

" VINYL VISITS AN FM STATION "

a play in one act by Ronald Tavel

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characters:

HANOI HANNA  
G.I. JOSEPH  
VICTOR  
SCUME  
MR. PUBLIC  
CUTTER  
SLICER  
SAINT BARBARA  
MEMBER

" VINYL VISITS AN FM STATION "

( Dark stage; silence. Then a harsh overhead illuminates two figures placed downstage center: HANNA, a very tall, long legged and beautiful girl dressed in an all black-leather "Hong Kong traffic-stopper," is standing perfectly still, her face expressionless, holding a radio mike. A foot or two behind and to the right of her, seated in a plain chair, is G.I. JOSEPH, dressed in jungle fatigues. His head is thrown back and, as HANNA speaks, he moves it slowly forward, showing a face lined with the death-limit of exhaustion, empty, gray, emotionless, drained of all ability to feel, see, or react. Simultaneous with the end of HANNA's speech, G.I.'s head falls powerless on his heaving chest.)

HANNA: Harbor in my heart, exhausted soldier boy, you wretched refuse on our over-populated shore, Hanna has sympathetic charms, she is a licensed masseuse let to a parlor-house by her parents at age eight, and knows how to stretch the knuckles in your gun guarding hand, let down your guard, she knows how to touch your sole so your toes uncurl and run her tapering middle nail from your knotted groin to your five o'clock neck. Bend, bend with the Orient, the river of Lao Tzu bending east northeast in its untroubled run up the range of the Way, bend, boy, with the oriental wisteria shrub, whispering in your weekend ear the weekends of your youth will run out here. The weekends of your middle mind, the weekends of your age age in the wood of the rice wines of the East: you'll never go home, home now is here, you complex economic extension of what's the matter in the America of your mother's moneyed marriage, your sister's honeyless proposal, your mother's milkless dugs. There are many ways, but the Way is unwayed, there are many names but the name is not named. The core attends in the culture for as long as it takes to tend the culture of the pearl of the seeker of the core. For this seeker is unclouded by longing and the man without mist in his mind takes a long life to move, for he sees all the ways and every different route is open to him; but the man who is mastered by his desire is accessible to the surface and the surface touches his skin in each turn that handles his heart. Harbor in my heart, exhausted soldier boy, you have no home that you remember now and your heart is in the dark chamber of the imaginary daemons.

There are many ways, but the Way is AWOL, A.W.O.L., A Way Of Love, A Will Of Life, A Walk Of Leaving, there are many names but the name is Hanoi Hanna. Hanna you have, who else have you who's sympathetic, too? Slip, slip away, mere slip on the hybrid wisteria shrub, dark property of the oriental ever, come, come, I have hair down to here, dark hair have I to here and nowhere else. Soft my little hands, as momentary as the rice field's puddle's patter after it's sown in the spring. I know you'll come away, away from the base debases you. Hanna waits. Your black Saint Barbara, slashed and bleeding, bless you in the desertion to life that you will endeavor. Renunciate. No river within you can run up the mountain of the Way and its Power, must race self-righteously downward grabbing at coin and matter, mere mother matter, unless you renunciate. Renunciate. You must renunciate!

(There is a long moment of silence. The two figures curiously resemble Egyptian statuary: HANNA seems like a stone Isis, G.I. like the familiar seated Pharaoh. Then the harsh overhead dims out. The stage remains entirely black and silent for a full minute and a half.

Suddenly, cruel, third-degree spots come up on the set: Stage right holds an elaborate steel structure, approximately 6 foot square. Its top is an uncovered mattress and, 3 feet under that, is a horizontal platform. The sides of the structure are variously equipped to restrained torture victims. A fireman's axe is bound by a leather cord to one of the front beams. A ladder runs up to the mattress. There is a parrot stand with circle upstage center and upstage left is a 4 foot square estrade concealed now by the presence before it of a standing torture rack: SCUM, a heavy fellow, is chained to this rack with arms and legs outstretched, clothes torn, etc. MR. PUBLIC, a long hair shadow, is reclining beneath the parrot stand, reading a large book, eating an apple, and sniffing a bar of naphtha soap. CUTTER and SLICER, twin grotesques in S-M regalia, motorcycle helmets, etc., are seated silently by or on the estrade. VICTOR, a handsome, soft-eyed stud in peacock-elaborate Hell's Angels finery, is lying on the mattress, his allotted roost. G.I.'s chair is now at the right side of the steel structure. He sits in it, immobile, blankly staring at the audience. Downstage off-center is a table with two chairs. On the table is a microphone, a carton of cigarettes, a package of tacks, a red bulb. A piano is situated at extreme stage left. Chains, whips, candles, etc., decorate everything. The whole impression is one of extreme conjection as in an S-M clubhouse built into a small garage. As the lights go up, HANNA, astride the reclining MR. PUBLIC, is whipping SCUM who groans with delight:)

SCUM: Aaaaaah! Give her room! give her room to work!

PUBLIC: Whadda ya mean give her room? You're the one that takes up half the space in this club.

VICTOR: She needs a whip twice that length just to circle yer girth.

PUBLIC: Put a girdle on him, Hanna, 'n ya might not have to get a longer whip.

SCUM: Owwww! You slim jims are jist jealous a all the area I got to enjoy myself with.

VICTOR: (now midway on the ladder, reclining against it, filing his nails) I'm jist jealous that ya kin still enjoy yerself.

HANNA: (turning on VICTOR and whipping him) Why be jealous -- try some yourself!

SCUM: He's too callous to cut through to, Hanna.

PUBLIC: It's hard to find the artery into a guy who got calluses on his heart.

VICTOR: (taking the blows) Have a heart, Hanna, I don't go in for scourging!

SCUM: Go down for it, Victor, on your knees. The mental set's better that way.

PUBLIC: (as VICTOR is beaten to the floor) 'N ya kin look for yer lost way on the floor that way, too.

VICTOR: (on eye-level with PUBLIC) Like you, for instance?

PUBLIC: I try; I read.

SCUM: While I go to seed.

PUBLIC: I'm searching for the true creed.

SCUM: All I want is to bleed. Yet every woman bestows

PUBLIC: her blows

SCUM: on just the Jim who can't appreciate it.

VICTOR: I hope you're getting something outta this, Hanna.

HANNA: It's to get something outta you, Victor -- and get this play started.

VICTOR: Well, stop whipping me for a minute, will ya, and I'll get it started.

SCUM: How stout hearted of you, Victor. Them guys half asleep in the first two rows'll be forever in your debt.

VICTOR: (as HANNA drops the whip) I'll collect that debt

'n pay up my Blue Cross first thing after the show.

- HANNA: (going to the table, wiping blood spots from her outfit with a roll of Scott's tissue) Well, we're waiting.
- VICTOR: Don'tcha wanna wash up first?
- PUBLIC: (sniffing the naphtha) Soap's busy. She'll have to get in line.
- SCUM: That's just fine. While you peacocks prime I'm left hung like a horse with his mare jutting out from under during rutting time.
- HANNA: I like that image.
- SCUM: Too bad: it's never used again.
- PUBLIC: Yeah, there's no running imagery in this one-acter.
- SCUM: There's just running off at the mouth.
- PUBLIC: Or running off with oneself.
- SCUM: (examining his chains) No, I don't think there's that either.
- VICTOR: (standing, approaching HANNA) Well, to start things off, I'd venture to say you're an ideal, Hanna, you're some facet of man's ideal.
- SCUM: Very venturesome of you.
- PUBLIC: But boring.
- VICTOR: And you are different.
- HANNA: I don't claim or want to be. I'm just a simple girl much like any other. Got simple tastes, simpler needs. I'm wise ya might say, very wise, but never different.
- VICTOR: But you're still an American ideal.
- HANNA: I don't claim to be that either -- more exactly, that's exactly what I don't need to be. I need ---
- VICTOR: But the way you keep up the appearance. How fresh and summer-stocky you look after a day's work. Whatever you do somehow agrees with you. The club all looks bushed after they finish work.
- PUBLIC: Or looks for bush after they finish work.
- VICTOR: But you look more beautiful then than ever.
- HANNA: There's a profundity somewhere in there. Guess I'll

have to wait till the denouement to find out what it is. However, I haven't finished up completely.

- SCUM: That's what I've been tryin' to tell you. There's still another nail needs to be driven.
- HANNA: So make like you're Luther, will ya, Victor?
- VICTOR: (sizing up SCUM) Man, such a mess!
- SCUM: And you're gorgeous?
- HANNA: Soon as you post him, wanna blast off with me, Victor?
- VICTOR: I aim at the moon, every day.
- SCUM: And stars fall over Alabama that night.
- HANNA: Come, quick, see if you can't place one peg right.
- PUBLIC: Peg leg.
- HANNA: Here's the hammer. Hanna's hammer.
- VICTOR: This is gonna hurt me more than you you insatiable low class maso.  
(driving a nail into SCUM's right foot)  
Got a real ghetto mentality, Scum. No sense of sublimation, everything's gotta be black and white. Poor Scum.
- SCUM: I like to have things spelled out for me, too. Can you spell, Victor?
- VICTOR: S.C.U.M. - Sado Come Uppity Maso. And there ya go. -How's that, mentors?
- SCUM: (bored) Resplendent. Like the first kiss of love.
- HANNA: Perfect analogy.
- SCUM: Meaning a painful try.
- HANNA: Yes, that's what strikes me about you, Victim I mean Victor, everything you aim at, each nail you're driven to, is such a painful try.
- VICTOR: That's cause you're my muse.
- HANNA: Really!
- VICTOR: My mentor and muse. Two ideals in one body - that can still keep its shape.
- SCUM: Sounds like a bargain.
- VICTOR: I believe so. Where do you want him?

HANNA: Oh, put him under the bed for the weekend. Mr. Public will be glad to assist, be of public assistance or something.

PUBLIC: Medicare would be more to the point.

VICTOR: (to PUBLIC) Careful of the points.

(HANNA snaps her fingers, cracks her whip, and PUBLIC rises reluctantly and he and VICTOR lift up SCUM's torture rack and carry it over to the steel structure.)

SCUM: You drop your load and there's a buck in it for both of you. Ya can spend it on bandaides.

HANNA: Mr. Public can spend in yer mouth.

VICTOR: And I in I mean on you.

SCUM: Such repartee.

(VICTOR and PUBLIC place SCUM's torture rack on the shelf under the mattress. PUBLIC sits on the immobile G.I.'s lap, opens his hardback book and continues reading it. G.I. reads over his shoulder. HANNA mounts the ladder during this.)

VICTOR: (to SCUM) Lemme know if ya want a glass of vinegar or anything. Long as I don't have to rise to the occasion in the middle of the night.

HANNA: Oh, I don't know; sometimes I like it when I'm half asleep.

PUBLIC: (to G.I.) You read over it and I'll give you the cold shoulder.

SCUM: Well, he can always read between yer wrinkles, ya don't wanna open up yer as---

HANNA: (on the mattress) I'll open up, you studs too limited in your Kama Sutra to open up new areas. At least you, Victor, try, so Hanna's stuck-on her simple tastes.

SCUM: Impaling by prick is so passé: who really still feels it? -Hey, where's he going?

HANNA: (calling) It's five o'clock, Victor, I'm off work.

PUBLIC: Or off to work. She plays "switch."

SCUM: How vulvar.

PUBLIC: (amused) Revolver. You can revolve her

SCUM: on yer index toe.

PUBLIC: Towing the asiline it's called.

SCUM: No, no, I can't think quick enough to top that.

PUBLIC: So you'll shut up for second?

SCUM: Yeah.

HANNA: (calling to VICTOR who is standing indecisively by the table, eyeing a record player) Help me off ---

PUBLIC: Help her to get off.

HANNA: with my boots, will ya, baby?

VICTOR: Baby like to listen while she loves?...  
(turning quickly to the audience)  
Listen, I may not be the educated type, I'm only half informed and this script only half informs on me, I only half understand half the things that happen around here, but I have heard the music, an echo on a plain in a closed place, and I am willing to close my eyes if it's sweet. Close them the same as everyone else.

HANNA: (referring to the wailing of the low background music) If you put on a record that oriental shit'll stop. Who could keep rhythm to that?

PUBLIC: I feel some kinda rhythm myself, wonder what it is....

VICTOR: (uncertain, but obeying HANNA) Yeah, that background tape sorta gives ya a headache, don't it? I don't mean listening to it, I mean trying to figure it out. Music shouldn't make matters more troublesome. Specially gook stuff.

HANNA: It's chinxs, not gook.

PUBLIC: Like the food?

SCUM: Right, but without the M.S.G.

HANNA: (to SCUM) You broke your fast, not with food but with fool falderal.

SCUM: (shrugging) I jist faldered ya all.

PUBLIC: (to the audience) Don't sweat it, folks, that'll probably be the worst.

SCUM: Till your next line.

(VICTOR puts Turn, Turn, Turn on the record player and the Chinese wail immediately aborts. He rushes up the ladder, flounces on top of HANNA, and both go at furious fakery like tomorrow was moritorium on it. PUBLIC gets kicked in the head.)

VICTOR: (singing along, but with blatant vindictiveness)



To every fling, twin, twin, twin,  
There is a treason, twin, twin, twin,

- HANNA: (singing) And a crime to every purpose under Heaven.
- PUBLIC: (singing) A crime to be true, a crime to lie,  
(referring graphically to his long hair)  
A crime to grow, a crime to keep,
- SCUM: (singing) A crime to will, a crime to feel,  
(peeking up) A crime to look, a crime to peek.
- VICTOR: (singing) To every king, twin, twin, twin,  
There comes a treason, twin, twin, twin,
- HANNA: (singing) And a slime in every purpose under Heaven.
- VICTOR: (singing) A crime to crack up, a crime in sanity!
- SCUM: (singing graphically) A crime to plough, a crime  
to weed!
- HANNA: (singing) A crime to blast away stoned!
- PUBLIC: (singing) A crime to get together sober!
- ALL FOUR: (singing) For every wing, twin, twin, twin,  
There is a reason, twin, twin, twin,  
And an "I'm" to every purpose under Heaven!
- VICTOR: And you thought the Penta costal Church was the  
only religion with a beat!
- PUBLIC: (still heaved on the earlier rhythm) No... but I  
wouldn't say every beat had to do with a church....
- SCUM: I always lived on the top floor. I never liked  
people living over me.
- HANNA: An exemplary masochist.
- PUBLIC: Just a fatted calf.
- SCUM: Your better half, Mr. Public, your better half.  
What time is it?
- VICTOR: Where you going?
- SCUM: I like to know the time - you mind?
- PUBLIC: (getting kicked in the head on his upbeat) I'd  
appreciate knowing the time, too, when you quit that  
is. It's like burning your candle at both ends.
- HANNA: (edifying VICTOR) It's like some kinda marathon for  
stop-watch Scum. He's going to try to outdo his record.  
Pity you ain't going for trying to outdo this record.
- VICTOR: (picking up pace) A connosewer can arrive in low.

HANNA: I know: but I ain't seen no speed limits posted.

SCUM: Hey, how's about hitting the keys a little lighter? You're gonna knock out my eye with one of them springs! My good eye, too!

VICTOR: And make the bad one jealous.

HANNA: (singing to Love Me Or Leave Me) America!:-  
Love it or leave it,  
But don't try to deceive it...

SCUM: I don't feel a thing.

HANNA: Neither do I.

SCUM: What's that supposed to make you?

HANNA: It doesn't make me. But at least I'm not complaining.

VICTOR: (insightfully, to HANNA) That's your tragic flaw.

PUBLIC: This page is a bore.

(VICTOR's attention turns to PUBLIC, coming to focus with incredulity on his non-voyeurism. He stops screwing.)

VICTOR: Hey, whatcher doing, Mr. Public?

PUBLIC: Reading. What does it look like?

VICTOR: That's what it looks like.

(Long pause. PUBLIC continues reading; G.I. continues as well.)

VICTOR: I don't like it.

PUBLIC: What?

VICTOR: You reading.

PUBLIC: Well, that's how the cookie grumbles.

SCUM: And stumbles.

VICTOR: Or tumbles, baby!! I said I don't like it.

PUBLIC: Why? - because you can't read?

VICTOR: That's right, dummy.

PUBLIC: If that's right, I ain't no dummy. Besides, if I can read I'm no dummy and if you can't read, you're the dummy.

VICTOR: (long pause) I can read.

PUBLIC: (long pause) Then why don't ya?

VICTOR: (long pause) Cause I don't wanna.

PUBLIC: What do you wanna do?

HANNA: Yeah, what do you want to do?

SCUM: What, pray tell! what?

VICTOR: This!

(VICTOR scrambles down the ladder. PUBLIC gets up and darts across the stage toward wing left, but VICTOR reaches him, grabs the book out of his hands, and tosses it backwards with a vicious thrust: it lands in G.I.'s lap: G.I. opens it and continues reading. Everyone else watches VICTOR and PUBLIC stand at bay. The tension mounts; VICTOR is a shade defensive.)

VICTOR: What was it you were reading, Mr. Public?

PUBLIC: The Wisdom of China; and, of India.

VICTOR: All in one volume?

PUBLIC: For a buck ninety-eight.

VICTOR: Sounds like a bargain.

HANNA: (the oriental music resuming) Sounds like that shit again.

(Everyone listens thoughtfully until the tape ends on its own.)

PUBLIC: I don't like it.

VICTOR: You a music critic now?

PUBLIC: I don't like what you done.

VICTOR: When?

SCUM: Which?

HANNA: What?

VICTOR: Why?

SCUM: I don't like it either.

PUBLIC: What?

SCUM: What all three of ya done.

HANNA: Why not?

SCUM: It's Broadway-slick connoisseurish, that's why not. Studious effort is the mark of men without Grace. Yin-Yang spins subconsciously, or not at all.

HANNA: If we Yin-Yanged the Catholic Indo-Chinese circle you thought subconscious, none of us would be genuine sadists.

