

A STUDY OF THE PROBLEMS
INVOLVED IN WRITING AND
PRODUCING SIX ORIGINAL
HALF-HOUR RADIO PLAYS

Thesis for the Degree of M. A.
MICHIGAN STATE COLLEGE
Maxine Arlane Eyestone
1946

THESIS

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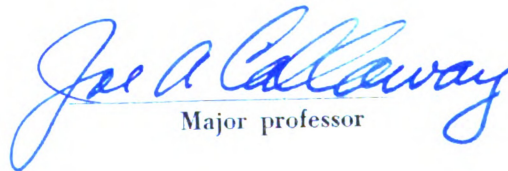
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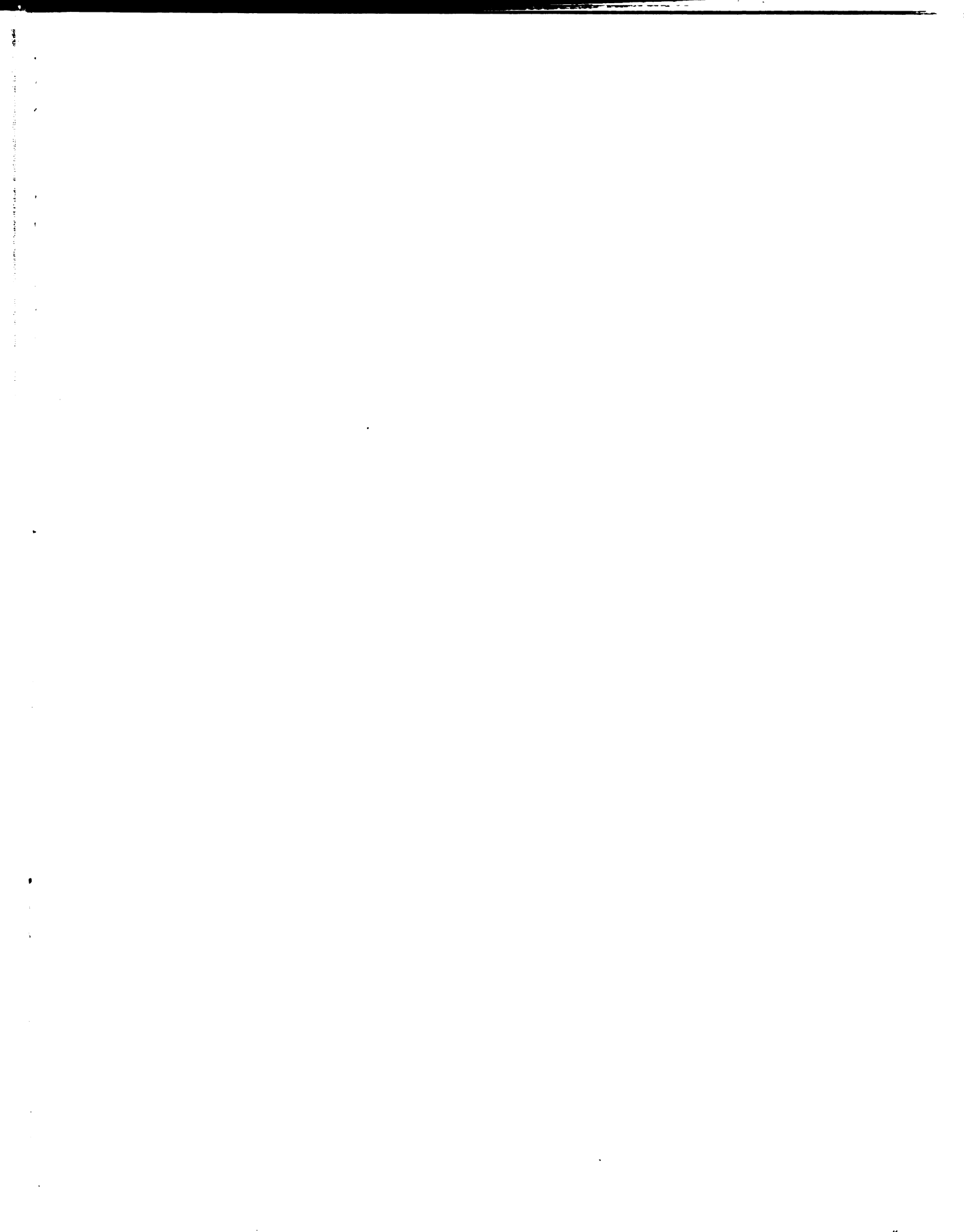
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A STUDY OF THE PROBLEMS INVOLVED IN
WRITING AND PRODUCING
SIX ORIGINAL HALF-HOUR
RADIO PLAYS

by

MAXINE ARLANE EYESTONE

A THESIS

Submitted to the Graduate School of Michigan
State College of Agriculture and Applied
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requirements for the degree of

