispel misconceptions.**

Godfrey enters. He and Zoe play, tease, and speak of their past together. They were step-brother and step-sister and have grown up together sharing important moments of childhood.

Godfrey is introduced and the warm relaxed relationship between him and Zoe is exposed. Various odd pieces of information are related which create more questions. What is the relevance of this information?

Neither one is dominant. The scene is an equal and mutual tilting.

**Beat 5: Scrivens.**

Scrivens enters and discusses his job as undertaker and his views on funerals as democratic processes. Zoe listens with much interest. Godfrey reacts to Scrivens' coldness in dealing with all corpses similarly instead of taking the individual into account. Zoe teases Godfrey by siding with Scrivens. Godfrey finally becomes enraged and tries to strangle Scrivens.

The purpose of the beat is to introduce Scrivens.
This is achieved by the presentation of three points of view toward him - his own view of his function in the world, Zoe's sympathy for the necessity of his function, and Godfrey's impatience with Scrivens' point of view. Scrivens shows himself to be self-assured and patient.

This beat is one of increasing tension between Godfrey and Scrivens to the point of Godfrey's attack. Scrivens dominates consistently.

**Beat 6:** Do you know what Mr. Scrivens is?

Zoe and Godfrey extend their arguments for and against Scrivens after he has left and Zoe comforts Godfrey by assuring him that Mr. Scrivens is there to help him. This beat provides the first definite clue that it is Zoe who has died. The tension of the previous beat dissipates and a calm is established between them.

**Beat 7:** What are you doing after the show?

Fred and Sid have been polishing the coffin and arranging the funeral flowers. Fred beckons Zoe, shows off his craft (the coffin) to her and makes a pass at her. Zoe turns the tables on him by taking over, declaring her mock love, and finishes with a speech indicating that she is dead. Fred, unnerved, leaves to get a cup of tea.

The purposes of the scene are: to provide a comic touch when the tables turn, which prepares for Uncle Edgar's
entrance, to continue establishing that Zoe is dead, and to expose more of Zoe's character - her levity, her regret.

At the end of this beat, as with many of them, we are left with Zoe in the half-world of her death. The mood and atmosphere of the opening beat is constantly reiterated whenever she is alone on the stage.

Beat 8: What are you laughing at Uncle Edgar? (That's Granny)


This beat introduces Granny through the eyes of Zoe and Edgar and introduces Edgar. She is the "symbol of the wisdom of the ages" who does not speak, cannot move, and rots away in the attic with her belongings. He is a Pagliacci whose funny stories contain much sadness.

The mood is light.

Beat 9: The Snow Princess and the Big Bad Wolf.

Zoe and Edgar play one of their games. She hides and he searches for her - mock hide-and-seek. They provide amusement for each other in these games.

The mood continues light with childlike carelessness until Edgar suddenly turns to be confronted by the coffin
and the mood suddenly changes. Uncle Edgar's cynicism dominates at the end of the beat.

**Beat 10: Agnes of the iron heart.**

Agnes enters, has a last minute look around (before the funeral) to make sure all is in order, picks up the white roses to put them on the coffin. Zoe snatches them away from her.

This beat introduces Agnes and, succinctly, her relationship with the four people in the room.

Her presence dominates.

**Beat 11: He. (The white roses).**

Zoe introduces her lover and the importance of the white roses as symbols of remembrance. They were supposed to have been yearly reminders of their affair after it had ended and, ironically, are only ever used as a funeral wreath.

The mood is one of time suspended.

**Beat 12: They grow up.**

This is a transitional beat. Zoe comes back to references in the room. She talks of Granny and to her. Godfrey and Edgar regain contact in the room by referring to Zoe, the child. The pieces pull together again in order to continue.
Beat 13: You're abominable.

Edgar and Agnes quarrel over whether or not Edgar should be smoking. Agnes starts the quarrel and Edgar stands his ground.

Their relationship is elaborated. Bitter opposition exists beside the emotional tension of this situation (ie meeting to attend Zoe's funeral).

Beat 14: Did we have to quarrel all the time? (Relax kid).

Godfrey tries to teach Zoe to dance the Charleston. He teases her on religious grounds (We learn she is Catholic.). They argue, resolve the argument and recall past quarrels. Godfrey regrets his part in their last huge quarrel now that Zoe is dead. It was more important than he had realized at the time.