SCUM: Aye!- there's the rub, you Catholic Indo-Chinxs: none of you is, because I ain't satisfied.

VICTOR: Who says you're supposed to be?

SCUM: I can't get no satisfaction....

PUBLIC: Some of the public might get the idea that this whole set-up is just to satisfy you.

SCUM: Well, ain't it? - I'm the masochist.

VICTOR: (confused) You meaning to imply that we all don't get no kicks outta this?

SCUM: You all get your kicks outta seeing me get my kicks. That's academic. It's the Confusion-ancient slave-Queen myth:- imagine what power the treasoned King must renunciate just to keep her in the chains to which he's grown accustomed.

HANNA: (blase) That is academic. -And we are sub-conscious.

SCUM: Youses sub human. I'm submattress.

PUBLIC: I don't like it.

HANNA: (really fed up) Public don't like it!!

VICTOR: What?

SCUM: Which?

HANNA: (bored to limpness) And why....

PUBLIC: What you done with my book.

VICTOR: You mean what I done with the wisdom of China -- and of India?

PUBLIC: Exactly. And you don't stand a Chinaman's chance of getting away with it, either. There just ain't enough room in this clubhouse for both of us, Victor. Like there ain't enough room in China for seven hundred million Chinxs. Some soon mourning they's gonna be bustin' outta their unarable earth 'n spreadin' inta Sidney Australia 'n Red Square Moscow never mind Vietnam 'n northern India. Figured I oughta know somethin' about the Yella Peril if it's gonna stop me from cashin' Traveler's Checks in as many places as that, that's why I was readin' that book. Figure you oughta know somethin' about me,

too, seein' as I'm gonna be findin' yer comfy roost up on that there mattress a mite softer than the concrete floor or that there chair with the rhinoceros horn.

SCUM: Hornbill I believe it is, actually a bird not a ---

VICTOR: (wavering a bit before PUBLIC) You got a one-track mind, man. There's still a north and south to every country. Once ya find it you latch onto the Libran balance of power 'n come up with a lotta state's rights, too.

PUBLIC: Speaking of my rights, I think ---

VICTOR: What?- that you and me should oughta have this out?

SCUM: I knew it was coming to that - oh, joy in the some soon mourning that has arrived!

PUBLIC: Exactly, Victor.

(VICTOR and PUBLIC go at each other's throats. HANNA pops chocolates in her mouth, relaxes on the mattress, and doesn't pay particular attention to the fight. SCUM squirms with frustration. G.I. reads. At first the struggle is even and more resembles a ballet than a realistic match.)

HANNA: Hmnnnnnn, - Barracuda Chocolates, my favorite.

SCUM: I can't see a thing! I can't see a thing!

HANNA: People in the cheaper seats never do.  
(leaning over the edge of the mattress, stuffing some chocolates into SCUM's mouth and mushing others all over his face)  
Nash instead.

VICTOR: Who's my little boy, the Public who just listens or the Public who just sings?

PUBLIC: Pubby who takes it or Pubby who swings?

VICTOR: When the war's silent as silent our springs,

PUBLIC: And the salt water rising eyewhite red stings.

VICTOR: I could be treasoned if there were kings!

HANNA: Deal death to the loser, loosen his strings.

SCUM: Others want bootblacks, but I wanted wings.

(Suddenly the tape of oriental music blasts out a singularly grating disharmonic riff. VICTOR, caught off guard, shocked and shaken, bears down with his foot in antagonized fury. Unfortunately, his boot comes down squarely on PUBLIC's toes.)

VICTOR: God damn that Yella Peril yellin' bitch! I'll ---

PUBLIC: OOOOWWWWW!!! You oughta be shoved back up a Tampax you're ~~re the string cut a string along some~~ ~~computer's~~ nervous breakdown!!

(PUBLIC throws himself at VICTOR and their fight is now quite real, vicious, dead-serious, bloody. HANNA and SCUM become genuinely excited, they hang on the outcome despite their talk:)

SCUM: Samson and Goliath! their battle rattles the brainy saviors of civilization.

HANNA: This beats the Pope's hot war on abortion,

SCUM: his rousing the rutters to overpopulation

HANNA: and inviting the unborn foetus to the feast of life;

SCUM: which, with the starving billions on a square inch each

HANNA: and a half bowl of rice seaweed flavored

SCUM: is, all in all, an unfortunate metaphor.

HANNA: They're even matched! there's no way one can win.

SCUM: Only some holy intervention can determine an outcome.

VICTOR: I believe so. Where do you want him?

HANNA: (seeing VICTOR reaching for a pair of shears on the table) Look! he's gonna cut that hippy down to lies.

SCUM: The hippy's only way to Heaven is through his hair: the Chinese thought of that first, the pigtail, you know, that they get pulled up to Chinese Heaven by?

HANNA: (indifferent) I flunked outta my Eastern Culture course. Couldn't stand the gook that taught it.

SCUM: Mr. P.'s gonna flunk outta Heaven, sure as the shears of the Philistine. -P.'s probably the Philistir

VICTOR: (snipping a lock of PUBLIC's hair) And a crime to every purpose under Heaven. A crime to plough, a crime to weed... Weeded, ya could be rammed aft right easy.

PUBLIC: (stopping short; melting to the floor) As you'll be rammed right aft-er me.... Hypocrite lecteur.....

HANNA: (blankly) Samson did lose. These Biblical mysteries sure are inscrutable. Wonder what secret P. revealed?

SCUM: Goliath's still champion in the flicks of his dreams.

HANNA: (looking at VICTOR downstage left, priming himself)  
Wonder why they're only dreams....

VICTOR: (to audience) I must be doing something right....

(CUTTER and SLICER rise in accord, fiercely, purposefully. They yank PUBLIC up from the floor and immediately begin to chain him to the parrot stand, forcing his arms through the circle and pressing his chest against the vertical. PUBLIC, rallying slightly, merely mouths his words: SCUM speaks them.)

HANNA: Why, there's Cutter and Slicer!

SCUM: It's like Dancer and Prancer.

HANNA: (sexy-blase) And Vixen...

VICTOR: I'm fixin' myself up.

SCUM: No, no, not the parrot stand... that jungle parrot....

CUTTER: Ssssssssssssssh.

SCUM: Anything but the Asian jungle parrot's stand!

SLICER: Don't be crass.

CUTTER: Or over-obvious. Alas! tryin' to spoon-feed the audience. Where's the S-M game in that?

SCUM: Mercy, mercy!

HANNA: Il n'y a pas de quoi.

SCUM: O Christian God! -- the Asian parrot's last stand!!

CUTTER: Now, now, you're a big boy now. Old enough.

SLICER: (fatherly) Act your age, everyone's watching.

SCUM: What does age have to do with it? - the older you get, the more it hurts.

SLICER: Splendid.

VICTOR: (nursing a cut) I was beginning to suspect as much....

HANNA: (to VICTOR) I suspect this is some kinda adult education course for you. High School extension division.

VICTOR: High School derision more exactly:- upstagin' me.

SCUM: But you guys really hurt! you two ain't actin' at all!!

CUTTER: Now, now, if you had any stage deportment at all to speak of, you'd know how to fake and fall and

completely avoid getting actually harmed.

- SLICER: Of course, given the kind of Method training you've had, I suppose we have no choice but to really and truly torture you. Pity, some people know (moving down left of center, almost into the audience, strutting) how to pretend. Take the war, for instance, that's a play I could really get my incisors into while this Actors Studio freak would be still mulling it over on his worried-down molars looking for the motivation. Motivation! Just play yourself, that's all there is to it, and you'll find picking off yellow pigmies as native to your territorial needs as picking the hair out of your teeth before going straight.
- CUTTER: (moving down right of center, almost into the audience) Going straight to the Actors' Unemployment Fund, that is: there are certain straight roles take a bit more honing and polish than just coming off as one's own simple, elegant, and audacious self.
- SLICER: Can't imagine which those might be.
- CUTTER: Hamlet's a case in point. When I play Ham---
- SLICER: You ham it up: Hamlet's not a case in point; despite the complexity and quantity of his thought, more thoughts go through an average actor's head in the course of a single day than they do through Hamlet's in the run of that whole play.
- CUTTER: A good actor's day, that is.
- SLICER: Every day's a good day for me.
- VICTOR: (gazing at himself in a mirror) This just ain't my day. No sooner do I down one distraction when two more rise to take his place. (strutting across and then upstage as he speaks, forcing CUTTER, SLICER, and PUBLIC on the parrot stand back upstage by the strength of gait and will) Creeps who, if they was in flicks, would be found on the bottom of that diagonal list ya see in the credits. On TV reruns their names would be so low down they'd be outta frame. I got the plumage and some mix up in the Xerox room, some illiterate typist's typo gives them the speeches. But I can talk if it comes to that, I ain't no deaf 'n dummy, I hear the music and I can talk back to it - talk and walk - walk up in a Way these leather lovers will never learn to crawl. Now stay there! (mounting the ladder to the mattress) And I can ascend, heights don't scare me. I'm Libra, an air sign. Animals earn their concrete floor. They need the concrete....



(VICTOR sits beside HANNA on the mattress, examining himself in the mirror. His legs dangle over the downstage edge. As she speaks he slowly releases the mirror and stares haughtily, pridefully confident at the audience. Then he grows morose, his eyes turn downward. CUTTER and SLICER proceed to torture PUBLIC systematically but silently until her speech ends. When the dialogue begins the torture sounds are heard and they continue throughout except as indicated.)

- HANNA: When I was thirteen I needed my first abortion. The go-between took two hundred I had to earn by whoring and started to drive me to the quack's. Half-way there he parked the car and asked me to run into a drug store and buy the douge bag, he'd forgotten to pick one up he said. While I was in the pharmacy, fumbling with the bills, trembling, weak from worry, timid, a child, the go-between stepped on the gas and drove off....
- VICTOR: He seen ya coming, honey.
- HANNA: When I needed my second abortion I went directly to the quack's myself. He put me under with ether. When I came to, as someone struggling upward for breath, three old men were holding me down, each in turn assaulted me. The second one a second time after the third.... there had been no abortion.... At the time of my third pregnancy I was addicted to opium. Those days I felt nothing. I had the baby in a room by myself. I felt no pain. I bore the baby alone without feeling, without pain, without feeling. It inherited my opium habit, went into withdrawal, and was dead four days later. I shut it up inside the incinerator.
- VICTOR: Animals do need the concrete, a man is different....
- HANNA: (touching VICTOR's crotch) I don't think you're paying attention - to anything!
- VICTOR: Then why are you so acutely?
- HANNA: I'm not! Nothing much to look forward to.
- VICTOR: How do you mean?
- HANNA: Those so lengthily impressive in a state of inattention are the kind that wouldn't venture much farther in a state of attentiveness.
- VICTOR: But that isn't so with me.
- HANNA: I know, but I'm saying that's the kind that wouldn't.
- VICTOR: But it does.
- HANNA: But it's the type that wouldn't.

VICTOR: It's the type that wouldn't, but in actuality it's the exception to that rule.

HANNA: But it is the type that wouldn't.

VICTOR: Yes, it is the type that wouldn't.

HANNA: Well, then, you don't interest me.

VICTOR: Why not?

HANNA: Because I'm not interested in types.

CUTTER: (to SLICER, choosing a long pin) This type of needle pierces most profoundly....

VICTOR: But you can't type me, I'm the exception to ---

HANNA: I know all that. Shut up. That's why you're the hero. Audiences can't figure you out an---

SCUM: (himself now) Hero of what?

HANNA: Shut up, Scume, or we'll pull out your nails and set you free.

SCUM: They promise me anything, but the monitor's merry, Mac. I ain't got a thing to worry about.

VICTOR: (suddenly enlightened) Escape from freedom! -Scume, you're an accomplished escapist from freedom. An escapist artist! That's why you're a minor character.

SCUM: A minor character in what?

HANNA: In what! In what! --- you sound like a broken wrecked chord. A minor character in the Theatre of War -- does that satisfy you?

SLICER: This shorter needle gives more satisfaction....

SCUM: (singing) "I can't get no satisfaction..."

VICTOR: And you probably never will. That's why and what makes you a maso, baby; you got it worked out to stay one your whole one-track insensitively defined life. Insensitives can't sense the right and left of things. There just ain't never gonna be a north or south for you. Or there'll be just that: a north and a south, always that. You're a whole: a defined whole - defined as a whole indiscriminate mass.... Which mass outsiders can't discriminate. It's a waste of good stage time to torture you.

SCUM: Didactic pig. Wait'll next play for my answer.

PUBLIC: Please, guys, please, gimme a break!

CUTTER: Here in your thigh bone, how's about the elbow jernt?

SLICER: Yeah, that gives more easily, sounds the sweeter too.

SCUM: Sounds which distract from the downstage action.

HANNA: (despondent) Lengthiness in a state of both attention and inattention is pure redundancy.

VICTOR: (cutting) Same thought just occurred to me, Hanna.

G.I.: (amused, unconscious of his surroundings, reading aloud) "The greatest cleverness has a surface re-assembling asininity; the greatest eloquence sounds like stuttering."

VICTOR: Shut up down there!

G.I.: (not hearing, continuing) "The farther one pursues knowledge, the less one knows."

VICTOR: I'll come down there in one minute and it will mean the less you knows. Stop reading!

G.I.: (deaf, continuing) "When two armies equally matched meet, the yielding one has the right of way; when two men matched equally meet, the man of sorrow wins.

VICTOR: (jumping up in a fury, tumbling HANNA aside, and leaping off the steel structure) Stop reading that book! you water dieted, brain washed weasel. I'll ---

G.I.: Library closing?

VICTOR: (making to grab the book) Gimme that!

HANNA: (hanging over the edge of the mattress, insouciant) Let him keep the literature, Victor. You take it out of his hands and it'll just fall into some others. Like it did into his.

VICTOR: What others'? Everbody else is tied up.

SCUM: (sighing with sadness) La chair est triste, hélas, et j'ai lu tous les livres...

PUBLIC: (now bleeding) I haven't.

HANNA: (calmly descending the ladder) Cutter isn't tied up. His hands are free, albeit busy. And you know how much he loves to read.

CUTTER: After I deliver the mail, I read it.

SLICER: (reading a letter he has taken out of PUBLIC pocket) His wife says she hopes he won't be changed when he comes back. She says she hasn't changed at all.

CUTTER: That's such an obvious American point to make.

PUBLIC: Such a good, long suffering woman...

VICTOR: I want that book!

HANNA: (crossing to the table; once there, she stuffs a cigarette into a long, carved holder; MEMBER, a near mute and ominous looking member of the club seated at the left side of the table, lights the cigarette for HANNA) Very explicit of you. But grabbing is not the way to get it. No man inherits what another has not renunciated. Bring him over here, we'll put him on the air, and I'll get more renunciations outta him in a fifteen minute stint than you can shake your rock-filled boxing glove at in twice that time. --And then the Wisdom of China, and of India will be all yours, Victor.

VICTOR: (dubious) You mean it?

HANNA: (straight to the audience; very strong) I mean something. Why would I have so many lines? -Come over here, soldier boy.

VICTOR: (throwing G.I. out of his chair) Get up, get moving.

SCUM: (to the bewildered G.I.) You stand you lose yer squatter's rights, you know.

PUBLIC: And God knows we been in Indo-China long enough to have earned them... Hey, easy on that scalpel.

CUTTER: Just trimming yer left nipple. It's bigger than the one with rights. Some nights I do a little more than just trimming the rights. -The pastey.- (SLICER hands CUTTER a pink pastey)

HANNA: (scattering tacks on the chair at the right edge of the table) Sit down before you drop, soldier boy.

VICTOR: (as G.I. stares down at the tacks) Shall I hel---

HANNA: No! you just stay where you are. You've done enough. Of nothing. It's time for you to listen now. (smacking G.I.'s face, once, twice, thrice) I said, sit down!

G.I.: (swaying, bleary eyed) You want the book?...

HANNA: (furious) I read that book!! -sit down.

(HANNA kicks G.I.'s shins with a vicious karati blow and he buckles into the tack-strewn chair. VICTOR sits simultaneously in the chair G.I. vacated. G.I. starts up for a moment when he feels the thumb tacks, then resettles quietly. He puts his hand under his seat, lifting his thigh slightly, subtly, and

searches about for a moment. He comes up with a single thumb tack which he slowly places in his mouth and sucks as if it were a toothpick. The torture trio steps up in ghouliness.)

HANNA: Chinese Heaven protect the working girl! What unpromising material.

G.I.: I dunno know. My brain washer thought I had a real future in Oriental Lit.

SCUM: (bored into somnolence) Glit did he say....

HANNA: Silence: I will do the talking until we go on the air. You will answer all questions to the letter of the re-instructions you have received; failure to respond responsibly will result in immediate infliction of sensory stimuli insuring you do so, after which cooperation you will be removed from the premises and dragged across burning bomb-sites to a premises whereat you will be treated to more unusual re-instructions until such temporality in the muddlemind of Western man as when you have been enlightened enough to respond without paradox as reconstructed. You have no choice! You will come to the sum same sooner or later. For you, G.I., better sooner than later. -Now, act natural, just relax and be yourself.

G.I.: That's dumb. Who else could I be?

HANNA: Silence, you insignificant slipper on the slither of a Christian God over the shods of His holocausted domain! -We're on the air! Hit it, you canaries!

(HANNA switches on a red bulb on the table and there are other red light effects to indicate the radio show has begun. VICTOR draws his chair up to the table, SCUM slips off his torture rack and rushes to the table, CUTTER and SLICER roll PUBLIC down to just behind HANNA, and VICTOR, HANNA, SCUM, CUTTER, SLICER, PUBLIC, and MEMBER burst into the program's theme song, a conglomerate of unmatched voices and music adding up to a torture G.I. never dreamt he'd be subjected to:)

G.I.: Hammammm, if Mohammed won't go to the red light district, the red light district'll come to him...