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Department of Speech, Dramatics, and Radio

1946

THESIS

PREFACE

The writer wishes to extend her deepest gratitude and appreciation to the many students and faculty members of the Michigan State College and to the staff of radio station WKAR, without whose cooperation A STUDY OF THE PROBLEMS INVOLVED IN WRITING AND PRODUCING SIX ORIGINAL HALF-HOUR RADIO PLAYS would not have been possible.

To Prof. Joe A. Callaway, director of radio education, for untiring assistance and supervision of both writing and production of the six radio plays; to Allan Scott of the journalism department for added suggestions in script-editing; to Prof. Paul D. Bagwell, acting head of the department of speech, dramatics, and radio; to R. J. Coleman, Norris Grover, John Blakesley, Linn Towsley, and the staff of WKAR, for broadcasting and recording; and to the following students who participated in the productions: Norman Tipton, Joan Carter, Toni Procissi, John Cottrell, Dawn Demont, Chuck Anthony, Sally O'Connor, Patricia Beechler, Lois Banzet, Frances Fausold, Roland Young, John Corbett, Roberta Robinson, John

Fitzgerald, Louise Osterholt, Arnold Bransdorfer,
Ruth Hulbert, Doris Guth, Robert Haflich, Jack
Warren, Helen Tillis, Marion Parker, and Betty
Fuller.

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INTRODUCTION

Radio writing as an art is of fairly recent origin, and it has been only within the past 10 years that first-rate writers in the field of radio drama have emerged to claim for themselves a place in the field of literature. Probably two of the most outstanding of these are Norman Corwin and Arch Oboler.

When the author chose A STUDY OF THE PROBLEMS INVOLVED IN WRITING AND PRODUCING SIX ORIGINAL HALF-HOUR RADIO PLAYS as the subject of a master's thesis, it was her object to study the problems involved in this new art of radio writing from the practical standpoint of production on the air. The scripts therefore became a tool for the purpose of studying production techniques, and production became the means for molding and editing the plays.

Much of the material contained in this thesis is light and fanciful. The writer sought to study the problems encountered in creating comedy, fantasy, and serious drama or melodrama. Comedy and melodrama are probably most prevalent

and the most in demand in radio today. Therefore, the bulk of the material of these plays falls into one or the other of these two categories.

The writer has attempted to gear her creative material to the levels of both commercial and sustaining radio. Therefore three of the plays--BABY BE GOOD, HONEYMOON BY PROXY, and OH, PROFESSOR!--are aimed at commercial radio, whereas the other three--THE MISFIT GHOST, THE OLD CRONE, and STORY OF PAGE ONE--are more experimental in nature and are geared for the sustaining workshop type of program like COLUMBIA WORKSHOP and CARRINGTON PLAYHOUSE.

Each script was polished to the best of the writer's ability before going into production. Further revisions were inserted during the course of rehearsals. Then the actual production on the air was recorded and the disc retained for subsequent study. These records were helpful to the writer-director in detecting errors and weak points in production and in discovering rough spots in writing. After the records were studied

the plays were edited and production notes written before inclusion of each script in the thesis.

For purposes of simplification and to avoid repetition, the plays have been grouped into three categories--the three comedies occupying first division; the fantasy standing alone; and the two serious plays coming together at the end. The three groupings are prefaced with a chapter on general problems encountered in writing radio drama, and each type has a further chapter dealing with the problems faced in that particular category. Production notes follow the individual plays.

The goal of this thesis was twofold: the writer wished to gain an understanding of and a facility in writing original drama for radio as opposed to other dramatic media, and in so doing to gain a knowledge of the problems involved in directing and producing that drama for broadcast purposes.

CHAPTER I

PREPARING THE RADIO PLAY

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PREPARING THE RADIO PLAY

Drama designed for radio involves a technique of writing which is very different from that required by any other oral medium. There are two major reasons for this: one is that the audience is scattered in small groups in the privacy of its own living rooms instead of gathered in large numbers in a theater; the other is that radio depends for its effect solely upon the ear and the imagination of its audience.