This beat prepares for the climax of the action in Act II - the quarrel between Zoe and Godfrey that pulls together the pieces of her conflict between church and lover and illuminates the importance of the church in her life.

The beat begins light-heartedly, the tension and relaxation of the argument follow and, finally, Godfrey withdraws. Zoe, left alone, switches her attention elsewhere.

Zoe states pieces of information about her early years. Agnes and Edgar discuss Zoe's background, her suicide, and the possible relationship between these—specifically, her mother.

Zoe introduces her mother whom she really did not know and who apparently meant as little or as much to her as the dolls she had to leave in America. Agnes and Edgar argue about the influence of the mother on Zoe and about her imagined character. Godfrey breaks in with the only real and knowable fact—Zoe is dead.

The beat exposes data of Zoe's life and indicates the tension among the family members because of their shock and sorrow at her suicide. They blame themselves, each other and, indeed, grasp at any possible explanation which may help them to, in some way, understand the strange event of her death.

Beat 16: We dwelt together in a fairy grotto.

Remembrance and quasi-flashback by Zoe and Edgar of him telling her fairy stories. The beat begins tenderly but changes to the mood of Edgar's pitiable sadness.

Beat 17: My father.

David and Scrivens enter. The family comes together
again in the room in their comments on David.

The purpose of the beat is to introduce David.

Beat 18: The question of the floral tributes.

This beat begins during the previous one with David and Scrivens' entrance. The purpose of their entrance is the purpose of the beat. David must choose the floral tributes for the funeral. In a sense, this beat hangs suspended until the necessary introductions which constitute the previous beat are completed. David completes his task and slowly, one by one, the family leaves for the church.

The purpose of the act has been to bring together the characters and all the information pertinent to the central action - Zoe's suicide. Having all been assembled, they begin a journey together into Act II.

ACT II

Beat 19

Zoe enters the church, looks carefully around her as she walks past the altar to a statue of the madonna at a chapel altar. She cannot find the way to relate to this object or this building any longer. She is quietly sad and slightly confused. The bottle of pills on the altar means as much to her by way of comfort as the madonna. She touches both objects.
Beat 20

Fred, Sid, and Scrivens enter dressed as altar boys and priest respectively. They carry out the prayers and procedures of the funeral mass which provide ironic counterpoint to the action in Act II. The mass fades in and out throughout the entire act and will be notated as 20a, 20b, etc. It takes place in the present whereas the various scenes occur in the past and chronologically present the events leading up to Zoe's suicide.

Beat 21: *You'll know this place.*

Edgar arrives at the church and passes through, wheeling Granny. His monologue provides one more line in the melody of comment on the church. It stands in contrast to Zoe's and the altar party's relationships to the place. Also, the lightness of the speech provides facile transition into the lightness with which the next scene begins.

Beat 22: *You still ticklish?*

Flashback to Zoe's arrival home from school much earlier than she is expected. She and Godfrey meet. He is surprised to see her and questions her but she evades his questions. This beat re-establishes their rapport - the tilting good humor of Act I.
Beat 23: Well, why are you so early?

Godfrey sets out to have his question answered. Zoe still evades and becomes increasingly tense. Godfrey continues prodding her.

Beat 24: There's this priest.

Zoe decides to talk about her problem - the fact that she has no friends at school and can really only talk to her priest. Godfrey reacts immediately to her friendship with the priest and they argue about her attachment to the church.

This beat is the vocal climax of the scene. Godfrey tries to dominate and succeeds until he pushes her too far.

Beat 25: The other one.

Godfrey sees that something more serious is involved than simply the church. He gently pulls information from Zoe about her lover. Low tones.

Beat 26: You'll tear yourself in half.

Godfrey shows some disgust at her dilemma but gives in to his concern for Zoe. She sees herself in a hopeless situation. His personality dominates but the beat ends expressing the tone of her feeling of hopelessness.

 Beats 22 to 26 delineate the components of the dilemma which is the crux of Zoe's suicide.
Beat 20a

This beat functions as previously stated and provides transition.

Beat 27: Zoe is having an affair. (You have a responsibility.)

Flashback. Agnes tells David that Zoe is sleeping with one of her lecturers and that David has a responsibility to discuss, with Zoe, bringing the affair to an end. He is reticent about interfering and tries to shift some of the blame to Agnes. They argue. The tension shifts back and forth and the beat ends with the tension of an unresolved argument.