THE SONG: Broadcast from our bamboo shack,  
We gonna slice it up, we gonna stomp 'n hack:  
The best ends up on the cutting room floor  
But shows where it's at crying "More! more! more!"  
It's the FM S-M Sextet time:  
Got a chain, got a whip, got a missing rhyme....

HANNA: (purring into the mike on the tail of the fading music as VICTOR tosses SCUM back onto his torture rack) Good evening Mr. and Mrs. America and all the ships at the China Sea. This is your blockaded informer, Hanoi Hanna, bringing you a program of

whimsey and fact for men, including the latest news developments followed five seconds later by a comprehensive commentary from the magazine of the identical nomenclature, boxing the compass liberally north northeast a liberal analysis meant to rest light and comforting on the rednecks of Red Square.

G.I.: (mumbling, puzzled) Square rednecks?...

HANNA: Red runs the river of Yankee blood and on it are set little toy sails bearing the message of a reviolated Barbara who bleeds for you a purer strain into the stream you have polluted with the ignorance of your deaths. The East has sooooooooooooo much time. Time, as in Lady Murasaki Shikabu's mentality,

G.I.: (Kabuki growl) Murasaki Shikabu???

HANNA: you will recall, moves so slow it doesn't move at all. Yet move your lives on and out of existence, the existence you dreamt was yours by birth, farmers in a Iowa cornfield, ranchers on an olive oil grease splattered pan handle, counter boys serving straw, soap, soap scrubbed necks on a Saturday night and strawberry sodas to Lana Turner who sits forever at your soda counter waiting to be discovered.

SCUM: Think if I sat forever at a soda counter I'd be discovered?

PUBLIC: If ya blew some grass while you were sitting there I imagine you'd be.

HANNA: Have you never dreamt of going back home, lonely and lost, private, how private is it in a fox hole, dreamt I say because that is as close to home, dreaming, dreaming, that you will ever come. Unless, of course, you run off now.

G.I.: (mumbling) Run off at the mouth...

HANNA: Run off now, run off now, or forever shoulder the onus of leaving it to your black Saint Barbara, saint of artillery and soldiers, gunsmiths and napalm-sprayers, firemen and General Electric Motors - the patron saint of all of these and even that, to repent for the murders that you have made. And hasn't she enough to repent for will take up her time for the better half of eternity ---

PUBLIC: Which better half is about how long yer speech'll run.

HANNA: without the addition of the damage that you, private, killing, personally do?

VICTOR: Black, was she? Good old Saint Barbara?

- HANNA: For those who find beauty in a brow of Egypt.
- G.I.: I know her: she was the daughter of a pagan merchant who cut off her head when she declared the Faith.
- HANNA: Which merchant was immediately struck down and killed by the lightning and thunder of the Lord.
- G.I.: (squashed between HANNA and VICTOR) And for which miracle of the Lord's vengeance Barbara was canonized.
- SCUM: (Yiddish accent) Could ya drop dead? Under a bed I have to lay to hear a Sunday sermon.
- PUBLIC: Under that bed you're laying for some reason.
- VICTOR: Didn't they de-saint her last year along with George and Christopher and all them?
- HANNA: (genuinely interested, as at a cocktail party) Did they?
- G.I.: Why so nuff, I remember the whole mess: they claimed she was a saint of a God of Vengeance and that don't sit easy with the Church right now. I don't sit easy either with all these tacks up my ass.
- HANNA: (to VICTOR across the squash of G.I., very strong) If the Church can de-saint a saint, thereby admitting that it was once in error, on what grounds does your Church claim to be ever correct? Must not the Ultimate Dictum be above suspicion infallible?
- G.I.: (struggling to get his face between the two conversers) Don't sweat it, honey, they is. They took her back, didn't they? they re-sainted her.
- VICTOR: (dead serious) Along with George and Christopher and all them?
- G.I.: Why sho nuff. The Church pasted Barbara's beheaded head back on her shoulders where it belongs. -Wha'd you say about making Barbara shoulder the onus of my murders in Indo-China? If she can shoulder her own head after all that taking it off and putting it back on, that black bitch kin shoulder anything.
- HANNA: Enough of these sophistic circumventions! You Yankee oversexeds have learned a White House lingo allows you to say black when you mean white, peace when you mean war, and God when you mean genocide. ...And Hanna's nightmare consists in knowing that you mean what you say .... It is time for ---
- VICTOR: (enthusiastic) Our song?
- HANNA: The song later. I misplaced my earplugs. Right now

it is time for a word from the Silent Majority. Roll him over to the mike, guys. He looks ready to burst his last opened vein with the venom of all the evil of his investor's ways within him we haven't found an outlet for as yet. -Ya could gag on those prepositional clauses...

SLICER: (rolling the parrot stand toward the table with CUTTER's help) If he actually confesses is the exquisiteness of his tortures lessened?

HANNA: Presumably.

CUTTER: If not altogether dispensed with. Depends on the explicitness of his confessions. Drat.

SLICER: (holding the mike up to PUBLIC who squirms slightly within his chains) Speak directly into the honeycomb mouth; use the same even tone. Don't cough, swallow, or spit: it picks up everything.

PUBLIC: I wish to confess: I ain't no Cardinal Spellman, but I can flex my muscles and feel my Spiro as well as any mother morth of the Mason-Dixon. I ain't no cardinal, but I know something about parrots and I can spell, man, as well as I can read any rot the random house or groove press prints on the eternal mystery, wit, wisdom, and erotica of the East. The parrot's beak looks something like a disappointed pecker, fizzling out, it quartermoons down to within thirty-two miles of our beer juggling boys in the sanctuary of Saigon, we are in Cambodia because of the sanctuaries of the diminutive ones in the disappointed pecker. Peck, peck, pecking order of the military established orgy, defoliation vernal equal knox gelatin celebration, and all other generally good times are had over the upside-down corpses of the water buffaloes with cardinals and parrots pecking on their Heaven-pointing non-kosher hooves, hooves that only yesternight were ploughing through the rice wine paddies' puddles' piss. I love orgies and other competitive sports! America is founded on the principle of competition and if Laos can out-compete Cambodia for our intervention so much the more hair on their depilatoried crotches for them! I mean a weeded garden is groovable kicks for a single night in the brothel of Bangkok but, man! two years a bangin' that hairless bottom 'n ya start feelin' like yer movin' in on some pederast's territory, the forbidden right or left to the Plain of Jars. Them bushless chicks looks like they're eight years old! We might've carried this defoliation bit a bit too far.

HANNA: Please to find other metaphors for the renunciation of your capitalist mistakes: we have the FCC



regulations to contend with.

PUBLIC: Pardon the color I give to my points, M'am, but we folk on the bottom of the Dixie cup are plain spoke and without prejudice, we color the shots like we sees them. And we are ready to shoot it out in Thailand, Facist Burma, frozen Tibet, and in our marriage of convenience Sikkim if we has to and kill that cook, Hope Cook, if Uncle Sam eats supper that far up by Everest. Shoot it out! and make a loud noise unto the Lord for we be tired of being silent and the majority rules don't it? I been thinkin' about Manchuria, now there's a candidate for McCarthy's investigation, and Mongolia, what about Mongolia, if Russia don't want it and they's had long enough to make up their head, shouldn't we be movin' on in? He who hesitates is opting for some more guerrilla war, we forge in now and we've got an open field, can fight right out in the open same as the redcoat British used to and be old fashioned respectable same as them British still is beyond every blitz and recalcitrant letting go of colony after commonwealth after puppetship after possession after --- O Lord! that's all I ask for - a little respectability, a little open plain dealing so's I can hold my head up high in the cup of Your paternal condoning con-job!!

HANNA: Con-job! - that's it, he's confessed. His Christian God and all Its saintly flunkies are perpetrating a vicious con-job on his head, leading him and his fellow minutemen by a Holy Hand into the demolition of Its pagan competitors. Con-job: that's exact! He's confessed. Take him away!

PUBLIC: But wait a minuteman, I ain't finished my confession!

HANNA: Ah so - then continue his torture the better to bouse the color and clarity of the which he'll spit out that's yet still lodged to prick and sting him. Take him away I say! Refine your techniques upstage.

CUTTER: (rolling the parrot stand back upstage left with SLICER's help) Good; I was just getting into something that'll really make him come into the cup and wafer of his Martian God.

SLICER: He'll see that God plain as the nose on his face, assuming, that is, we don't decide to wittle a bit off that excessive beak.

PUBLIC: Hey, ya don't hear me layin' into the way you two lovelies look.

SCUM: With a mug like yours, hippy re-public, I doubt you could afford it.

VICTOR: Ya took them words right outta my mouth, Scume.

SCUM: No plume in my hat for that:- takin' words outta your mouth, Victor, comes almost second-nature to a guy what's flat on his back.

HANNA: (quickly, as VICTOR rises belligerently, cutting him off with all the hyped-up enthusiasm of a late night disc-jockey: directly into the mike) Mr. and Mrs. America, the FM S-M Sextet!!

(SCUM hurriedly scrambles off his torture rack and rushes to join the group: HANNA, VICTOR, SCUM, PUBLIC, CUTTER, SLICER, and MEMBER, all squashed together around the mike, immediately burst into raucous caterwauling; HANNA puts plugs in her ears:)

THE SONG: Saint of Thunder and of Clap,  
Saint of Lightning and Mishap:  
Saint of Sado-Masochists art Thou!  
On broken knee to Thee we bow.

Bar-bar-a! Bar-bar-a!  
From barbaric origin  
To the Christian ph'lasophy  
Vi-o-lence did violent win!

Saint of the Sacramental cup,  
Saint of the Flesh at which we sup:  
Saint of Sado-Masochists art Thou!  
Our minds to stretch we Thee endow.

Bar-bar-a! Bar-bar-a!  
From barbaric origin  
To the Christian ph'lasophy  
Vi-o-lence did violent win!

Saint of the Peacock's rainbow dye,  
Saint of the Phoenix resurrect high:  
Saint of Sado-Masochists art Thou!  
Thou sanction us to bomb Kwangchow.

Bomb Kwangchow! Bomb Kwangchow!  
That's Canton in China's south:  
But an hour by air we vow  
From the bomb-sites Thou allow'th!

Bomb Kwangchow! Bomb Kwangchow!  
That's Canton in China's south:  
But an hour by air we vow  
From the bomb-sites Thou allow'th!

HANNA: (into the mike) Ah-ah, don't touch that dial out there in radioland,

SCUM: I should think they're all too paralyzed out there to do that.

HANNA: cause we'll be back in just a moment with our special guest of the evening, G.I. Joseph: to us, as I'm sure

he will be to you, just a guy called Joe.

G.I.: (ashamed) Call me Ishmael. I got a mopey dick.

(The group is taken aback. MEMBER rises from his chair at the left edge of the table and seeks refuge by the cluster at the parrot stand. SCUM squats in MEMBER's chair with relief. HANNA pulls the plugs from her ears in a fury:)

HANNA: Did you dare say something?!

G.I.: It ain't what I said, it's what I done. Sorry.

HANNA: What do you mean, you spineless spastic ---

G.I.: Guy gotta keep busy at solitaire in solitaire: go outta yer mind if ya don't. I was willin' to jist sit here 'n read, but that wasn't good enough for you members.

HANNA: So you --- this ruins everything!

VICTOR: (taking his chair from the table in disgust and bringing it back to its original position by the steel structure; sitting in it there) You's a two-time loser, Hanna, lost two birds in one evening. It must be the Orient's night off.

HANNA: The night's not over yet. The God he has in mind resurrected, didn't He?

G.I.: Like Barbara's phoenix from the burning bomb-sites ---

HANNA: Fools! Hanna has time, like the Orient so much time ---

G.I.: Pardon, Madame, but it is protocol to inform your listening audience of the time intervals at which you broadcast the news - so's they knows when next to tune in, Madame, thank you.

HANNA: (upset, annoyed) The news is broadcast every hour on the hour. Bulletins are broadcast at one - in the morning.

SCUM: I'll set my alarm.

HANNA: And now, Joe, I'm sure our audience is all on pins and needles to hear what you have to say.

G.I.: (smiling broadly) If they was on tacks we could use ESP, wouldn't have to say nothin' at all....

HANNA: First of all, how do you find the weather here?

G.I.: (examining his trousers' thigh) Sticky?

HANNA: Sticky? What is this Americanism?

G.I.: Gosh, you know, creamin' in my pants:- it ain't the heat, it's the Hanna.

HANNA: (pleased) Then I have made points! even if once removed. Twice, proved. -Hear that, Victor?

VICTOR: (unconvinced) A Hanoi Hanna of the mind?

SCUM: The mind's eye.

HANNA: Exactly! Now you boys are getting the idea. Hanna's hope as well as her strength is to be found in her woodpecking away at the vivid fantasy life these unfortunate American provincials have been forced to cinematize into in escaping from their wouldn't-satisfy-a-dodo reality.

PUBLIC: I think that wouldn't-satisfy-a-dodo is another dig at you, Scum.

SCUM: It's a dig, but it ain't a cue. Dig?

HANNA: (laughing) You mean you couldn't dignify that triple gerund with a witless come-back.

SCUM: Lemme sleep, will you? Gerunds(!), the dummy -- what does she know about gerunds? A gerund is a verbal noun having all the ---

MEMBER: (worried about his chair) You stayin' here permanent?

SCUM: Temporary. I'm a transient, cheaper by the week.

MEMBER: Where ya transientin' to?

SCUM: To my torture rack, soon as Public and Victor set it back up in the back where it belongs.

VICTOR: I ain't settin' nothin' back. I'm on my way forward.

SCUM: Fool to think there is a forward. Thought is a circle been spinning for five thousand years, it repeats itself with all the dependability of a Tibetan prayer wheel.

CUTTER: (to SLICER, indicating a huge funnel to be employed in the Drink Water-Drink Urine torture on PUBLIC) The "Funnel of Love," please.

SLICER: (handing CUTTER the funnel) If we could just once fit Scum through the funnel, he'd come out a shape not nearly so rotund and subconsciously disposed to wheeling around repeating himself.

SCUM: Pure sophistic hoping aghast hope.

HANNA: And so now, Joseph, why don't you tell our all-ears

audience what you think continuously about while frigging, a, frittering away your middle of the road existence here in par conséquent sticky country?

G.I.: Home -- right?

HANNA: Right round robin. What is your home like?

G.I.: Well, did ya ever hear of Truth Or Conséquent, Aridzona?

HANNA: Yes.

G.I.: Well, that ain't it. That's this. I hail from Twin Peaks, Iowa.

HANNA: Is that near Paris, Illinois?

G.I.: No, it's closer to Sodom, Mass.

HANNA: Solemn mass?

G.I.: Skip it.

HANNA: We skip nothing! I asked you what Twin Peaks is like, and why you yearn so for it!

G.I.: Well, it's like this: at Twin Peaks there is, as you come in off the open freedom of the road, a peak directly to your left and if ya turn about face real sharp, you'll sight a peak directly to your right ---

HANNA: Which looks identical to the one on your left, is veritably its twin, n'est-ce pas?

G.I.: How'd ya guess, Hanna?

HANNA: No guessing in it: Americans think they always have to make a choice between two twins. They think there is a choice.

VICTOR: (assured) There's only consolidation.

G.I.: (suddenly asserting his rights) And I yearn so for it because of the peacefulness of making a choice between the two twins:- it's sick of one and half dozing of the other.

HANNA: Silence, bird brain!

G.I.: Whadda ya mean, bird brain! And whadda ya mean, silence?? -Ain't this a radio program?

HANNA: You will tell what you were told to ---

G.I.: Jesus! it's like somebody tellin' ya ya talk too

much over the telephone. What the hell else can ya do?

SCUM: Ever hear of Pinter? Or not-hear Pinter?

PUBLIC: The matinees.

HANNA: (resuming, pursing with stepped-up direction) Your beautiful house under the shaded elms ---

G.I.: My house, if anything, is under the wistaria shrub.

HANNA: (a sentimental routine, the entire club humming behind her, sentimentally) Under the shaded Oriental wistaria shrub, with Mother there in the door, Father also there - all the friends that I knew, named saints engowned in blue!

VICTOR: (insightfully) I'm beginning to get the picture.

HANNA: Well, I'm waiting, what about these things?

G.I.: I dunno. You're the one who's good at telling stories. And they is stories.

HANNA: It's your home town story. It's your life story. The girl you left behind - what about her?

G.I.: Well, to begin with, right now I'm glad I left her behind.

PUBLIC: Pussy is preferable.

G.I.: I'll tell ya, Hanna, Alice was a matter of opinion. See, she weren't nothin' like you. Fat 'n dull, fulla corn 'n apple pie 'n the wide blue sky I seen every day of my life. I used to lay in the hay stack a lot, with a straw in my mouth, and dream. (eyeing HANNA and resuming his compulsive habit) Uncle Sam is smart. Now I jist have to look across the table.

VICTOR: G.I. Joseph swings across the crescent moon from the horn of terror to the horn of total indifference. He never finds the middle mark, he opts for the boring but more dealable indifference. I take the crescent moon by the horns, halve it with a clean crack, and create a cusp.

HANNA: I hate to be brusque, but that is quite enough!

G.I.: (first working up, innocently) That's enough?

HANNA: (her anger mounting) You lie!

G.I.: Do I?

HANNA: Your Alice is beautiful! your home is beautiful!  
your home town of Twin Precipices is beautif---

SCUM: (as Charlie Chan) So now they're precipices....

HANNA: your mother is beautiful! your father is beautiful!  
your friends crowded into the door are beautiful!  
beautiful! beautiful! beautiful! waiting there! ---  
and you are beau--- you are lonely! lonely! lonely!  
to see them all as they really are, you are sick  
and sticky of your mind's eye and want nothing more  
than to leave this sticky jungle forever!!!

G.I.: If you say so.

HANNA: It is not I, but you who say so!

G.I.: Yeah, but you put it so much more usefully than I  
could. You put purpose and inclination in it. I  
put the tacks a bit to one side.... on some days....

HANNA: Enough!!