The beat illuminates Agnes and David's relationship. They are concerned for Zoe but are unable to put aside their disagreements in order to truly help her together. She becomes a pivotal point for their differences.

Beat 20b

This beat occurs in the middle of the previous beat. Without some kind of focus change to Zoe, there is no justification for this break. It merely impinges on the scene. It functions only as a reminder of Zoe which is unnecessary at this point.
Beat 28: Darling.

Zoe talks to her lover whom she imagines beside her in bed. She feels momentarily at peace and the mood is peaceful. She reminisces and teases him. She does not want to think about any problems but finally must ask about his wife. Her monologue then moves through high-pitched emotional tension to another kind of calm - that of acceptance; almost acceptance of death.

This beat and her conversation with her nameless lover overlap into the next beat creating the ironic juxtaposition of lover and priest - the priest talking to and answering Zoe; Zoe, her lover.

Beat 29: One possible choice.

The Priest comes down from the altar and steps into a flashback scene between himself and Zoe. She tells him of a friend who is having an affair with a married man. He realizes that she is speaking about herself and encourages her to leave the lover and come back to the Church.

These two beats clearly indicate the triangular conflict in which Zoe is involved. She loves adulterously. This forces her outside the security of the Church which she has always known. The Church enforces the guilt of loving parents. Her priest believes he can help and Zoe feels guilt at having to disobey. The Church as parent is compared to Agnes' parental attempts in the next beat.
Zoe is also then struggling between two sets of parents.

**Beat 30:** Make a decision Zoe.

This beat overlaps the last speech of the previous one. Agnes wants to make Zoe face the realistic facts of her dilemma and decide logically what she is going to do. Zoe cannot believe there is sincerity in Agnes' concern for her and refuses to listen. The frustration of not being able to stop Agnes' talk and of the unbearable facts she describes send Zoe crying for help to her father.

**Beat 31:** Say something to me.

This beat is woven into the previous one. David enters. Zoe calls to him and finally goes to him but David says nothing, does nothing. His ineffectuality in this situation is indicated.

**Beat 20c**

With focus on David from both Zoe's unanswered call for help and Agnes' unanswered question, the mass intervenes. This may be interpreted as indicating that the church offered Zoe the parental support her father was unable to give her. More precisely these interventions keep juxtaposing the high points of Zoe's conflict with the fact of her death.
Beat 32: **Bloody punctures.**

Godfrey is fixing his bicycle tire; talking and joking as he works. He enlists Zoe's assistance. She is wrapped up in her thoughts.

The beat is low-key, light - the beginning of the build to the climax of the act.

**Beat 33: Zoe?**

Godfrey continues fixing his tire. He tries to sound her out, to bring her out of her thoughts.

**Beat 20d**

**Beat 34: I've been to Confession.**

Zoe tells Godfrey that she has been to Confession. The implication is that she has done this in lieu of making any decisions or taking any action to resolve her dilemma.

**Beat 20e**

**Beat 35: That makes everything alright?**

Godfrey prods Zoe with questions about the Church. Zoe appeals to his sympathy to make him stop.
Beat 36: Hypothetical Harry and Confession.

Godfrey proceeds to present the bare facts of Zoe's affair as he sees them. He gets carried away with his negative feelings toward confession and the Church and ends up haranguing Zoe. She becomes extremely upset and throws a wrench in his direction.

The scene has built from Beat 32 to its climax when Zoe throws the wrench in Beat 36. The atmosphere is one of increasing friction. Godfrey dominates.

Beat 37: What's the matter with your arm?

Godfrey grabs Zoe's arm to prevent her from throwing anything else. She cries out in pain and he, wondering why, pulls up her sleeve to reveal a bandage. He removes it and, to his horror, finds a cigarette burn in the shape of a cross.

The beat indicates Zoe's state of mind. It is obvious that she has deliberately burnt herself. Physical pain hardly exists beside her mental anguish. Saunders prepares us for her suicide.

Beat 38: Tell me a fairy story.

Zoe turns to Uncle Edgar for the consolation of child-
hood stories. Edgar begins the story but gradually becomes entranced by the child-become-woman who is seeking solace in his arms and he cannot stop himself from wanting her. Edgar attacks her, Zoe struggles free.

Zoe's last vestige of comfort and security has been removed. Not only has the act clarified the despair and guilt which Zoe feels, but it has also shown that, one by one, all the people who could have helped her have disappointed her or been rejected by her. The violence of this last disappointment sends Zoe into action.

**Beat 20g**

The mass ends. The Priest leaves and the altar boys carry out the coffin.

**Beat 39**

Zoe calmly goes to the pills and methodically takes them. Edgar looks on horrified but helpless.

This beat is the climax of the act.

**Beat 40**

Scrivens enters, Zoe takes his arm and they exit together, leaving Edgar behind. This beat suggests a further journey which Zoe will be taking with Scrivens.
ACT III

Beat 41: Killing time.

Fred and Sid (in their work clothes again) are playing cards while waiting for the burial to take place. Sid describes a predicament he is in with his best friend and his mistress who is the friend's wife.

The atmosphere is relaxed and easily comic - an apparent contrast between the treatment of Sid's adultery and Zoe's. The beat sets up a tone of relaxation for the entire act and more firmly reintroduces Fred and Sid.

Beat 42:

To Sid's annoyance and Fred's interest, Zoe breaks into their conversation with a question. Sid excuses himself in order to ponder it.

Zoe is introduced into this act as an onlooker rather than the central character. This place seems to be taken by her coffin rather than by her person.

Beat 43: What's relevant?

Fred and Zoe banter and tease with each other. She annoys him slightly with her questions and her pessimism.
Beat 44: It's an unreal question.

Fred and Sid argue over the question Zoe has asked. Fred becomes impatient and ends the discussion.

There is no heat in their discussion. Rather, it is comic. With Fred and Sid, daily existence, questions and predicaments are not taken so seriously as Zoe takes them. They may be funny and ludicrous.

The beat sustains the atmosphere and the contrast to the earnestness of the previous act.

Beat 45

Zoe asks for some attention. Fred kisses her and puts his arm around her and prods Sid into doing the same. He creates a situation of warmth and security for Zoe so that they may steal away for tea.

In demanding attention Zoe becomes a nuisance to Fred and Sid.

Beat 46: Question Miss?

Scrivens breaks into Zoe's quiet. She questions him about her life. He tries to placate her in order to get on to his next client. When this upsets her, he tries genuinely to show her how unnecessary her frustration is. Zoe understands and, with good humor, leaves her questions behind her.
Beat 47: Paper memories in two colors.

Edgar arrives at the grave with Granny. He does not recognize the girl standing there. He reminisces about Zoe and the memories become grotesque as he relives their last encounter.

Beat 48: Your face is familiar.

Godfrey arrives and does not recognize Zoe. They "chat" about the dead girl.

The mood of this beat is gentle sadness as time clouds over the memory of Zoe for those who knew her.

Beat 49: There was nothing anyone could do.

Agnes and David arrive. Agnes is upset and edgy and Godfrey's attempt to politely talk to her turns into an argument. Agnes tries verbally to comfort David and the others. She does not notice Zoe.

Beat 50: Who's that?

David notices Zoe. Godfrey invites her to join them but she refuses. She is entirely alienated from the family and their grief.

Beat 51: The final and closing stage.

Scrivens arrives. Sid and Fred lower the coffin into
the grave. Agnes and David say their respective goodbyes to Zoe. Edgar hysterically pushes Granny toward the grave. David takes them out. Agnes beckons to Godfrey as she leaves but he remains to say his goodbye to Zoe. Fred and Sid become impatient to finish the job but Zoe staves them off for a few more minutes. She comforts Godfrey and sends him on his way.

Beats 47 to 51 accumulate the evaporation of Zoe's memory in the minds of those who knew her. Each member of her family retains a dominant impression based on his or her experience of the person, Zoe - Edgar has guilt; Agnes, estrangement; David, ineffectuality; Godfrey, affection and confusion.

To Fred, Sid, and Scrivens she merely represents another job to be done and completed.

Through her final confrontation with her family, Zoe comes to accept her estrangement in their memories. She helps Godfrey to see he must continue now and not linger with his thoughts of her any longer and, finally, she may go into her grave with the peacefulness of total acceptance.

**Beat 52**

Fred and Sid help Zoe into the grave.

This beat is the climax of the act. It is an emotional climax rather than one of plot structure. It is the point
of greatest intensity of the play's mood wherein our accumulated impressions and feelings about Zoe and her death and Saunders' various images and philosophical viewpoints culminate.

Beat 53

Fred and Sid have a cigarette and decide to have tea before filling in the grave.