G.I.: Enough? I can go ---

HANNA: (as G.I. rushes from his chair) Stop! Stop! -Victor!

(VICTOR leaps from his chair and catches G.I. downstage center  
where he deals him a cruel blow in the stomach. G.I. doubles  
up and crumbles to the floor. VICTOR rabbit-punches him on  
the back of the neck. HANNA puffs furiously, shaking.)

VICTOR: The program ain't terminated, Joe!

G.I.: It will be: your ratings are probably lower than ever.

VICTOR: Like it in the neck again?

G.I.: No - please! - my neck is stiff.

VICTOR: Then put it back in your pants.

HANNA: (lowering the mike to G.I.'s level on the floor)  
And so, now, quickly, to resume:-

G.I.: Can't you do the news first - m' zipper's stuck.

HANNA: We will tell you the news if you tell us first about  
your anxieties, elaborating at length on the quaint  
suspicions you have about just who is seeing your  
Alice home: who is warming her over... You can't  
kid yourself that much:- yet you still hold onto her  
still waiting for you, do you, Joseph?

G.I.: She don't have much choice. Anyhow, I couldn't  
care less if she's waitin' or not. My kinda luck  
'n she jist would be waitin'... Mmmmmmmmm... maybe

if I stayed here longer.... maybe another four or five years....

- HANNA: (totally out of control) NO!!! NO! NO! That is exactly what you musn't say ---
- VICTOR: Shut up, Hanna! I think Joe is going to stay here another four or five years. He's in bad need of re-instructing on how to conduct himself on FM.
- G.I.: We can't all be stars.
- HANNA: (recouping her glam) Tant pis pour toi!
- PUBLIC: (his parrot stand rolling uncontrollably downstage left; HANNA swinging the mike quickly over to him) We interrupt this program to bring you a special news bulletin --
- ALL: Sssssssssshhhhhh.....
- PUBLIC: Word just in from Wall Street:- before closing the Dow Jones Averages voted that as part of their plan to back the book industry by issuing paperbacks, The Wisdom of China, And of India, will shortly be re-issued in paperback form!!
- G.I.: Gee! I coulda saved six cents.
- PUBLIC: (being viciously rolled back upstage by a CUTTER and SLICER with murder on their minds) And now, our regular programming will be resumed as we return you to your local station....
- G.I.: (grabbing the mike, standing alone centerstage) Listen, I have actually found a part I really like: (reading from the book as the entire cast stares at him incredulously:)  
 "Palaces have beauty against a set of hovels.  
 Goodness is apparent only when the backdrop is black.  
 Being requires non-being to germinate.  
 Difficult and easy are phases of achievement.  
 Long needs short just to be measured.  
 High must relate to low.  
 Sound tones next to the voice give rise to the  
 recognition of harmony.  
 Therefore, the Wise Man works by being still.  
 He teaches the Doctrine without using words.  
 Everything comes up before him; he never turns away  
 from it.  
 He animates all things; he appropriates no thing.  
 He earns, he does not own.  
 He never lays claim to credit; therefore credit  
 can never be taken from him."
- HANNA: (solemnly, evenly) Take him away, Victor, and torture him until you yourself drop from exhaustion



or are sucked into succor from some other source.  
Hanna has had enough.

VICTOR: (laying rough hands on G.I.) Let's go, smartypants.

G.I.: (being dragged to the steel structure) Hey, hold on!  
I have a vote same as the rest of the clubmembers!

HANNA: You cast it, Joseph. You're off the air now.

SCUM: (now standing upstage center; deeply moved) How  
marvelous: he must be a maso after me own heart:  
opted for the ultimate, for feeling....

(VICTOR chains G.I. to the left side of the structure; he slashes him with a barbed wire and rubs alcohol into the cuts. Then he begins to bury long needles in G.I.'s arms, legs, and ribs. PUBLIC, still being tortured, is now nearly dead.)

G.I.: (weeping) Lord God, I have given all, that I might  
feel one single sensation, however small its flame,  
burning into me the knowledge that I am alive....  
Lord God, Thy servant calls.

(HANNA, sitting on the table and caressing the mike, begins her speech with exacting sensuality, perfect control; as she speaks a great light grows upstage left: in its heart is SAINT BARBARA, dressed in flowing blue veils, holding a peacock feather in one hand and a tiny three-windowed tower in the other. She appears suspended, is actually standing on an invisible staired estrade some 4 feet high. Her black skin seems almost purple under the blue gown and her calm, smiling face beams dazzlingly: the enlargening light gives the strange impression of emanating from her eyes. Everyone except HANNA, becomes imminently aware of BARBARA's epiphany; some kneel.)

HANNA: The sado-masochistic game of war, poor soldier boy,  
your sit-at-home Hannibals and Alexanders desensitized  
you into; sailing you uniformly and in uniforms into;  
flying you to, in great birds of fray, the eagle of  
prey, the Yankee Eagle.... Uniforms:- the most  
necessary, the most associated-with badge of the  
sado-masochist, his need of the uniform just to sight,  
to recognize, so insensitive to detail is he, detail  
by which the remaining sane build to generalities,  
the generality here being the almost universal  
condemnation in our contemporary decomposition of  
what you do.... Some say the desensitized have  
chosen, some year lost in their infancy's own memory,  
never to feel again. But the sage knows that no  
such choice is parceled the animal of man. -And  
Hanna holds even her Haven-Heaven apart from the  
piteousness of such a self-deception.... The  
whole play's a power-play.....

(The light surrounding SAINT BARBARA intensifies spectacularly,

reaching all the corners of the stage. Holy music begins to play and BARBARA sings, a clear, compelling soprano:)

BARBARA: Christian soldiers waging war  
On Lord Christ's competitor!  
Warrior Popes embattled for  
Oneness -- One excelsior!

Peace shall follow on your fray  
Staged to give to Christ His day,  
Deadly weapons hid away,  
Painless pastimes to portray.

King of Peace! for us portray  
Pastimes perfect, pause, and play.

Peace! peace! peace! pea---

(As BARBARA reaches for a sopranic crescendo, her voice alters into the terrifying sound of artillery fire; machine-gun staccato sputters out of her mouth and, finally, as she ovals her bewildered, trembling lips, the deafening explosion of bomb after bomb pours uncontrollably from her. She contorts, flexes, and wages an awesome struggle within her own body to suppress the holocaust that has bloomed from her throat, and finally triumphs, the battlesounds subsiding and petering out, allowing her to reach for and attain three pure, perfect notes. As she returns to her original, immobile smiling stance, VICTOR reaches for the huge fireman's axe that is bound to the front of the steel structure. He intones staring into the audience.)

VICTOR: I need... I need....

BARBARA: (softly, kindly, a saint's voice) Have you a need, Victor?

VICTOR: Oh, yes, Saint Barbara. The need at least to be Victor.

BARBARA: (pause; then, kindly) O my son, you would not ---

VICTOR: (rushing up the steps of the estrade with the axe in his hand) So it's peacock, then, neither cardinal nor parrot, but peacock's pride for which they died....

(VICTOR twists the peacock feather out of BARBARA's hand and lets it fall to the floor. She smiles at him and, of her own accord, drops the miniature three-windowed tower. It clanks on the estrade. VICTOR pulls her slightly forward, revealing a large wicker basket till now concealed by BARBARA's gown, and forces her to kneel beside it with her head over its open top. He raises the axe high into the air, and then brings it down cleanly beheading her. Her head drops into the basket, her body slumps over on the estrade. The holy light dwindles back into itself slowly dimming most of the stage. Only HANNA is visible now under a harsh overhead striking the table.)

She holds the mike close to her mouth as she speaks; her lines lead her into the gentleness of absolute confidence; her tone as well as her feeling continually elevates until it freezes, as it were, in a kind of forever. The overhead softens imperceptibly before beginning its slow fade.)

HANNA: How well your pentagon has always geographed the theatres of your wars:- in a Havanna of Cecelia Valdez where you might pick the poinsettia from the auburn circles a senorita's ear, in a Paris of Mademoiselle Fifidon a Berlin of Mai Britt where you might reamaze with all the wonder of a babe the miracle of chocolate, soap bars, and a single carton of cigarettes. Reamaze after the pall of their always appearing. And now are you fixed after a kiosk under the scrim of Madama Butterfly, geography's farthest, an extreme as fine as any, no, the finest of all I fancy, if one had as one has to find a fancy in the young soldier's sleep where he must imagine for as long as his pentagon imagines that he probably must. Hanoi Hanna. In Terry and the Pirates, the Dragon Lady, Madame Chiang Ky Chek, Ngo Ding Nhu, Tokyo Rose, Saigon Sally, even the Tiger Woman.... Like every woman, mother, sister, wife, Hanna has lost; like every woman Hanna is loss lost in her use.... Your love looks to love the world in the ways its progenitor can not:- and a Hanoi Hanna is born, is cultured, is set in a sundial brooch with needles circumferencing out until they indifferent away like the sign of the rising sun. I am always, inutility in myself, inutilly frozen for me, imaged, exploited, waxed.... I am the Always to eternal, the eternal woman made by men.... imaginary; immortal.....

5/6/70.  
5/31/70.

THE NUTCRACKER  
IN THE LAND OF NUTS  
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THE NUTCRACKER  
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THE NUTCRACKER  
IN THE LAND OF NUTS  
a play by Ronald Tavel

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Characters:

NUTCRACKER  
MACK DONALDS  
HACK DONALDS  
SEVEN-HEADED MOUSE:  
GLUTTONY  
GREED  
SLOTH  
ENVY  
FIB  
PRIDE  
DESPAIR  
FRED  
MOTHER  
FATHER  
JANE  
DROSSELMEIER  
ANGEL  
NATHAN

CADILLAC  
ERIKA MOUSE  
GRAVEL GERTIE DOLL  
BLUE GRETA GARBO SLIPPER  
GHOUL  
BANDAGE  
HARD HEART of the Seven-Headed Mouse  
WALL OF CHINA  
ARNOLD BLACK-EGG  
BEETLE  
JAGUAR  
VALERIE  
(CHRISTMAS TREE)

Suggested doublings:

NUTCRACKER  
JANE  
DROSSELMEIER  
MOTHER, ERIKA MOUSE, BLUE GRETA GARBO SLIPPER  
MACK DONALDS, THE BANDAGE, ARNOLD BLACK-EGG  
HACK DONALDS, THE HARD HEART  
FATHER, GHOUL, THE BEETLE  
FRED, THE JAGUAR  
THE ANGEL, VALERIE, THE GRAVEL GERTIE DOLL  
NATHAN  
THE CADILLAC, THE WALL OF CHINA  
THE SEVEN HEADS as voices suit the music  
(THE CHRISTMAS TREE)

A music score has been written for this play by  
Simeon Westbrooke.

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Christmas Eve. The stage is dimly lit. Around a gigantic and strangely decorated Christmas tree is assembled a heap of packaged gifts, among them The Summer Dull Drums, MACK and HACK DONALDS, two toys wearing chefs hats whose rotound stomachs (or spare tires) are formed into drums; and a tall NUTCRACKER, an American soldier.

A scratching noise, the NUTCRACKER sits up.

NUTCRACKER: Listen, listen, did you hear it?  
A scratching sound, a little twit:  
Pawing, I think, and squeaking,  
Clawing and tweaking:-  
Where there's such a scratching sound  
Mice abound!

MACK & HACK: We heard it, we heard it,  
It's all around -  
It's a kind of scraping sound,  
It's under the floor,  
It's in the ground:-  
Where there's such a scratching sound  
Mice abound!

NUTCRACKER: A Nutcracker am I,  
I only personify  
A living and loved G.I.:  
You see, I'm just a toy  
And though I try and try -  
On that you can rely -  
I'm not a much-loved boy:  
A Nutcracker am I.

MACK: Get the fast food!  
Bring the junk!  
The mice will plunk  
Right down upon it!  
And bit by bit,  
While eating it,  
They'll thrash and gasp,

Gargle and rasp -  
 And by this device  
 We'll do in the mice!

HACK: Bring the sugar and salt,  
 Franks, buns, and malt,  
 Chewing gum and soda pop:  
 Hurry up, skip to it, hop!  
 Bacon and lox,  
 French fries in the box,  
 Pudding and jelly  
 To swell up their belly -  
 And by this device  
 We'll do in the mice!

MACK & HACK: We're Mack and Hack Donalds,  
 The Summer Dull Drums --

MACK: I'm Mack, he's Hack --

HACK: I'm Hack, he's Mack --

MACK & HACK: We're Mack and Hack Donalds,  
 The Summer Dull Drums,  
 And on our big tums  
 We mix and prepare  
 An edible snare  
 For boys or girls,  
 Mice, men, or churls  
 To eat -  
 But it's a cheat!  
 So beware! beware!  
 We're Mack and Hack Donalds,  
 The Summer Dull Drums,  
 You'll see how the junk food will swell up their tums!  
 And bums!

(A huge and hideous SEVEN-HEADED MOUSE digs its way up through  
 the roots of the Christmas tree, causing it to tilt and sway.)

SEVEN-HEADED  
 MOUSE: Squeek, squawk, squiggle,  
 Look at all those delicious toys,  
 Granola girls and whole-wheat boys:  
 Let's eat 'em up!  
 Squeek, squawk, squiggle,  
 Make 'em squirm, make 'em jiggle!  
 And eat 'em up!

FIRST HEAD: But they call me Gluttony  
 And don't I see  
 The kinda food looks good to me:  
 Hot dogs, candy, and white whipped creams,  
 And ketchup and ices that fill my dreams!  
 And there's French fries - they make me drool!

MACK: That's Gluttony - what a fool!



SECOND HEAD: My name's indiscriminate Greed,  
 On almost any scrap I'll feed,  
 Doesn't matter if I've need  
 Or not, I'll eat, eat, eat:  
 And greasy food to me's a treat!

HACK: That bore's insatiable Greed:  
 To the table he'll stampede:  
 He never has enough -  
 And that's too bad, that's tough  
 On him!

THIRD HEAD: Me, people call cool-headed Sloth -  
 Meaning "laziness," by my troth!  
 I'm too lazy to eat good food  
 And I'm seldom in a thinking mood.  
 Besides, although I'm sluggish Sloth,  
 I don't think junk food'll stunt my growth.

NUTCRACKER: (feeding the fast food to FIRST HEAD)  
 Then eat, eat, ess, fress,  
 Sugar, salt, the whole mess;  
 Baloney, salami - it's on the house!  
 Eat, you Seven-Headed Mouse!  
 Eat, Gluttony - to stay alive!  
 Seven heads ---  
 (the FIRST HEAD dies)  
 only six survive!

(feeding the SECOND HEAD)  
 So eat, ess, fress, eat:  
 Breakfast cereal - it's sweet!  
 Eat, you Greedy-Head ---  
 There:-  
 (the SECOND HEAD dies)  
 dead, quite dead!

And drink, drink, drink,  
 You sleepy Head o' name o' Sloth,  
 This gets you and your nerves up both:-  
 It's coffe, tea, and ovaltine,  
 And cocoa squeezed in-between:-  
 Drink, drink - it'll give you drive!  
 Seven heads ---  
 (the THIRD HEAD dies)  
 only four are alive!

FOURTH HEAD: They call me Envy, green-eyed Envy,  
 Cause I am jealous of every one I see:-  
 And even though this did them in,  
 Why should I alone be thin  
 And not partake of all this food?  
 That would just make me brood.  
 I'll eat it.

NUTCRACKER: Do.  
 (the FOURTH HEAD dies)

FIFTH HEAD: I am called the Head of Fib,  
I lie all life to grave from crib.  
And I'd have better lyrics if they'd let me ad lib.

NUTCRACKER: You lie!  
You die!  
(striking off the FIFTH HEAD with a bayonet)

SIXTH HEAD: (fixing the ribbon on her elaborate neck)  
Me, men call the sin of Pride.  
These five dead heads I take in stride:  
I'm too proud to learn from them,  
My lovely neck's a fine strong stem.  
I let my beauty be my guide.  
What have I to cloak or hide?

NUTCRACKER: Your neck!  
She's a dame, but -  
Oh - what the heck!  
(lopping off the SIXTH HEAD)  
See what comes from being proud?  
Naught that's fit, save for a shroud!

SEVENTH HEAD: And I, the last, am called Despair.  
With six parts dead, how can I care?  
Nothing excites or inspires me,  
The last live branch on a withered tree...  
(looks downcast and dreary and dies)

NUTCRACKER: What a dope -  
He gave up hope:  
And hence his living head  
Just like that fell dead.  
As simple as that.  
-What an unusual hat!  
(tying the SEVENTH HEAD's bonnet over his helmet)

NUTCRACKER &  
MACK & HACK: Victory! Victory!  
The Seven-Headed Mouse of Sin  
Has been done-in  
By its own faults:  
Ice cream and chocolate malts,  
Sweets and franks,  
Treats and pranks,  
Pride, envy and gluttony  
And, most of all, giving up, you see!  
Victory! Victory!

NUTCRACKER: Sssssh! Listen, the humans are coming. Back to  
our boxes and packages.

HACK: But shouldn't we sweep up the remains of the  
mouse-monster first?

NUTCRACKER: Too late!

MACK: But they'll smell a mouse!

HACK: Shut up! Get in!

MACK: (looking worriedly at the Christmas tree) That tree's precariously balanced...

(The TOYS hasten into their respective packages, helping each other to re-fix their ribbons. Enter MOTHER, FATHER, JANE, FRED, and DOCTOR DROSSELMEIER.)

FRED: The presents - at last we can open our Christmas presents! I can't wait!

MOTHER: But you'll have to wait. You know we never open our gifts until after the party.

FRED: But I've waited so long, mother!

FATHER: Fred, you're not even being polite. You stampeded right in here and nearly knocked over your sister.

JANE: And cousin Nat, shouldn't we wait till cousin Nat arrives, first?

FATHER: That's right, Fred, you're in such a hurry that you neglected to wait for Nat. And godfather Drosselmeier's feelings will be hurt for Nat is his nephew.