The play ends with the feeling of a cycle having been completed. For Fred and Sid, who begin and end the play, it has been the cycle of daily routine which will continually be repeated and which in no real way relates to the cycle of a life.
DETAILS OF PRODUCTION
INSERTS FOR MASS IN ACT II

Insert 1:
Priest: If you O Lord mark iniquities O Lord, who can stand?
        Out of the depths I cry to you O Lord.
Response: Lord hear my voice.
Priest: Let your ears be attentive.
Response: To my voice in supplication.
Priest: If you O Lord mark iniquities.
Response: Lord, who can stand.
Priest: But with you is forgiveness.
Response: That you may be revered.
Priest: I trust in the Lord.
Response: My soul trusts in his word.

Insert 2:
Priest: Eternal rest
Response: Grant unto her O Lord
Priest: And let perpetual light shine upon her.
Response: If you O Lord mark iniquities O Lord, who can stand?
Priest: Let us pray. O Lord we commend to you the soul of your servant Zoe that having departed from this world, she may live with you through Christ our Lord.
Response: Amen.
Insert 3:
Priest: Eternal rest
Response: Grant unto her O Lord
Priest: And let perpetual light shine upon her.

Insert 4:
Priest: And lead us not into temptation
Response: But deliver us from evil
Priest: From the gate of Hell
Response: Rescue her soul O Lord.
Priest: May she rest in peace.
Response: Amen.

Insert 5:
Priest: Eternal rest
Response: Grant unto her O Lord
Priest: And let perpetual light shine upon her.

Insert 6:
Priest: O Lord, hear my prayer
Response: And let my cry come unto you.
Priest: The lord be with you
Response: And with your spirit.
Priest: Let us pray. O God, who alone are ever merciful and sparing of punishment, humbly we pray on behalf of the soul of your servant Zoe.
Insert 7:

Priest: O Lord we implore you to grant this mercy to your dead servant that she who held fast to your will by her intentions may not receive punishment in return for her deeds. Your mercy may unite her with the company of the choirs of angels in heaven through Christ our Lord.

Response: Amen.

Insert 8:

Priest: O Almighty God, may this sacrifice purify the soul of your servant Zoe which has departed from the world today. Grant that once delivered from her sins, she may receive forgiveness and eternal rest through Jesus Christ your son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the holy spirit, God, forever and ever.

LIGHT PLOT

In order to simplify a description of the lighting cues, the stage will be referred to by nine areas as indicated by the following diagram. All lights were gelled with steel and/or chocolate and specials were gelled as indicated. Two fill lights were used variously as general illumination and specials. The actual instrument plot is included with the other working drawings to follow.

Lighting areas:

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Specials:  
Settee special - on settee in Act I - steel
Edgar special - in area 1 - steel and chocolate
Zoe special A - on SR proscenium - steel
Zoe special B - on SL proscenium - steel
Zoe special C - in area 5 beside coffin in Act II - chocolate
Altar specials - in area 8 in Act II - chocolate
Grave specials - area 5 - Act III - gobos of tree branches - steel and chocolate
**Light Cues:**

Q1 : Preset: settee special up dim to light set as the audience arrives.

Q2 : Blackout special and house lights.

Q3 : Music cue: settee special dims up very slowly, cyc lights dim up to low constant reading.

Q4 : Music cue: Areas 7, 8, 9, 5, 6, 2, 3 up full.

Q5 : Cross fade 1, 4 up, 8, 9 down.

Q6 : Quick cross fade to fills used here as Scrivens special.

Q7 : Quick cross fade back to Q5 reading.

Q8 : Areas 1, 4 down.

Q9 : Areas 1, 4, 7 up.

Q10: All out except area 5; Edgar special up.

Q11: Area 5 out.

Q12: Fade up areas 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 8, 9.

Q13: Area 7 up.

Q14: All quickly out leaving only Edgar special.

Q14a: Dim settee special up for Godfrey's line; then out.

Q15: Areas 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 up; lose Edgar special.

Q16: Areas 3, 6 out.

Q17: Sneak up area 3 dimly.

Q18: Cross fade all out; Edgar special up.

Q19: Dim up areas 2, 3, 5, 6.