FRED: (looking at the MOUSE's corpse) What happened to that mouse?

DROSSELMEIER: He ate at a deli and died.

MOTHER: Musicians, let us have music! Come, let us dance.

JANE: Oh, mother, you know I can't dance!

MOTHER: Don't be silly, child, of course you can. Play!

(The BAND plays and MOTHER and FATHER dance. The children sit at the side. DROSSELMEIER amuses himself at the punch bowl.)

JANE: I wonder what Godfather Drosselmeier created for us this Christmas. Fred... don't you wonder what Godfather made for us?

FRED: I know what he made for you.

JANE: What?

FRED: A Gravel Gertie doll.

JANE: Oh, Godfather is going to perform!

DROSSELMEIER: (singing and dancing, tipsy)  
 I'm Drossel... -Drosselmeier,  
 I'm a magician, not a liar,  
 And I'm getting higher and higher  
     On this punch --  
     Should have had lunch  
 Before I started to drink.  
 Never think, never think, I never think.

I make unusual puppets and dolls,  
 Gangster types and molls,  
 Private eyes,  
 Russian spies,  
 And Geishas with parasols.

ALL:           And Geisha girls with parasols!

DROSSELMEIER: Spinning and spinning and spinning about  
 Out of control one night,  
 I set down to work  
 Drunk as a jerk  
 And couldn't get one foot right.

ALL:           He couldn't get one foot right!

DROSSELMEIER: The Nutcracker's foot,  
 Despite what I put  
 In the design,  
 Seems too benign --  
 That thin wooden stick  
 Just doesn't have kick  
 And may fail when it's put to the test.  
 Oops, I'm spinning, I've got to rest.

ALL:           Oops, he's spinning, he's got to rest.

MOTHER:       Poor Jane, I'm afraid for her. She's so slow,  
 so backward, she can hardly walk without  
 tripping and she has no confidence at all.

FATHER:       She is simple. Don't fret, dear. The Good  
 Lord watches over her.

DROSSELMEIER: She is blessed, mother, Jane is blessed in a  
 special way. All simple folk are.

MOTHER:       Oh, look, here comes Nat at last!

(NAT enters, gallantly removing his cloak. He bears an  
 identical resemblance to the NUTCRACKER. A special aura  
 surrounds him. JANE, across the stage, looks at NAT, and  
 in that moment she, too, is enveloped in an aura.)

JANE:          Hello, Nat. Merry Christmas.

NAT:           Merry Christmas, Jane. You look beautiful  
 tonight.

(NAT crosses to centerstage and JANE goes to meet him. An ANGEL in the tree sings and they both dance together while everyone watches in astonishment.)

ANGEL: Beautiful night, magical night,  
Our suffering's light and all seems right  
On a magical night.  
Broken dolls walk and wood puppets talk,  
The wounded are well,  
Dull books sell  
And the plain smile as lovely as stars.  
Angels sing and nothing mars  
A beautiful, magical night.

FRED: Well, now that Nat's finally here, we can open our gifts.

NAT: Hello, Fred.

FRED: Can't stand on ceremony, Nat. Hmm, let's see, here's my present from Godfather Drosselmeier. My name's on it. It's nice and big.

MOTHER: Why, Fred, aren't you going to give Nathan his present first? Where are your manners?

FRED: We got you a white Cadillac, Nat. It's behind the tree. Now can I open my present?

JANE: We got you a white Cadillac, Nat.

NAT: Thank you Fred and Jane.

DROSSELMEIER: Fun with Fred and Jane.

(The white Cadillac is propelled out from behind the tree. FRED opens his package. It is MACK & HACK.)

FRED: What's this? - two fat chefs!

MACK & HACK: Well, we never!

MOTHER: They're counter boys, Fred. They work in a fast food chain.

FRED: What's that supposed to mean?

DROSSELMEIER: Well, you're always hungry, aren't you?

FRED: And what if I am? Just look at their stomachs, looks like they ate up all the food themselves!

MACK & HACK: Well, we never!

JANE: Did somebody say something?

FATHER: Those aren't their stomachs, Fred. They're

drums. You wind them up and they play on those.  
You call them skins.

DROSSELMEIER: Here, let me wind them up for you, Fred.  
(doing so)

MACK & HACK: (singing and drumming on their stomach-drums)  
Hittin' some skin!  
Hittin' skin! sockin' skin!  
Bangin' on skin!  
We ain't fat, we're thin as thin,  
These ain't stomachs, these are skin!  
Hittin' some skin!

FRED: Ugh!

MOTHER: Oh, Godfather Drosselmeier, they're charming!

FRED: I think they're raucous.

FATHER: They're "with it," Fred, very "with it."

JANE: Mother, ~~my~~ my gift to you's a Sacred Heart;  
(See Insert for Page 8.)

DROSSELMEIER: Don't you want to open your gift, Jane?

JANE: May I?

FRED: Oh, boy.

DROSSELMEIER: (undoing the wrapping) Had a little trouble with  
the left leg, didn't seem re-inforced enough, but  
birch is hard to come by these days, good birch,  
and I didn't have quite enough....

FRED: Don't worry, Jane's not likely to notice the  
difference.

FATHER: Why, Fred!

FRED: Why? Cause she's simple-minded.

FATHER: That'll be enough. Oh, look, oh my!

MOTHER: Extraordinary!

(The NUTCRACKER is revealed. Everyone is astonished.)

JANE: How handsome he is!

FRED: Bears a striking resemblance to someone we might  
know, don't he?

Insert for Page 8.

JANE:           Mother, my gift to you's a Sacred Heart;  
                  And Frieda, here's a Belgian petticoat;  
                  Godfather, I found in the bargain mart  
                  This fifties' bug-detector; and I wrote  
                  Out a Christmas gift-certificate  
                  For 14 dollars' worth of tropical fish  
                  For Dad, complete with tank. I think that's it.  
                  Oh, no! I forgot: if it's not too babyish,  
                  Here is a big, stuffed orange tabby cat  
                  For my one and only favorite cousin, Nat!

(MOTHER, FATHER, DROSSELMEIER, and NATHAN receive their gifts  
from JANE with surprise and appreciation, (DROSSELMEIER with  
surprise) and FRIEDA with something less than appreciation.  
Except for the latter, they thank her warmly. The latter  
thanks her coldly.)

DROSSELMEIER: Well, Nathan is my favorite nephew. And sometimes I can't think up original ideas. Not after so many years of original ideas, must have suffered a brain-drain....

MOTHER: But he's beautiful!

FRED: Sure is! And all I got is the Summer Dull Drums.

MOTHER: Hush, don't be ungrateful.

NATHAN: I'm embarrassed.

FRED: I'll bet. I'm furious!

JANE: But if those counter boys are drums, what is this lovely soldier?

DROSSELMEIER: Come, I will show you. Anybody have a nut?

FRED: Well, my sister; will she do?

FATHER: I may have to send you upstairs.

NATHAN: Here is a walnut, uncle.

DROSSELMEIER: Good, thank you.

MOTHER: And here's an almond and a hazelnut. And a betelnut.

DROSSELMEIER: These are fine. Now watch:

(DROSSELMEIER manipulates the NUTCRACKER's legs. The NUTCRACKER sings, dances, and cracks the nuts one by one.)

NUTCRACKER: Quickly, let me have a nut:  
 Around its husk both legs I shut --  
 And crack, crack,  
 I give you back  
 Its kernel good to eat!  
 Now, isn't that a feat?

ALL: Now, isn't that a feat?

FRED: I hope he didn't cheat!

JANE: Oh, I love my Nutcracker! He is so wonderful!  
 Oh, thank you, Godfather Drosselmeier, what a wonderful gift! What a beautiful present!

MOTHER: It is a unique creation, perhaps uniquely inspired.

NATHAN: No, I am altogether unworthy to have been its inspiration.

FATHER: Fred might make your modesty his model. That would be the finest present he could give his parents this Christmas.



- FRED: (coming downstage with a demonaic expression, a Devilish aura envelopping him, changing before us and reciting (not singing) evilly:)  
Modesty, my foot! That Nutcracker's a freak:  
Didn't Drosselmeier say one of his legs is weak?  
Well, the heart of a Seven-Headed rat  
Is harder than a baseball bat!
- (FRED extracts the heart from the mouse's corpse and brings it to DROSSELMEIER who is drinking again and not looking at things too carefully.)
- FRED: Here, Godfather: I have another nut for the Nutcracker to crack.
- DROSSELMEIER: Well, well, well, we are consumming all the little nasties, aren't we? I'll have to switch to the pickled onions.  
(manipulating the NUTCRACKER again)
- NUTCRACKER: Quickly, let me have a nut:  
Around its husk both legs I shut --  
-Oh, that fiendish little Fred  
Gave me something hard and red:  
The mouse's heart -- some joke!  
Now I fear my leg is broke!!
- ALL: Oh, look, his leg is broke!  
Fred played a nasty joke!
- FATHER: Up to bed with you, bad boy, this instant. No more party for you. You have spoiled this night for everyone!
- JANE: No, he hasn't, father. I can mend the Nutcracker's leg. I'll bandage it up.
- MOTHER: I'm afraid that may not be enough, Jane, dear. All of Godfather's creations are very intricate and delicate. A bandage may not do at all.
- DROSSELMEIER: Oh, but do let her try, mother. Her sentiments are correct as they are pure. So who knows what she may do?
- MOTHER: No, Godfather, it is wrong to lead her on and deceive her. The truth is the kindest thing in the end. She, too, must learn to live with what is so, as must we all.
- DROSSELMEIER: But just this night, make an exception. There's time enough for truth tomorrow.
- MOTHER: Only regretful persons think such things. But there's no arguing on Christmas Eve. Then remain a while here, Jane, and administer to your

Nutcracker. But don't be long. We shall ajern to the sitting room to continue the festivities. Be sure to join us there.

JANE: Oh, I shall, mother.

NATHAN: I'll be waiting for you, Jane.

DROSSELMEIER: May I bring along the punch bowl?

(Exit MOTHER, FATHER, FRED, NATHAN and DROSSELMEIER with the bowl of punch. FATHER can be heard reprehending FRED in the hallway. Their shadows play against the walls and ceiling of the hall, somewhat altering the atmosphere, somewhat other-worldly in effect, a bit eery; they are watched by JANE.)

FATHER: You are not to continue onto the sitting room with the others, Fred; you are to go directly to your room.

FRED: Why? Why? Why?

FATHER: Because you don't know how to behave like a human being. Because you don't behave like a human being.

FRED: Why? Why? Why? Why?

FATHER: Because you don't behave like a human being. Because you are not a human being.

JANE: Oh!

FATHER: You are not a human being.

JANE: Oh, dear me. Dear me. Isn't it strange being left all alone with the toys so suddenly..... But I have work to do. Like Clara Barton I must attend to the disabled veterans. Poor, dear Nutcracker: you fought so bravely for your country and now everyone is neglecting you.... pretending you don't exist.  
(ripping a ribbon of material from her petticoat)  
This bandage will take care of your broken leg, however. And now you must rest so that you will recover quickly.

(JANE places the NUTCRACKER in a swing for two (or a hammock) and swings him to sleep. The voices of the toys all about them join in a gentle lullaby and JANE, herself, falls asleep. DROSSELMEIER is seen in another part of the theatre, fancifully garbed - more like an owl than a magician.)

DROSSELMEIER: O my toys, children of mine:-  
Sing! though you be but tin and pine!  
Tin and pine! Tin and pine! and in the end

Cast in the trash as dividend!

- TOYS: Soldier, soldier, put away  
The busy, exploding glare  
Of war. And take your rest.  
On your moist, unquiet breast  
Two hundred trembling ginkgo leaves,  
White with smoke and seared with shot,  
That listened to the march all day,  
Have coiled them inward and shied away  
And folded themselves up to sleep  
Under your holster.
- HACK: Look, Mack, she done gone out.
- MACK: Him, too. Ain't they sweet? sleepin' together  
like that.
- CADILLAC: (who is very snooty, an upper-class type toy)  
Well, I don't want to say anything, but that  
girl is just kidding herself. She's walking down  
Dream Street, if you ask me.
- HACK: Why?
- CADILLAC: Well, she's so poor, what else can she do but  
dream?
- MACK: What do you mean?
- CADILLAC: What do you mean what do I mean? Where'd you  
boys get your smarts? Why, that gal's so poor  
that if she liquidated her assets she'd have a  
trickle.
- MACK: But why do you say she's dreaming?
- CADILLAC: Cause she imagines that a mere bandage can heal  
a wooden nutcracker's leg. Now, a bandage can  
heal a mere human's leg, but a mere bandage  
cannot heal a wooden toy's leg. You see, toys  
are infinitely more complicated ~~than~~ than  
humans and it takes a great deal more to cure  
us of our ills than it takes to cure a person.  
If this were not so, a mere bandage would do us,  
but it is not so and so ~~obviously~~, it does not.
- HACK: But what, then, would heal the Nutcracker's  
broken leg?
- MACK: Assuming a bandage is of no use?
- CADILLAC: I'm afraid, my dears, that only the true love of  
a true queen can do that. Remember, I said a  
true queen. By the way - I'm Alexandra:- ride  
me!

MACK: Well, a true queen is more easily read than rid.

HACK: Wha?

CADILLAC: Listen, did you two spare-tires hear something peculiar?

MACK: You don't mean that scratching sound?

HACK: You don't mean that pawing and squeaking, do you?

CADILLAC: Think we better take it on the lamb?

MACK: You ain't goin' to Witchita Falls by any chance?

MOTHER MOUSE:(from under the roots of the tree) My poor dead Seven-Headed son! I shall be revenged!

CADILLAC: I think you boys better hop in!

(The very, very gigantic MOTHER MOUSE emerges from the floor-boards under the roots of the Christmas tree. She is very much more terrible to behold than her late offspring; bits of flesh hang from her fingernails and blood is caked at the edges of her mouth and in her whiskers: the remnants of her last repast. She sings as the cowardly toys desert the Nutcracker:)

MOTHER MOUSE: Jump in that Cadillac and flee,  
You tubby toys - cowardly!  
Ride to Dry Gulch and Calamazoo -  
I'd do that if I were you!

(The MOTHER MOUSE comes downstage and takes the corpse of the 7 Headed mouse in her arms.)

MOTHER MOUSE: What? - is no single head left alive? I cradle your corpse as once I did your mewling bald and blind pink infancy. Who did this? Who slew my son?  
(addressing the audience and the children in it who, presumably, would say nothing fearing for the Nutcracker's safety)  
What is this silence that deafens my ears? Did none of you here see who took the life of my son? Were you then all asleep or in the john? Does not a one of you know the truth:- tell me the truth that I may be avenged. Tell me, tell me, tell me who killed my son that I may kill him! So.... not a sound. To know the truth and not tell it, is not altogether unlike a lie.

DROSSELMEIER: Yet if they tell, they betray him: what a predicament these poor children are in! Life is soooooo ambiguous, isn't it? Ah, come here, Mack, Hack, and you, you silly pretentious Cadillac, and hide behind my shirt sleeves.

NUTCRACKER: I slew thy son and did not say so because I slept, you evil-smelling mouse! But you, you have awakened me from my pleasant rest with all your sobbing and babbling and I would know why you make such a fuss and disturb my well-earned sleep!

MOTHER MOUSE: So, you laughable cripple! you poisoned and beheaded my offspring and now add impudence to your crime!

DROSSELMEIER: Oh, who can save the Nutcracker now?!

NUTCRACKER: I am not afraid of you, wicked mouse of the underworld! Come, Erika Mouse, and do your worst!

(The NUTCRACKER, wielding his bayonet, appears rather small and ridiculous next to the huge MOTHER MOUSE. But he courageously enters into battle with her, limping on a crutch but very nearly immobile. HACK, MACK and CADILLAC, peering out from behind DROSSELMEIER form a kind of commenting CHORUS on the engagement:)

CHORUS: See them fight! see them duel!  
Oh, it's awful! oh, it's cruel!  
This commentary comes, alack!  
From Mack, Hack, and Cadillac!

He is wounded, he can't move!  
This is futile, what's it prove?  
And the newscasting clique  
Is Mack, Hack, and Cadillac!

HACK: She looks a lot like Godzilla  
Or some grilla in a thrilla  
That I seen one afternoon  
On the airplane to Rangoon.

CADILLAC: And he looks like a puny shrimp  
With that broken leg and limp!  
There jist ain't no contest here --  
Pass the vin-ordinaire?

DROSSELMEIER: (doing so) Drown your sorrows, drown your dread:  
My Nutcracker's as good as dead!

MACK: Poor G.I. -- he done no wrong.  
His name we celebrate in song.

CHORUS: These gifted observations smack  
Of Mack, Hack, and Cadillac!

(The MOTHER MOUSE lifts the NUTCRACKER in her paws, looking indeed like a movie prehistoric monster about to munch off her victim's head. But just then DROSSELMEIER gets an idea - the only one that could possibly save the NUTCRACKER.)

DROSSELMEIER: Jane! Jane! Wake up! Your Nutcracker is in terrible trouble!

CADILLAC: Oh, that dreary plain-Jane, what can she do to help? Of what possible good to awaken her?

DROSSELMEIER: Foolish Cadillac, she is a human and therefore somewhat the equivalent of a god among you toys.

CADILLAC: There is nothing foolish about a Cadillac. Only poor people say such things.

MACK & HACK: Jane, Jane, get up, your beloved Nutcracker is in dire need of help!

(DROSSELMEIER, MACK, HACK and CADILLAC sing from their distant safety in the theatre to JANE: Her eyes slowly open.)

D, M, H, & C: Arise, Fair Maiden, heroine:  
 The squealing Beast of Berlin  
 Is going to bite your boy-friend's head off  
 Unless you open your eyes and get off  
 Your behind.  
 Then look about and find  
 Some weapon to whip the mouse with  
 Or your dress his blood will be doused with!

NUTCRACKER: (striking at ERIKA MOUSE with his bayonet)  
 There - that's for trifling with a marine:-  
 Nicks on your knees, toes, and in-between!

MOTHER MOUSE: Idle chatter from a midget -  
 I'll chop yer head off and watch you fidget!

JANE: Oh, my wonderful Nutcracker! His broken leg has rendered him helpless against his enemies. I must do something to help him! But what?!

DROSSELMEIER: What every woman does when confronted with a rodent!

JANE: (simple: pained to think) Set down poison or a trap? Oh, please!

DROSSELMEIER: No, to dispatch with the rodent immediately!  
 Those measures are taken afterward, poor child!  
 Child, dear Jane, look down - at thy feet:....

(JANE casts her gaze downward and a spot follows her eyes: traveling down her dress to her feet: there we notice for the first time (as if appearing quite conveniently now just when it is needed) that she has on one enormous blue slipper -- about two and a half times the size of her other one. It sparkles! A light bulb goes on over her head.)

JANE: If the shoe don't fit, don't wear it!

(JANE removes the great blueslipper and holds it high over her head, aiming it at the MOUSE. But she steps back as she gets ready to throw it and, in doing so, catches the slipper in a crucial, central piece of wiring on the Christmas tree. As she thrusts her arm forward flinging the slipper at the MOUSE, JANE pulls the entire Christmas tree and all its decorations, including the ANGEL, down upon herself. The ANGEL tumbles with an agonizing cry:)

ANGEL: O, all is lost through this, her blu<sup>s</sup>lipper:  
I tumble to earth as at dawn the Big<sup>A</sup>Dipper!

(The toys all scatter in chaos and most of the lights go off as if broken by the tree's fall. But the MOTHER MOUSE sees her opportunity - and seizes it.)

MOTHER MOUSE: So - you are pinned under the tree, you dreadful offspring of human kind! You who would have bashed out my brains with your Garbo slipper! But the awesome, abstract perfect Idea of Mousehood hath punished thee for thy insolence - and hath given me the only arrangement possible for me to take my revenge upon thee - the true cause of all my sorrow!

JANE: Oh, no, Erika Mouse, don't bite me - don't! How could I be the cause of your sorrow: I never ever saw you before!

MOTHER MOUSE: Indeed, O Feeble-Minded One: for whom then did that dottering Doctor Drosselmeier create the Nutcracker, if not for you? -- that Nutcracker who slew my Seven-Headed son?! Nay, nay, do not try to deny it!

JANE: You can't possibly hold me responsible for what my toys do! I mean, am I my Nutcracker's keeper?

MOTHER MOUSE: An end to chatter and in your side  
My razor-sharp teeth I'll slide!!

TOYS: Flee all, flee! All, all flee!  
No time to stay and disagree  
With what she's done! For she is done  
With what she's done and so avenged her son!

MOTHER MOUSE: Eeeeeeeeeekkkkkk! Heh-heh-heh! Eeeeeeeeeekkkk!  
I just had to get a bite to eat!

(The gigantic MOUSE scrambles off down under the uprooted roots, her whiskers dripping with fresh blood. And all the toys drop down into the hole as well with a great fuss and clatter. Only the NUTCRACKER is left limp and supine on the floor, his broken leg twisted up half into the air. DROSSELMEIER hurries over to JANE and, quite breathlessly, begins to pull the Christmas tree and roll it off her. She appears very still now.)

DROSSELMEIER: My child! my Jane! Oh, dear - how awful, how perfectly awful for something like this to happen on Christmas Eve. But then again, it would be perfectly awful any night of the year, wouldn't it? Except that it couldn't happen just any night of the year - could it? Know why? - there ain't no Christmas tree around just any night to fall down on poor Jane. And I ain't so tipsy, making it ever so difficult to extricate the child from ---  
Oh, gracious! Why, I -- oh, dear....

(DROSSELMEIER finally frees JANE from under the tree - or what he thought was JANE: for she is so swollen up from the MOUSE's bite that she is virtually unrecognizable. In short, she has been transformed - rather unpleasantly.)

JANE: Godfather Drosselmeier, what is the matter? Why are you staring at me?

DROSSELMEIER: Um, nothing, my child, nothing is wrong.

JANE: Then why are you staring at me?

DROSSELMEIER: Am I?

JANE: Oh, I know I <sup>am</sup> slow and simple, but even I can tell that something is wrong! Aren't you going to administer to my bite?

DROSSELMEIER: Your bite?

JANE: Yes, Godfather, my bite! I was bitten. You know that, you saw it happen, you told me to throw my slipper at the big mouse and I tried and got bitten for my pains. A mouse that was angry with me for a doll that you, as well, created.

DROSSELMEIER: This doll has brought you some small measure of joy, has it not?

JANE: Why, yes, I think so. He is very lovely.

DROSSELMEIER: Then stop trying to make <sup>out</sup> that I am the cause of all the problems in the world.

JANE: But it would appear that you are.

DROSSELMEIER: Yes, it appears that I am. But am not I also the author of whatever brings you joy as well?

JANE: Well, the world is very complicated.

DROSSELMEIER: Just so long as you recognize that, little girl.

JANE: I do. But now what?



DROSSELMEIER: Well, now we have to set about finding a way to restore your former beauty. No question but that we can't leave you looking like this.

JANE: (fighting back tears) Oh, I knew it, I knew it, I've changed, haven't I? I'm hideous, hideous! That bite has run a poison through my veins!

DROSSELMEIER: Now, now, nothing that can't be reversed. This isn't irrevocable like Greek tragedy or something, you know. I've just got to think.

JANE: What have you got to think about? Aren't you a doctor - don't you know what will cure me?

DROSSELMEIER: Now don't suffer a personality change as well. You were always a passive and compliant sweet little thing - and I prefer you stay that way while work things out.

JANE: Grrrrrrrrrrrrr..... Grrrrrrrrrrrrr..... Oh, dear, I'm afraid I've taken on the mouse's temperament through its saliva. I'm rabid.

DROSSELMEIER: (looking at her ears) No, you're still a girl. A girl with a swollen head, that's all.

JANE: Very funny.

DROSSELMEIER: And I do know what will cure you.

JANE: What?

DROSSELMEIER: Well, it's nothing I could lay my mits on right away, understand. In fact, it's something rather hard to come by. In fact, I have no idea where in creation to start looking for it.

JANE: What is it?

DROSSELMEIER: Valerian root.

JANE: What?

DROSSELMEIER: I mean, Valerian, the kernel of the Valerian nut, a single bite of it would restore thy natural good looks in a second. Oh, I'm certain, it does so many things, cures so many ills, it's a kind of panacea, Valerian, it is. But I haven't the foggiest about where to find it.

JANE: (on the verge of tears again) Oh, then what good is it to know what will cure me - when no one knows how to come by it. Why, it could be anywhere, this Valerian nut - in the Matto Grasso or Bhutan!

NUTCRACKER: I know where the Valerian nut is to be found!

DROSSELMEIER: Do you?

NUTCRACKER: Surely!

JANE: Then will you take me to it?

NUTCRACKER: That would be my greatest pride and pleasure! For you saved me, dear Jane, from certain death at the teeth of the dreadful mouse and suffered, in place of me, the brunt of her ill will. But this land where the sacred Valerian is, is not easy to get to: it will take a bit of traveling and some perseverance, I warrant you that much.

JANE: Oh, I'll go anywhere, anywhere,  
And I'll also persevere!

DROSSELMEIER: And I had better go along as chaperon.

NUTCRACKER: Then look up there: see that steam pipe and all the steam that's coming out of it now? and see that hole in the floorboards around the pipe? - well, we've got to scamper down it! Let's go!

J, D, & N: Don't mean to leave you in the lurch,  
But down we go to search and search  
For the yellow and blue Valerian nut  
Whose use the Senate would like to rebut  
Because it's better than Mother Church  
For curing ills. And that's clear-cut!  
So -- strut! strut! strut! strut!  
Then down to find the Valerian nut!

(They scramble into the hole and shimmy down the pipe. Steam pours out from it as from Hell. Finally they come to the bottom, tumbling over each other, and sit up dazed somewhere in the Underworld. They rub their sore limbs. Presently, MACK and HACK drive by in the CADILLAC as if on a Sunday drive.)

CADILLAC: (sexy) Hi, G.I.!

NUTCRACKER: Where are we?

M, H, & C: You're in the hole! You're in the hole!  
When you lack the self-control  
To drive straight or take a stroll,  
But trip instead and tumble down  
A piping hot pipe or pole  
Heated by some kind of troll,  
You're in for lots of rigmarole:-  
Perhaps a Mouse of bad renown,  
Some shmahta-rag or hand-me-down,  
A mink stoll, a curtainpole,  
A chicken down or prince's crown  
Or bag of kittens marked, "Please drown."  
But on the whole,  
You're in the hole!

NUTCRACKER: Very edifying.

CADILLAC: Don't get smart. I norm'ly don't stop for hitchhikers.

HACK: Just what is it that you three want?

JANE: Please, good sirs and madame, don't get angry with us: but we are looking for the Valerian nut.

MACK: What for?

DROSSELMEIER: So we may cure what ails poor Jane.

CADILLAC: Nothing, I fear, can cure what ails plain-Jane. She's just plain plain, you see. It's a matter of genes, you got it or you don't, and she, I fear, don't got it.  
(just then, seeing JANE in a clear light; startled)  
She jist got it. Bad.

NUTCRACKER: Would either of you two short-order cooks know where the Valerian nut is?

CADILLAC: Why, G.I., don't you?

NUTCRACKER: Well, yes, I thought I did. I mean, of course, I do - know where the Valerian nut is. It's in the Land of Nuts.

MACK & HACK: But of course, where else would it be?!

NUTCRACKER: Where else, indeed. But that's just the problem! You see, I thought I knew where the Land of the Nuts was - I mean, it was right under the hole in the floorboards around the pipe. I saw it here yesterday!

CADILLAC: Well, it was here right up until yesterday - but then Erika Mouse and her Seven-Headed Son took over and since that moment nothing's been the same in the Underworld.

HACK: Tell you what: why don't you ask the Gravel Gertie doll where the Land of the Nuts is now? She's a kind of matriarchal type - they knows just about everything, she'd know where.

NUTCRACKER: But where is she?

CADILLAC: She's where she always is, hard by her hovel. I just passed her on my way down to The Roots. Hop in, I'll take you there.  
(to MACK & HACK)  
O.K., boys, this is where you two get off.

MACK & HACK: Well, we never! Where does she get off to tel---

CADILLAC: Get off! Get off!  
 (MACK & HACK do so)  
 And you three get in.  
 (JANE, NUTCRACKER & DROSSELMEIER do so)  
 And off we go! So long, suckers!  
 (she drives off, heavy on the accelerator)

MACK & HACK: (stranded, looking kind of dopey together)  
 What a crusty, thankless dame  
 To dump us here and feel no shame!  
 People say: "Put out or get out,"  
 But never just scoff:  
 "Get off! Get off!"

(The lights go out on MACK & HACK and come up on the GRAVEL GERTIE DOLL who is dancing with her broom in front of her abode. She has huge protuberant eyes and floor-length, soft grey hair. An ugly duplicate of the well-known original.)

GERTIE DOLL: I need a man so bad I'm mad:  
 Boy, am I homely, boy, am I sad;  
 Only a mother could look around and see  
 Something to love here passionately:  
     Remember me?  
 I hid in a cave cause I wasn't too brave,  
     But mostly I grovel  
     By my old hovel:  
     Remember me?  
 I ain't from a movie, I ain't from a novel:  
     Remember me?  
 My hair is floor-length and grey,  
 My voice is like Dennis O'Day,  
 I go back quite a way:  
     Remember me?  
 I ain't from folklore, I ain't from TV:  
     Remember me?  
 I'm a friend of Dick Tracy's:  
 You buy me in Macy's:  
     Remember me?

(The CADILLAC rounds a bend and pulls up screeching in front of GERTIE. JANE claps her hands with glee.)

JANE: Half an angel and half a loon,  
 You first appeared in a famed cartoon;  
 A mixture of honey and vitriol ---  
 You're the Gravel Gertie Doll!

GERTIE DOLL: Right you are, sweetie, on the first try! Eeeeeee!  
 (spotting DROSSELMEIER)  
 Eeeeeee! Howdy, handsome; trick or treat?

DROSSELMEIER: A trick is a treat. At my age.

GERTIE DOLL: Not always. What can I do for you three travelers?

CADILLAC: Love your broom. Does it go non-stop to Tampa and St. Pete?

GERTIE DOLL: Aaaaah, why don't you go sit it out in the lobby!

JANE: Oh, Gertie, we're looking for the Land of Nuts.

GERTIE DOLL: (quickly) Yeah, but that means edible nuts, you wretch!

DROSSELMEIER: Now, Gertie, don't be so self-conscious and insecure. You seem to suffer from a very weak self-image. I'm sure none of us here thinks so little of you as you do of yourself.

CADILLAC: Yeah, listen to Dr. Esselen, he does more than just blow weed up at Big Sur.

NUTCRACKER: Indeed, the good doctor here is the leading spokesman for ~~our stoned~~ but unhigh generation.

JANE: So can you tell us, Gravel Gertie dear, where the Land of Nuts is ~~presently~~ located?

GERTIE: The Land of Nuts has been re-located. Erika Mouse and her Seven-Headed son absconded with it.

CADILLAC: We know all that - we want to know where.

GERTIE: Do ya? Well, why come to me?

DROSSELMEIER: Cause you're a kind of matriarchal type, Gertie, and so is Erika Mouse. Matriarchal types tend to understand each other and hang out together.

NUTCRACKER: Therefore, it was natural for us to assume that you must know her and that she might very well have confided to you the new location of the Land of Nuts.

GERTIE: Yeah, well, naah. Yis assumed all wrong. I'm too ugly to have friends. So nobody confides in me. I don't know nothin'.

DROSSELMEIER: And from this instance here at hand ought we all extract a pertinent lesson:- that abismal ignorance is often a by-product of one's lack of self-respect!

NUTCRACKER: For when you think little of yourself, how can others think more of you and be your friend and tell you things?

GERTIE: But I'll tell ya what, gorgeous:- why dontcha ask the <sup>Blue</sup> Greta Garbo Slipper where old Erika Mouse is now?

NUTCRACKER: Why her?

Big  
AD

GERTIE: Cause the Slipper had the last contact with Erika Mouse - heh! heh! - hit her right in the head, if I ain't mistaken!

NUTCRACKER: And just where might we locate the Big Blue Greta Garbo Slipper?

GERTIE: Oh, ya might "locate" her at The Roots Cafe - She's there most any time o' night and day: Since she give up fun 'n flicks She hides out there 'n stares at tricks.

JANE: Oh, thank you, Gravel Gertie!

GERTIE: Forget it, honey. Ya need all the help ya kin git. So I guess I'll see yis three later. (indicating the CADILLAC) And as fer you, partner, I'll take you in right now! Eeeeeeeee.

CADILLAC: I beg your pardon, you most certainly will not. I find you very ugly.

GERTIE: You may find me ugly, but ya'll be stayin' here to keep me company, sweetie, nevertheless. Ya see, you got four flats.

CADILLAC: What?!

GERTIE: Ya blew 'em on my front yard - didn't think they call me Gravel Gertie fer nothin', did ya? Heh! he! heh! Eeeeeeeee.

(GERTIE grabs the CADILLAC and starts voraciously hugging and kissing it. Lights out on the GRAVEL GERTIE compound and up on The Roots Cafe. This a cafe whose decor consists of the roots of the Christmas tree, reaching, twining, and twisting down under the floorboards. The BLUE GRETA GARBO SLIPPER is seated at a cafe table, smoking a holder-held cigarette, sipping a "viskey", her aged legs crossed. She has huge droopy lids. Her voice is husky and accented. She is a shoe.)

BLUE SLIPPER: The days creep, the years fly -  
 Oh me! oh my!  
 And I am bored, I am blue:  
 Aren't you?  
 But I want to be alone,  
 Everything I need I own:  
 Cable TV, a telephone,  
 HiKarate and Brut cologne.  
 I want to be alone.

I'm the Big Blue Greta Garbo Slipper  
 Cause I'm blue, very blue, not chipper.  
 And they said I had big feet -  
 The biggest on the shooting lot or street,  
 But vhat matter? - every man I want to, I meet.  
 And I want to be alone.



DROSSELMEIER: Well, I don't know, but obviously some actor who wants to branch out.  
(they both scream at DROSSEY's vitticism)

BLUE SLIPPER: So sit down, Drossey, and haf a viskey on me and tell old Greta vhat brings you to this secretive cafe in the back streets of the Newyoricans' New Yorico barrio? -Vaiteer, two viskies!

(The waiter, an absolute GHOUL, appears as out of thin air and peers down at the senior citizens. It intones:-)

GHOUL: Vill dhey be straight up, Madam?

BLUE SLIPPER: No! dhey'll be straight down!  
(screaming, etc.)

GHOUL: (bending over, as if to confide in Madam's ear)  
But, Madam, dhis article can down a qvart of Old Granddad in a qvart of an hour.

BLUE SLIPPER: Ghoul! Dhis article is Old Granddad! Now, do as I tell you and russle up dhem viskies! You vas sayin', Drossey - oh, Drossey, vhat times ve used to have!

DROSSELMEIER: Well, Greta, I've actually come on a mission t---

BLUE SLIPPER: Oh, look, Drossey, it's a full moon tonight, a full moon!  
(moaning and swooning as in her most cliched flicks)

DROSSELMEIER: Greta, I've come to ask if you know the whereabouts of ---

BLUE SLIPPER: How can I know anybody's vhereabouts when nobody knows my vhereabouts? People bore me, you know I'm too good for them!

DROSSELMEIER: But this is urgent - you must think! I'll show you why, you'll see what I mean - it's an emergency. Jane - Jane, will you come in?

(JANE enters accompanied by the NUTCRACKER whose leg is still bandaged. JANE's condition is somewhat more advanced now.)