Q20: Edgar special out; begin slow dim up Zoe special A.
Q21: Area 4 up.
Q22: Dim out areas 4, 5, 6.
Q23: Zoe special A out; then area 2 as Zoe crosses out of it.
Q24: Dim out area 2.
Q25: Zoe special B dims up as Zoe moves to proscenium.
Q26: All areas up full.
Q27: Zoe special B out.
Q29: Blackout; house lights up.
Q30: Altar specials and cyc lights gradually dim up to low constant reading as Fred lights altar candles.
Q30a: House lights out.
Q31: Dim up all areas to low general reading.
Q32: Fade up Zoe special B.
Q33: Reading up on areas 1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 9.
Q34: Area 9 out.
Q35: Area 6 out.
Q36: Area 4 up.
Q37: Area 3 and Zoe special B out.
Q38: Cross fade areas 1, 2, 4, 5 out; Zoe special C up dimly.
Q39: Areas 5, 6 up.
Q40: Cross fade areas 5, 6 out; Zoe special C up.
Q41: Area 6 up.
Q42: Areas 2, 3, 5 up; sneak out Zoe special C.
Q43: Dim up area 1.
Q44: Areas 5, 6 fade out.
Q45: Area 4 up.
Q46: Area 3 out as Zoe crosses out of light.
Q47: Area 5 up.
Q48: Dim out areas 1, 2, 4.
Q49: Area 1 dims up.
Q50: Zoe special B begins to slowly dim up as Zoe crosses to altar.
Q51: All out except altar specials and cyc lights.
Q52: House lights up.
Q53: Altar specials and cyc lights gradually dim out as Fred extinguishes altar candles.
Q54: House lights out.
Q55: Dim up grave specials and cyc; hold momentarily on tableau of Fred and Sid; dim up area 5.
Q56: Dim up area 4.
Q57: Dim out area 4.
Q58: Dim up area 4 and fills.
Q59: Dim up areas 6, 7, 8, 9.
Q60: Dim up area 1.
Q61: Dim out areas 2, 3, 4, 6, 7, 8, 9.
Q62: Dim out areas 1, 5 and fills.
Q63: Slowly dim out grave specials and cyc.
Q64: Areas 1, 2, 3 bang up and blackout for curtain calls.
Q65: House lights up.
SOUND PLOT

Three recorded pieces of music were used: "Coming Back To Me", Surrealistic Pillow, Jefferson Airplane (RCA.Victor); Bach's Toccata, Adagio, and Fugue in C Major played by Helmut Walcha (Archiv Produktion); "Charleston", Yes Sir, That's My Baby, Ben Pollack (RCA.Victor).

The first was used as introductory music at the beginning of Act I; the second, to open and close the mass in Act II; the third, as background music for the Charleston scene in Act I.

A triangle was used for the sound of vesper bells in Act II, and a glass-breaking box for the sound of the garage window breaking in Act II.

Q1: Opening music begins.
Q2: Music slowly fades; out by Fred's first words.
Q3: Charleston fades in.
Q4: Charleston cuts out.
Q5: Mass music begins.
Q6: Mass music fades; out by Priest's first words.
Q7: Vesper bells ring 4 times.
Q8: Sound of glass breaking.
Q9: Mass music begins and continues until Fred has extinguished the candles after Act II.
PROPERTIES LIST

Preset Properties Stage Left

settee, coffin table
coffin
9 funeral bouquets with cards (lilies, carnations, white roses and 6 assorted others)
bottle of linseed oil
2 chamois
clothes brush
crucifix
2 candlesticks and candles
holy water sprinkler
central altar with purple altar cloth
side altar
madonna
glass with water
pill bottle with pills (red gelatin capsules)
2 kneeling cushions
funeral mass altar book
cigarettes and matches
coffin supports (2 boards placed across grave)
deck of playing cards
coffin ropes
1 single white rose
Preset Properties Stage Right
wheelchair and Granny (dummy)
cigarettes and matches
cigar
necklace (crucifix on chain)
thurible with charcoal and incense
2 books
bicycle with saddlebag
bicycle tools (2 tire levers, 2 spanners, rubber solution, patches, bicycle pump)
large bandage
1 taper

Placement of Properties
ACT I
settee (set up-right)
coffin table (down-left)
coffin (Fred and Sid)
bottle of linseed oil (Sid)
2 chamois (Fred and Sid
clothesbrush (Scrivens)
wheelchair and dummy-Granny (Uncle Edgar)
cigarettes and matches (Godfrey)
cigar (Uncle Edgar)
necklace (Zoe)
ACT II

taper (Fred)
central altar (set up-center)
2 candlesticks and candles (on central altar)
holy water sprinkler (on central altar)
alter book (on central altar)
thurible (Scrivens)
side altar (screwed to proscenium down-left)
madonna (set on side altar)
bottle of pills (on side altar)
glass of water (on side altar)
2 kneeling cushions (on bottom altar step down-left and down-right corners)
bicycle with saddlebag (Godfrey)
2 books (in bicycle saddlebag)
bicycle tools and patching kit (Godfrey)
cigarette (Agnes)
large bandage (Zoe)
bouquet of white roses (set on top of coffin)

ACT III

coffin (set center stage over open grave)
coffin supports (over grave and under coffin)
coffin ropes (through coffin handles)
1 white rose (on floor at down-right edge of coffin)
deck of playing cards (Sid)
cigarettes and matches (Fred and Sid)
pocket watch (Scrivens)
### COSTUME PLOT

<table>
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<th>ACT II</th>
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<tr>
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<td>Edgar</td>
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<tr>
<td>Agnes</td>
<td>black coat-dress, pearls, black shoes</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>Scrivens</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fred and Sid</td>
<td>pants, flannel shirts, overalls, work shoes, tools, belt, cap</td>
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PLAY COST REPORT

Royalties
Harold Freedman Brandt & Brandt 81.83

Publicity
Mamooks (AMS) 1 Banner & 25 Posters 33.25
The Ubyssey - 8 ads (1 col. x 2") 29.60
Express Printing Ltd. - 200 handbills 2.50
UBC Radio Society - Use of sound car 2.50

Tickets
1 Rubber Stamp for tickets (A Scent of Flowers) 1.68

SCENERY & MISC. Items Used from Stock
12 - 100 Watt lamps and 8 flashlight batteries (Stores #8166) 4.64

Stores #7823
64 sq. ft. ½ Fir Plywood 12.72
20 lin. 2x6 Fir Common 2.24
400 sq. ft. visqueen 4.24
250 ft. lamp cord 6.65
1 gal. ext. latex 5.09
4 Barn Door Pulls 1.60
700 sq. ft. visqueen 7.42
1 Barn Door Pull .40
1 sheet 4' x 10' Beaver Board 4.20
1 Pkg. Gestetner White Paper 8½x11 - #324 Program 2.22

PETTY CASH EXPENSES
Xeroding of play scripts - (J. Freiman 11.20
Wax (S. Hargrave) .92
Scenery material (B. Arnott) 2.49
Properties (D. Belshaw) 4.24
Set & Costumes (S. Gibson) 6.05
Balance Forward  237.68

OUT-OF-POCKET EXPENSES
Scripts, pictures, & actors' expenses  56.23
(J. Freiman)
Vancouver Textiles - 100 yds. Cotton  30.45
FEE - Bill Palmer - House Management  10.00

$ 324.36

Ticket Sales:  482.05
Profit:  157.69
**BOX OFFICE REPORT**

**Total Seating:** 103

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2/6/68 Deposit: 482.05
U.B.C. Theatre Department
presents
An M.A. Thesis Production

A Scent of Flowers

by James Saunders

directed by Judith Freiman

Set and Lighting Design by Brian Arnott
Costume Design by Susan Gibson
CAST
(in order of appearance)

Zoe.......................... Mariko Van Campen
Fred.......................... Mark Parry
Sid.......................... Bernie Bartlett
Godfrey...................... Brian Bueckert
Scrivens..................... Tom Byrne
Edgar........................ Peter Burgis
Agnes........................ Gerry Claman
David......................... Ron Knott

TIME
the present, the past

SPACE
Act I - a room
Act II - a church
Act III - a cemetery

SAMPLE PROGRAM

PRODUCTION
Stage Manager................. George Plawski
Lighting Execution............ Josephine Patrick
Assistant to the Director..... Esther Blumafeld
Sound........................ Bob Wallace
Properties.................... Dianna Belshaw
Set Construction.............. Brian Arnott
Lynda Weston
Costumes..................... Susan Gibson
Joan Sukava
Production Assistant......... Lane Stoney
House Manager................ Bill Palmer
Publicity..................... Maureen Holley

With sincere thanks to:

MAITHEM-SHERWOOD FLOWERS LTD.
Rev. C. Lemieux, C.Ss.R
Our Lady of Perpetual Help Church
St. Mark's College
Jay Bancroft
Donn Elliott
Vancouver Province

The Ubyssey

The Peak

U.B.C. THEATRE DEPARTMENT
The VANCOUVER SUN: Thur., Feb. 1, 1968

Scent of Flowers
Very Successful

By JACK RICHARDS

I suppose, that, in a play directed as an M.A. thesis production, the important thing is the work of the aspirant to the degree.