BLUE SLIPPER: Oh! Dear! Didn't I see you in a Maria Ouspenskaya movie?

JANE: Oh, I don't think so. I don't even know who she is. In fact, it couldn't be: I'm not an actress.

BLUE SLIPPER: You don't have to tell me! Ghoul! bring a small candle here.

GHOUL: (re-entering with a candle and 2 whiskies) Vill Madam have her viskies au fondue?



BLUE SLIPPER: (light<sup>ing</sup> the small candle) No, Madam vill not.  
It's just that it's better to light one small  
candle than curse the --- EEEEEEEEEEEEEKKKKK!!!!  
The curse of the Weremouse!

(The BIG BLUE GRETA GARBO SLIPPER flees the cafe, screaming.  
JANE is horrified, DROSSELMEIER and the NUTCRACKER more nervous  
than ever. The GHOUL takes on a new interest in life.)

JANE: OH! I knew it! Weremouse! I'm a weremouse!

GHOUL: And the moon will be full tonight, Missy. What a  
fun you can have if you play your bite right.

NUTCRACKER: Oh, the Garbo Slipper fled - now we'll never find  
out where Erika Mouse and the Valerian nut are!

DROSSELMEIER: (heating the two whiskies with the fondue candle)  
Doesn't matter:- her vanity prevents her from  
knowing or seeing anyone outside of herself any-  
way.

JANE: You mean, unlike Gravel Gertie, Greta thinks too  
highly of herself?

DROSSELMEIER: (downing both whiskies) That's right. So she  
wouldn't know who Erika is even if she bunked  
into her -- which she did, bunked right into her  
head, right, Jane? -What aim!

JANE: Grrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrr.... Grerrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrr.....

NUTCRACKER: Oh, I'm discouraged. Truly discouraged.

GHOUL: Why don't you just lay down and die?

DROSSELMEIER: (hiccup) And I, too, am discouraged. If I had  
only created your leg properly, reinforced it the  
way I know it should be reinforced, none of this  
would have happened - for then, with your true  
strength, you should have done in Erika long ago.  
But, instead, because of my unprofessional  
attitude, we are all at that monster mouse's  
mercy.

GHOUL: Would you like me to lay you out alongside the  
wooden one?

DROSSELMEIER: Oh, once I thought I knew how to make puppets,  
everyone said I could make them well and I believed  
it. Now, I don't think I can do anything, any-  
thing at all, and don't want to.

GHOUL: I play a pretty spooky organ: let me gif you a  
key, Drossey, and you can sing.  
(sitting at the cafe's organ and striking a  
dreary note; then, accompanying DROSSELMEIER)

DROSSELMEIER: Ah! there's the dreary note!  
 It makes the Ghoul grin and gloat.  
 Ain't it awesome and remote?  
 Oh, I know that note by rote!

GHOUL: It makes me grin and gloat,  
 Grin and gloat!

DROSSELMEIER: That note's the clarion called despair  
 And sob of hearts beyond repair:  
 It's when your coat is worn threadbare  
 And the party's out of wine and Gruyère.

GHOUL: The note makes me grin and gloat,  
 Grin and gloat.

DROSSELMEIER: When I hear that tragic key  
 Everything melts down in me  
 And I drip away to be  
 With the souls lost at sea.  
 And the bums on the bow-er-ee.

GHOUL: It makes me grin and gloat.

NUTCRACKER: Oh, I can't go on a moment longer! What's the  
 use of even trying. We're a total loss. And  
 what's the use of wearing this bandage all around  
 the Underworld? That's the biggest joke of all!  
 What do I need this big, silly thing for? It  
 won't do a bit of good - it can't help heal me!  
 It's a bloody piece of uselessness! It mocks my  
 misery!

(The NUTCRACKER unwinds the bandage from his leg and throws  
 it away in anger and despair. (Buoyed by invisible wires) the  
 bandage twists and floats across the stage; then, after traveling  
 about, it picks up speed, twirls about with blinding velocity  
 and (with a grand gesture of stage sleight o' hand) turns into  
 a large BANDAGE DOLL which can sing and dance. So it does so.)

BANDAGE: Bandage up, come on, get smart:  
 Give yourself a second start!  
 Just because you hurt a little,  
 Doesn't mean your brain is brittle!  
 So take your aching, broken heart  
 And bandage it - for that's true art!

And never give up!  
 Never say die!  
 Don't be fed-up  
 Cause you always can try  
 Again once you apprehend  
 That you can bandage up and mend.

(All the rest jumping up and forming a wild chorus line,  
 kicking and dancing as in a punk-disco)  
 GHOUL: (speaking) Just listen to that petticoat.

ALL: A Night at The Roots!  
Get tight at The Roots!  
Put on your jeans and high-heel boots:  
Stomp out a rhythm, stomp out a beat,  
Get off your fanny and use your feet!

BANDAGE: Now I'll tell you an anecdote:  
They tore me off a petticoat,  
Cause I was useless under skirts,  
So, now I'm good for where it hurts.

ALL: A Night at The Roots!  
Its management's in cahoots  
With nurse's aids who seek recruits  
To start a dance craze and a fad  
So they can bandage blistered feet like mad!

BANDAGE: Try again, try again  
Like Balboa at Darien:  
If he could find the Pacific Ocean,  
Then what the heck's all the commotion  
About your rather simple task?  
Looking for Erika? Well, then, just ask!

(The BANDAGE suddenly moves aside and, in doing so, reveals the Seven-Headed Mouse's HARD HEART seated at a cafe table; it looks very impatient and annoyed and growls at the waiter:)

HARD HEART: Ghoul! Let's have some service around here!

GHOUL: Yavol, certainly, Herr Hard Heart. Vhat vill it be?

NUTCRACKER: Why, look, look there, that's the Seven-Headed Mouse's Hard Heart!

HARD HEART: The usual!

GHOUL: One hard cider coming up!

HARD HEART: On the rocks!

GHOUL: But of course rocks, hard rocks.

JANE: Isn't that Hard Heart the remnants of the son of Erika Mouse?

DROSSELMEIER: Precisely. And are you thinking what I'm thinking?

NUTCRACKER: That if anyone would know where Erika Mouse is, the remnants of her son would!

DROSSELMEIER: Precisely.

NUTCRACKER: Oh, but of what possible use to ask it? A Hard Heart would never tell us anything we want to know. That's why it's a hard heart.

- BANDAGE: Well, you never do learn anything, my boy, do you? For what reason could a Hard Heart possibly exist except to be finally softened?
- NUTCRACKER: Softened? But how would one go about softening a Hard Heart?
- BANDAGE: Well, now, that is for you to go about discovering, is it not? How else will you ever learn what living with others is all about unless you go about it? And unless you discover what living with others entails, you can never become a real person: but will remain, instead, a wooden nutcracker forever. . . . . Now I suggest you start by asking it what ails it.
- NUTCRACKER: That's not easy for me, seeing as how I'm what really ails it more or less. I mean, it's a mere remnant of its former whole on account of me, wouldn't you say, Mr. Bandage?
- JANE: I'll help you, poor Nutcracker, you needn't get embarrassed so long as I can spare you that. Mr. Hard Heart, tell me, pray, what ails thee?
- HARD HEART: Get lost, hussy.
- JANE: I'll bet you have a lovely deep bass or baritone voice! I know it just by your manly demeanor. Perhaps it can give wings to your troubles.
- GHOUL: (reentering with the order) There's some hard stuff on the house for the entertainment. And an even harder bed of concrete for those who kill the business around here -- with their sour pussies, for instance... Could be a Mickey Finn in that cider right now, you never know....
- HARD HEART: (running<sup>a</sup> finger around inside its collar, feeling the pressure; giving in:)  
 A Hard Heart never dies,  
 It just fades away  
 To some secretive old cafe  
 In the skid row streets of town  
 Where every one is feeling down  
 And there it feels at home,  
 A heart of steel and chrome:  
 A heart of iron, rock, steel and chrome.
- JANE: And why do you feel so down, Mr. Hard Hat, I mean, Mr. Hard Heart?
- HARD HEART: Cause there is little left of me,  
 Of what I used to be.
- JANE: There is very little left of what I used to be.  
 I was once a meek and mild-mannered little girl,

now I'm a weed of evil in the guise of a weremouse and your dam did that I fear. And there is very little left of Doctor Drosselmeier and what he used to be: a creator, a man of ingeniousness and medicine, a specialist, oh, yes, not a family doctor, a specialist. Now he's a rummy. And a hack. And there is very little left of what the Nutcracker used to be: for not being able to crack nuts any more, he is slated for the woodpile, I fear, and from there a quick toss into the fireplace, a thing that warms our chilled extremities for but a moment, no more, and then 'tis but a cinder, an ash or two.

HARD HEART: (beginning to soften) It's a hard world. But I don't see what I can do about it.

JANE: Ah! but there is everything that you can do about it. For your mother, the great big monster mouse, who is the perfect reflection of the pure, Abstract Idea of Mousehood, has absconded with the Land of Nuts and along with it, all the nuts that lived there.

HARD HEART: So? I should think the Underworld is better off with a few less nuts.

JANE: Not so, Mr. Hard Heart. For among those nuts was the Valerian nut - a mere taste of which would restore me to my former self. And if he should see this happen, my Godfather, Doctor Drosselmeier, would doubtless be restored to his own former self: a man with confidence in his talents and creations. And this once so, he could then easily fix up the Nutcracker, reshaping his ill-formed leg so that it is well again and can crack nuts. Would not you like to see all these things come about? -See the world set at rights again?

HARD HEART: What would you have me do?

JANE: Bring us to your mother and the Land of Nuts, for she is your mother and you must know where she is. And we will do the rest.

HARD HEART: What's in it for me?

DROSSELMEIER: The pure, unmitigated pleasure of doing good and bringing pleasure to others. I guarantee you, there's nothing like it in all the world!

(The HARD HEART <sup>stands</sup> and leads everyone at The Roots Cafe in a circular dance which gets faster and faster until, like a spinning propeller, they seem to blur and become invisible, dragging the Cafe and its whole world into invisibility with them. Strob lights and strange music dizzy the theatre.)

HARD HEART: I'm a Hard-hearted Son of a Breck,  
 But I'm through now with all that dreck:  
 For I give up my commy bent,  
 Yes, I really do relent -  
 For I've seen the end and I repent  
 Of ever wanting a leftist totalitarian state  
 Where your brains, soul, art and talent you must  
                                   abnegate --  
 And from the rapidly encroaching New Dark Ages  
 I'll turn back a couple of history's pages  
 And restore you three  
 To a land that's free!

So spin and like a propeller turn!  
 And melt, Dark Ages, down and burn!  
 Twirl and whirl  
 With this little girl,  
 All of you -- the whole cafe!  
 And we'll redeem those led astray  
 For the young, the strong, the brave and the free,  
 The artists and lovers of Democracy!

(When they stop spinning, the Cafe and its crowd have disappeared, and JANE, NUTCRACKER, DROSSELMEIER and HARD HEART find themselves in a new place:- The Land of Nuts. Seated on a throne, laughing demonically and cracking her whip, is a sanguinary ERIKA MOUSE. She presides over a huddled mass of NUTS, all of whom are chained together and are of an identical innocuous color and shape. There are nearly a dozen of them and they cringe together in front of a flat on which is painted hundreds of these same shaped and colored NUTS going back to infinity - so that the realized NUTS appear to be continuous with the painted ones. They whimper pathetically.)

MOTHER MOUSE: Eeeeeeeee! Heh! Heh! Heh! Heh! Fools! Scoundrels!  
 -Wastrels! I know why ye have come! Ye seek  
 the sacred Valerian Nut! - well, ye seek in vain,  
 in vain! - for look, here chained together are  
 all the nuts in Nutland and I have put a curse  
 on them, on every one of them so that they all  
 look alike! They are identical! And you, O  
 Nutcracker, cripple that you are, and so not  
 able to crack them open and get at their kernels,  
 cannot now or ever tell which is the Valerian!  
 But now, since you have come into my land and  
 under my power, I shall turn the three of you as  
 well into nuts - nuts looking and being no  
 different from these identically looking commy-  
 enslaved nuts!  
 (suddenly noticing DROSSELMEIER for the first time)  
 Hmmmmmm, who's the senior citizen?

JANE: He is my godfather, Doctor Drosselmeier.

MOTHER MOUSE: Oh, yeah? Well, then, in that case, I think you  
 useless fools may have an alternative at that.  
 Tell you what:- I will point out which nut is

the Valerian and let you two take it with you with all safe conduct that I shall provide back to the realm of humans, if he remains in Nutland.

NUTCRACKER: Oh, no, never! We are not going to leave without him.

MOTHER MOUSE: You are not going to leave at all! For exactly at the stroke of Midnight, when I come into possession of and may articulate my full demonic powers, I shall bite you three in the head and turn you all into the nameless nuts you so obviously already are! And now, get out of my way, you're blocking my view of the full moon!

NUTCRACKER: Oh, but had I the use of my poor lame left leg, and were it as difficult as locating a needle in a haystack or a Snowman in the Himal'yas, yet I would to it and crack open each and every nut, though there be a thousand of them and a thousand times a thousand of them, until I found that Valerian and gave thee, my beloved mistress, to eat of it and be cured! But, alas, I have not the use of my leg and so cannot save thee, Jane!

JANE: Dear Nutcracker, wonderful Nutcracker, how I know now that you would if you could....  
(smiling and kissing the NUTCRACKER)  
Some people get to a subway station  
Just as the train is pulling in,  
And some just as it's pulling out.  
To some all life is a long vacation  
For they enter the world a mandarin;  
To others it's an endless drought.  
Do I ever ask myself why?  
No, not I.

Some shoppers fancy whatever is new,  
Their eyes only brighten at a thing's debut;  
But others look for beaded clutches,  
And lizard purses and old things such as  
Deco compacts and cigarette cases,  
Cloth gimcracks with harlequin faces,  
Genuine blueblack fountain pens  
And porcelain hounds tacked to Parisiennes.  
Did you ever ask yourself why?  
Not I.

Some only seek a lover dight  
In present force and future might;  
But I love thee for what thou art  
And love thee now as at the start  
When thou hadst all thy powers great,  
Which now are chipped away by fate,  
For then I saw the Good in thee --  
And wounds of war and changing wind  
Can never lessen that for me:

For that alone is disciplined  
 Against the tax of destiny.  
 Do I ever ask myself why?  
 No, not I.

NUTCRACKER: Look, look! My leg!

DROSSELMEIER: What is it?

NUTCRACKER: It moves, it flexes! It juts out at will, it  
 pulls back at will! It kicks up! it stomps down!  
 It's fixed -- fixed!

JANE: Oh, Godfather, it's a miracle!

DROSSELMEIER: No, no miracle -- unless love be a miracle. Why,  
 yes, yes, love is a miracle: for it is your love  
 for the Nutcracker that has set right again his  
 splintered limb!

NUTCRACKER: Do you indeed love me, Jane?

JANE: Yes, dear Nutcracker, I do.

NUTCRACKER: And then is it indeed her love for me, Doctor  
 Drosselmeier, that has fixed my leg? For if 'tis  
 that, why then, but Jane must be true royalty!

DROSSELMEIER: Why do you say that?

NUTCRACKER: Why? Everyone in Toyland says it:- that only the  
 true love of a true queen could heal my damaged  
 leg because it was damaged by hate. A true hate.  
 A hate such as only can exist between siblings.

MOTHER MOUSE: And a hate that was fostered by another true  
 queen, a great queen, namely myself - the Queen  
 of Nutland, the Queen of the Night! But enough  
 of this palaver, you bleeding-hearts, prepare to  
 make your peace with whatever it is you worship,  
 for it is nearly Midnight! Eeeeeeeeeeeeeee!!!!

NUTCRACKER: No, Fiend! Monster! Maniac! This ain't your  
 night! For I am healed, and now that I am healed  
 I shall crack open the nuts and find the Valerian  
 and cure Jane of her weremousehood.

MOTHER MOUSE: Her who-what-where? -her where-who-what?

DROSSELMEIER: Rules are rules, old woman, and you know as well  
 as we that so long as we are able to crack the  
 nuts, and able because we have strength by dint of  
 love, then for so long we are not under your  
 power to be changed by you into nuts! For hate  
 knows when it has no force in the face of love!

MOTHER MOUSE: Oh yeah? Well, rules may be rules, but I haven't



told you all of them:- which are, to wit, that you have only three tries at cracking open nuts and finding the Valerian - and if you fail in three, then it's my turn, and you'll be three nuts!

HARD HEART: Now wait a minute, Mother: that's not fair!

MOTHER MOUSE: Neither is life! -Kennedy said that, remember?

HARD HEART: But you didn't say that before.

MOTHER MOUSE: (hard) Well, I'm sayin' it now!

HARD HEART: But why, then, just three tries?

MOTHER MOUSE: Because there are three of them.

HARD HEART: Oh, yeah? Well, how about seven tries - because I had seven heads.

MOTHER MOUSE: Four!

HARD HEART: Six!

MOTHER MOUSE: Five! - And that's as high as I go -- five's a compromise, a good enough compromise. -You traitor! My own son. I'd say you were off your head for taking their side, but you're off all seven of your heads, so forget it. And now, no more palaver: start your five tries at once, Nutcracker, and pick shrewdly - for you bargain for the freedom, health, and eternal identity of yourself and your friends in these tries. Now, crack away like Krakatao!

NUTCRACKER: How can I pick shrewdly when every nut in Nutland looks alike? -Oh, well, there's no where to start except at the beginning: so, let's see, I'll just select the very ~~first~~ nut here. It'd be like her to place the one we want right in front of our nose: --because most people don't see what's right in front of their noses.

(he selects the foremost NUT, which is about 2 x 2 ft, rolls it centerstage and straddles it)

I straddle you, Nut,  
And I'll paddle you, Nut,  
If you don't split  
As soon as I hit  
My thigh with my fist.