On that basis, Judith Freiman, who directed James Saunders's A Scent of Flowers at the Frederic Wood Studio Theatre on the University of B.C. campus Wednesday night, was entirely successful.

She most certainly did not make it easy for herself in choosing Saunders's play. It misses being pure melodrama by the merest fraction and is all over in two acts with one still to go.

That Miss Freiman and her cast managed to maintain the degree of believability they did was quite wonderful. As a director, she steered most delicately along the edges of some most improbable situations and conversations, retaining the best of the sensitivity and avoiding the maudlin as much as possible.

GOOD CASTING

Good casting certainly helped. Mariko Van Campen as Zoe, the tortured heroine, was excellent. She has a passionate delicacy that worked well.

Brian Bueckert as Godfrey (Gogo, she actually called him) Zoe's step-brother; Gerry Claman as Agnes, her stepmother; Peter Burgis as Uncle Edgar (who struck the final dastardly blow); and Tom Byrne as Scrivens, gave excellent support.

Mark Parry as Fred and Bernie Bartlett as Sid were fine in their numerous roles they had. The only real disappointment was Ron-Knott as David, Zoe's father.

DREAMY PACE

He failed to live up to his role as the well-bred, self-centred David and appeared merely doltish rather than sensitive but inarticulate.

The pace was as dreamy as a Victorian novel. There were suggestions of Thornton Wilder's Our Town in the flashback method of beginning with a dead Zoe and getting her buried.

And at times they found real emotion though, at others, they skated perilously close to becoming ludicrous. But it was the writing that was at fault and their sincerity always managed to save it in the nick of time.

It was done with meticulous care throughout and will run in the Studio Theatre at 8:30 each night through Saturday as a fine example of the work possible by young directors who care.
A Scent of Flowers—grave stuff

By JAMES BARBER

Choosing a play for a thesis production at UBC is a major problem, complicated by budget, available cast, and the limitations of the Studio Theatre. More and more it becomes apparent that it is not what you do, but the manner of doing it that matters.

Judith Freiman chose James Saunders' A Scent of Flowers for last night's production, which seemed to be a pity, for the play is not easy—its main difficulty lies in its dramatic deficiencies, rather than production problems.

There is none of the tightly-written irony of last year's Saunders play, Next Time I'll Sing to You, which the Arts Club produced. There is also, little of the lightness or lyrical quality of writing, although the content is so lyrical as to border on the romantic.

It is a gimmick play, a romantic think-piece which tip-toes round and round the graveside of a suicide asking, and never answering, the in-terminable questions of reality of existence, mixing theology, philosophy and "one never knows, does one?"

It is an actors play, a very delicate exercise in avoiding excesses either of romanticism or realism. Most actor's plays create difficulties for the director in holding down the cast, but Miss Freiman's problem appeared to be that of getting them up, and then keeping them there.

At times, there was an undeniable dialogue with the audience, the soft and delicate unreal feeling of contact between the dead and the living, the real and the rose colored memory, despite unavoidable outside traffic noises.

But also there were too many moments of irritating impatience, when voices became unnaturally restrained and the obvious conclusion seemed to retreat further and further into nowhere, and the characters, almost entirely dependent on voices, lost any semblance of consistency or reality.

Mariko van Campen, the fragile girl, the memory, the catalyst of the whole question of identity, particularly needed this understanding of the strength of weakness. Like the other little girl, when she was good, she was very very good, but somehow I felt that I was supposed to want to cry for her, and I never did—although when I needed to smile she always supplied the motivation.

Gerry Claman's Agnes, her realistic mother, was consistent and important, but we needed more than just two characters to make Saunders say much more than has been said over and over about life in death.
"And I love her, yes
I love her...!"
"He once said: . . . ."

"... you looked just like an ape"/"You say this happened to a friend of yours."

"Zoe?"
"My Snow Princess . . ."

"Is that better?"/"We're missing our tea break."

Mr. Scrivens?
"Lower away gently."

"Keep it, Gogo . . . I've got nothing left to give you."

"It just seems . . . a bit pointless sometimes."
A SCENT OF FLOWERS
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