-Get the gist?

(he strains and socks his thigh, once, twice)  
Now don't be a bad jack,  
Crack, Nut, crack, crack!

-There we go!

(The shell of the NUT splits in two and falls away. The kernel,

which is a beautifully mounted small piece of the GREAT WALL OF CHINA (very recognizably so, but with two dancing shoes visible underneath it), sings and dances, encouraging the audience to guess who it is:)

WALL OF CHINA: Lots of culture, Confucius and Lao-Tzu,  
Laundry tickets, "Yellow Menace," and Mao, too:  
Chop-chop! -say, can you guess  
What kind of nut I am? -No? -Yes?  
I'm very long and I surround  
One-eighth the earth around and round:  
Six hundred million folks are in a rut  
Because I walled them in. What kind of nut  
Am I? Can you guess?  
No? Yes?

Well, everybody used to call  
Me the very high "Great Wall  
Of China."

In ancient times no wall was fine-a --  
In height higher nor in length more supreme --  
Since I was built with an ingenious scheme,  
Cause I'm still standing and still in the pink:-  
Oh, yes, I'm still a perfect rink  
Around the present Red regime  
Which I sort of ream.  
Yet some say I'm no wall  
At all,  
But just a bummer,  
And the Chink  
You see in Shakespeare's "Mid-Summer  
Night's Dream!"

HARD HEART: Oh, I know what kind of nut that is, don't you?

JANE: No, what?

HARD HEART: A Walnut!

JANE: A Walnut! Oh, dear, that will never do!

WALL OF CHINA: Nevertheless, my child, that's exactly what I am!

MOTHER MOUSE: Eeeeeeeee! Fabulous! Joy in the morning! That's one strike out, Nutcracker! one out for you! I'm so happy I could bust a bloodvessel anticipatin' your failure!

NUTCRACKER: You mean, you'd crack your own nuts to spite your face.

MOTHER MOUSE: You know, I find you as cheeky as a comic strip and twice as dumb. Now get on with the nutcracking - you have four chances left.

NUTCRACKER: (selecting a second NUT from the center of the mass of them) Let me see:- here's one that

looks ~~as~~ as good as any other. I'll try it.  
(rolling the second NUT out and proceeding as  
he explains:)

I place you, Nut, beside one leg --  
And lift my other one this high --  
Then snap it -- for my second try --  
Down to crack you like an egg!

(The SECOND NUT's shell cracks open and out pops its kernel,  
ARNOLD BLACK-EGG, a professional weight-lifter with a really  
unbelievable chest expansion and an inferiority complex --  
and a cute face and an Austrian accent. Everyone stares in  
dismay. ARNOLD gets into some classic poses.)

JANE: What is that?

ARNOLD: Arnold Black-Egg is my name,  
I can get 'most any dame  
I want to date me  
If I've a mind to it.  
Unt don't debate me  
Unless you're blind to it --  
Mine built, I mean - mine fabulous frame --  
Cause it's mine fortune unt mine fame!

Now I ain't vhat you call defensive --  
"Just let live unt let the mens live,"  
I always say -- unt since I always say;  
"Veight-lifting is yavel here to stay"  
-Zo alzo, big muscles, zere here to stay."

Mit barbells unt veights  
I get gorgeous dates,  
Cause zey make tip-top shape  
In mine calve unt huge nape --  
See dhese pecs --  
I vill break your necks  
If you laugh at me --  
Let me alone -- just let me be! --  
Zo now -- if you vant da best,  
Just ogle dhis chest ---

DROSSELMEIER: A Chestnut -- that's a Chestnut!

HARD HEART: Well, I didn't think it was a Bicepsnut or an  
abdominal one.

JANE: A Chestnut? I thought it was a Hazelnut. Aren't  
its eyes hazel?

NUTCRACKER: Oh, dear.

JANE: Can you believe how many kernels, clothes, and  
folks around here have a Northern European accent?

DROSSELMEIER: Cause this is based on a Northern European classic:  
nicht war, dumpkoff?!

look

MOTHER MOUSE: Yeah, but how they take liberties with them classics around here. I hardly recognize myself.

JANE: Me neither. I can hardly recognize myself. And I'm getting very worried - cause don't I get worse when the full moon is out - I mean, being a weremouse?

DROSSELMEIER: Uh-huh.

JANE: Then it won't be long now, Godfather. The moon is half risen and I'm wizened with long nails and down!

DROSSELMEIER: Maybe you should wait in the lobby.

JANE: Grrrrrrrrr.....

MOTHER MOUSE: All right, Crackerjack, make your third move. And you there, the Chestnut kernel, thank you. Thank you very much indeed...

CHESTNUT: You velcome. I zee you after, ja?

JANE: Please, Mr. Nutcracker, choose the Valerian this time. I'm getting desperate. Grrrrrrr....

NUTCRACKER: I'm doing my very best, Jane, but all this pressure isn't helping me one bit you know. How can one make wise choices with a double deadline?

JANE: Grrrrrrrrrr.....

NUTCRACKER: O.K., O.K. Hmmmm, this nut seems to be bouncing around a bit here - like it's trying to say something - if to me, what then but that it is the Valerian?!

(getting a hold on the "bouncing" NUT and steadying it so that he can work on it)

Now just hold still, you bouncy Nut

--Still, I say, until I split you:

Then whate'er's inside you shut

Will be free -- so let me hit you!

(The NUTCRACKER smacks the NUT about with his legs and it cracks in two. Out comes a huge auburn BEETLE with a Ringo Starr hair-do. It carries a guitar and is singing, "I Want to Hold Your Hand." Most jump with the joy of recognition, as if this were all just a guessing game: but JANE is beside herself.)

JANE: Oh, no, that's not the Valerian! No way, bluejay.

MOTHER MOUSE: Oh, shoot! that one is easy. It's a Betel Nut.

HARD HEART: Almost too easy -- I should have thought it was a Cashew -- since it made so much cash!!

(screaming at its own vitticism)

BEEBLE: Yeah! Yeah! Yeah! that Betel Nut is good to chew -  
Now maybe not for me and not for you:  
But folks down Southeast Asia way,  
Them Thais and Campucheans say  
The Betel Nut is good to chew!  
Chew! Chew! you won't be blue!

Just wrap a climbing pepper leaf  
Around the nut in a Betel Palm  
That's growing right out on the reef,  
Then add some burnt-up choral lime,  
Give the thing a little time  
And poof! you've got the Asian chew:  
The Betel cures the Asian flu -  
The Betel Nut! - you won't be blue  
No more -- you won't be blue  
No more -- you won't be blue  
No more --

MOTHER MOUSE: Shut that damn Beetle up! - I can't stand concert  
music - give me disco or give me death!

JANE: Asian flu? I don't have the Asian flu - that's  
not what ails me! Oh, Nutcracker, what are you doing?

MOTHER MOUSE: He's doing everything to play right into my hands!  
Three strikes against you, wise-guy! I said, get  
rid of that Beetle - Arnold, box its ears - if  
you can find them under all that hair!

JANE: All that hair! Gulp! You see, Godfather,  
everyone is noticing! Oh, hurry, hurry!

DROSSELMEIER: Patience, my child, patience. The Nutcracker  
still has two tries.

MOTHER MOUSE: And then he dies! - Or becomes the very nuts he  
cracks, which is much the same thing.  
(to HARD HEART)  
I don't know why they complain about the Aryan  
influence around here. Seems to me there's more  
talk about matters Asiatic than anything else.

HARD HEART: Too true, too blue, and too bad.

JANE: Grrrrrrrrr.....

HARD HEART: Ooops - did I say something wrong?

MOTHER MOUSE: Try number four, Nutcracker! The moon's three-  
fourths into the sky - hop to it!

JANE: She's just so sure of herself.

NUTCRACKER: Tell me.

JANE: O.K., I will. How about that one?  
(pointing to a NUT which is set aside from the others as if to escape notice)

NUTCRACKER: Oh, yes, hiding out, are you? I'll bet dollars to donuts this is the one.  
(getting the NUT in scissor-hold)  
I'll be gentle, I'll be true:  
One good clamp should open you!

(The NUT cracks, and out steps an amorous JAGUAR: it moves immediately into a frantic routine:)

JAGUAR: Nyoka the Carioca girl  
Ain't no Latin con:  
She's the luscious, milky pearl  
Of the Amazon!

Nyoka does the frantic dance  
Of Bahia fame:  
If the studs who see her, prance -  
They are not to blame.

Nyoka the Carioca girl  
Men love from afar:  
Cause she loves to pet and curl  
With a jaguar!

Nyoka in the noisy night  
Hears a tropic beat:  
When the bucks begin to fight  
She is on her feet:

Nyoka leaves them all behind  
Who'd her suitors be --  
So her suitors I remind  
She belongs to me!

(Everyone on stage grabs a piranha fan-mask and, holding them before their faces, join in with the JAGUAR as a busy CHORUS:)

CHORUS: Piranha! Piranha!  
Just put  
A bleeding foot  
In the Amazon and a hundred of 'em are on ya!

Piranha! Piranha!  
Will eat  
A scrap of meat  
Whether it's on a long horn cattle's hide or your  
feet!

Piranha! Piranha!  
Clean out  
A big hog stout  
In a couple seconds and they can do the same to  
you in there about!

ALL: Nyoka! Nyoka!  
 It sure ain't the polka!  
 It's not a fox-trot or a waltz:  
 Nothin' Yankee, nothin' false!  
 A Carioca! It's the Carioca!

JANE: Oh, that love-sick jaguar is a Brazil Nut!

DROSSELMEIER: Yes, it's a Brazil Nut: I didn't think so frenetic-ally self-confident a routine would betoken the Valerian.

JANE: But, Godfather, don't you see:- that leaves us with but a single try left. And look: the moon has nearly ascended to her throne in the sky!

DROSSELMEIER: Then let me pick the last nut to be cracked. We can't take any further chances with my inventions. (he pushes aside the crowd of identical NUTS until he reveals a very tiny ONE hidden in the dead center of them. He starts back with delight:) Ah! I believe I've struck gold!

NUTCRACKER: What? That measly shrimp?!

DROSSELMEIER: Big things come in small packages, my boy. No, no, step back, let me do it - stuff like this has got to be handled with kid gloves, not hard pantaloons.

NUTCRACKER: They're just standard army fatigues, a little loud on the camouflage, maybe, but ---

DROSSELMEIER: (prying apart the tiny shell) There - it's easier than opening a beached muscle. Ah-ha! Success!

JANE: What? - that?

DROSSELMEIER: Yes, my dear. That.

JANE: But that looks like a pea-nut to me: why, it's no bigger'n a pea in a pod!

DROSSELMEIER: Just so. And I've lost my specs, so tell me, Jane, what color is it? Yellow or blue?

JANE: (approaching dubiously, peering down, bending over) Blue.

DROSSELMEIER: Just so. Good. Maximum strength.

MOTHER MOUSE: Foiled, foiled! You fiends!

HARD HEART: Oh, mother, take off your glasses and join the fun.

JANE: Eeeek! The moon! Let me to it!

(The stage is suddenly hit with the full blast of white moonlight.)

JANE becomes quite animalistic as she reaches voraciously for the VALERIAN NUT.)

VALERIE: Hello, Jane. How are you?

JANE: Skip the small talk, sister - will I need ketchup?

VALERIE: Junk food is never necessary. My name is Valerie.

JANE: Big deal.

VALERIE: Valerie the Valerian.

JANE: That's quite a mouthful for such a small mouthful. Well, down the hatch!

VALERIE: Aren't you going to take me with water? I go down better that way.

JANE: There's enough rabid saliva in my mouth to make up ten glasses of water!

DROSSELMEIER: Wait, Jane, do you think you should?

JANE: Wait for what? -- the full moon's out, you old bag!

MOTHER MOUSE: Eeeeeeeee! My evil proceeds without my participation. Such is the role of momism in history.

DROSSELMEIER: But, Jane, I mean, at your age - why, you're so young, do you think it's wise to start in with things like this at your age?

JANE: Now, don't you start in! Let me have it!

DROSSELMEIER: No, no, I can't. In all good conscience, I can't!

MOTHER MOUSE: He talks of conscience now!

JANE: I'm warning you, Godfather, I'm rabid, I'm a weremouse - I won't take no for an answer!

DROSSELMEIER: Then let me pay the full price for my sins, for my creations, my unpredictable offspring!

JANE: You WILL, Drossey, YOU WILL!!!  
(she bites deeply into DROSSELMEIER's back)

MOTHER MOUSE: Eeeeeeeee! Savage jungle fury! All new thrills!

HARD HEART: Chaos, sheer chaos.

NUTCRACKER: What in the wonderworld of toys is going on?

JANE: The Valerian Nut, where is it? Lost, lost like a contact lens in a bearskin rug!



(DROSSELMEIER has fallen face down on the floor under the blow of JANE's weremouse bite. JANE is scrambling around (with her back to the audience) looking for the Valerian nut. When old DROSSELMEIER rises, helped to his feet by MOTHER MOUSE, he has been transformed into a weremouse himself (of course), a big one, about the size of MOTHER MOUSE.)

MOTHER MOUSE: Eeeeekkk! A weremouse! A hideous weremouse! Drossey's a were--- well, not so bad at that, are you, big boy? Not so bad at all....

DROSSELMEIER: And you, neither, - if you'd just remove your glasses.  
(taking off MOTHER MOUSE's specs)  
There, now, isn't that better?

MOTHER MOUSE: Much. And you look much better yourself. More like your real self, I should think....

DROSSELMEIER: Then shall we make sweet music together - I mean, you sweet old senior citizen, you think that's still possible?

MOTHER MOUSE: Quite possible. And I've got a pocketfull of half fares and drastic discount tickets - up at my place, that is.

DROSSELMEIER: My thoughts, exactly.

HARD HEART: Oh, look, look at Jane!

(Everyone turns to look at JANE who has risen to her feet.)

WALL OF CHINA: Why, she's completely changed!

ARNOLD: Hey, zey, she's not bad.

JAGUAR: Beautiful woman, very beautiful wooman!

BEEBLE: Cool, man, dig it!

NUTCRACKER: Jane, you are lovely. A true queen of beauty.

DROSSELMEIER: And a true queen. For I have given my all to manage that - my very humanity. But that's what you wanted, Jane, isn't it?

JANE: Oh, yes, to be a true queen! And so I am. In all the splendor and beauty which such entails. But, dear, good Godfather, was it necessary for you to be transformed into a... a.... just for me to become what in my heart I know I always was?

DROSSELMEIER: I'm afraid so, my child. I'm afraid so. For are you so very sure that this is what you truly were all along, completely were, even just in your heart?

JANE: I believe so.

DROSSELMEIER: Well, well, who can say?

NUTCRACKER: Not I, I'm sure. I'm quite beyond figuring these things out.

DROSSELMEIER: And so, too, am I, Mr. Nutcracker. Quite old and beyond knowing more than you'll ever know. -Come, Mother Mouse, we have our nest to build.

MOTHER MOUSE: But what of the remnants of my son, the Hard Heart of the Seven-Headed Mouse?

DROSSELMEIER: That Hard Heart can go and rest quietly in Heaven now for it has become quite soft, you see. So stop worrying about your son.

HARD HEART: That'll be the day.

MOTHER MOUSE: Thank you, John Wayne.

JANE: So <sup>that</sup> leaves just you and I, Mr. Nutcracker - to get married at last and live happily ever after!

NUTCRACKER: But I'm afraid that can never be, Jane - never, despite your true self, your beauty and queenhood: for I am a wooden toy, not a human - not a boy!

JANE: Oh, no, no, not after all I went through -- Godfather, where are you? Where are you going? Didn't you say that the love of a true queen could turn ---

DROSSELMEIER: (disappearing into the dark) No, Jane, true love can heal, it cannot bring the dead to life or the inanimate to humanity....

JANE: But, Godfather.....

MOTHER MOUSE: (softly, disappearing into the dark) Foolish child, girl-children are no less foolish than sons, are they?.... bye, Ja.....

(JANE falls in a swoon as the entire crowd of MICE and NUTS along with their fantasy-land fade away in a whirl. When a spot finds her on the floor of the bare stage, she is there alone beside the immobile, inanimate body of her wooden NUTCRACKER.)

JANE: Oh, lovely Nutcracker, brave G.I.,  
What have you and what have I?  
You no life and I no friend,  
You no breath at all in the end  
And I no love though we did try  
So hard - didn't we? I cry. I cry.

So this is how things end at last,

Nothing wet is water-fast.  
 Colors fade  
 Though dried in the shade  
 And the present is much like the past.  
 Why should I lie?  
 I cry. I cry.

Dear Nutcracker, sweet Nutcracker, toy,  
 I had wished you were a boy.  
 Foolish, so foolish, wasn't I?  
 Why should I lie?  
 I cry. I cry.

(NATHAN rises up from beside the immobile body of the NUTCRACKER, BEING HIS IDENTICAL IMAGE, except alive, and dressed in G.I. fatgues, camouflage, etc. He takes JANE's hand and lifts her.)

JANE: Why, it's Nut, I mean, Nat.

NATHAN: Yes, Jane. You look beautiful.

JANE: You look....

NATHAN: A little like some gift someone gave you? My uncle has seen me wear these Vietnam fatigues many times. And long before he fashioned that Nutcracker for you. You must have as well. These are hardly new, you know.

JANE: It's so hard to remember sometimes, isn't it? I mean where and when you saw things.

NATHAN: But you do remember and that's what counts. Things want to be remembered. And so do people. That's why they make things, to tell you never to forget. This Nutcracker says for my uncle never to forget....

JANE: I shan't, I promise, Nat.

NATHAN: Will you dance with me?

(They dance.)

JANE: A morning must come when people are gone,  
 But all my toys stay forever on  
 By that same need that made them live:  
 To teach their mistress what it meant to give.  
 To your maker, Goodbye,  
 For you, my toys, never lie,  
 Oh, my toys, how you never can die.

END.

11/28/79