For these reasons radio is a much more intimate medium than theater or movies. It is primarily an individual matter, concerning only the radio actor or speaker and the person or tiny group of persons surrounding the loudspeaker. Furthermore, although radio has the advantage of being able to rely upon the imagination of the listener to supply a much more vivid setting for the characters of his play than any stage designer could create, he is also forced to use sound and word pictures alone to fire that imagination. He cannot fall back upon explanatory gestures and elaborate facial expressions to clarify or add interest to a muddled line

of dialogue.

Other qualities to be considered in writing for radio are informality and simplicity. The radio listener hears a line spoken only once and has no opportunity to go back and figure out complex sentence structure or to ponder over glittering figures of speech. He does not even have the benefit of explanatory or illustrative gestures which may often be used in stage plays. For instance, in Richard Brinsley Sheridan's THE RIVALS one finds such a passage of dialogue as the following:

IYDIA: Then before we are interrupted, let me impart to you some of my distress!--I know your gentle nature will sympathize with me, though your prudence may condemn me! My letters have informed you of my whole connection with Beverley; but I have lost him, Julia! My aunt has discovered our intercourse by a note she intercepted and has confined me ever since! ¹

It is doubtful whether the average radio listener could grasp the content of that line of

¹ Act 1, Scene 11.

dialogue if it were presented in its original form. Therefore, for purposes of comprehension the following simplification would be preferable:

LYDIA: Before someone comes, I must tell you something. I'm in terrible trouble. I know you'll sympathize with me, but--well you might disapprove. I wrote you how much I care for Beverley. --But Julia, I've lost him! My aunt found out about it. She opened one of his letters. And she's kept me locked up ever since!

Sentences for radio must be straightforward and relatively brief. All ideas must be made clear by a vivid pattern of dialogue, sound, and music. The imagination of the listener can supply the details only when the essentials are obvious.

Originating the Plot

It is difficult, if not impossible, to determine the initial source of an idea for a plot. It is a well known fact that there are a limited number of plots in existence and that each of these basic plots has been used many times. The problem of the writer, then, is to pick a plot--no matter how original it seems, it has no doubt been used by other authors many times before--and to inject a fresh approach, a new and novel twist which makes it different and sets it apart.

Regardless of the source of the idea, this idea must meet three requirements before it can be considered adequate for a play. Many persons mistake a situation for a plot. They think that because they have a situation in mind that they can start immediately on the writing project. If they do so, they will learn before going far that they have nothing substantial upon which to hinge their dialogue.

The situation is only the first of three requirements for a plot. The next is the obstacle which provides conflict in the lives of the characters and thus gives suspense to the play. After creating the situation and the obstacle, the writer must evolve a solution, and often this is not as simple as it sounds. Solutions for comedies have a tendency to "write themselves" or at least to suggest the one plausible outcome, but solutions for more serious plays present a problem.

The ending of the play must be satisfactory to the audience. It must be logical, it must be fair, and it must answer all the questions presented during the course of the play. This does

not necessarily mean that the play must have a happy ending, but whatever the solution, it must be provocative and the listener must feel a sense of satisfaction that the ending was the only, the inevitable solution for that particular situation, problem, and set of characters.

Important Plot Elements

After the writer has created a plot which meets the three requirements just mentioned, he must make a detailed outline of his play before beginning the actual writing of it. In preparing the outline he must bear in mind two other important elements of effective radio drama--action and suspense.

The first requirement of radio drama is action. Unlike stage plays, radio drama cannot take up several pages at the beginning for clumsy¹ exposition. It must catch attention immediately with vivid action, and it must keep up the swift, intense pace throughout the entire play.

There are two reasons for this need of

¹

Max Wylie, Radio Writing, New York, Farrar and Rinehart, 1939, p. 17.

action. The first is to catch the listener's attention, and the second is to hold it. The radio listener is not necessarily presenting himself unconditionally in front of his loudspeaker inviting the radio artists to entertain him. He is likely to be darning his socks, washing his dishes, playing bridge, building a cupboard, or fixing a light switch. He is not giving his loudspeaker his undivided attention. Therefore, if the radiowright,¹ the director, and the actors are to be heard, they must be doing something which is more interesting to the householder than his socks, his bridge game, or his light switch. Something which will make him

1

Radiowright is a term used here in the sense of "maker" or "writer of radio plays." The "wright" part of the word comes from an Old English verb, weorcan, meaning "work." It is found in such words as playwright and shipwright, meaning "maker of plays" and "builder of ships." The parallelism in radiowright is not altogether exact, in that the definition is "maker of radio plays" rather than "maker of radios." The word, however, is gaining currency among writers for professional radio, and it is used by Norman Corwin in More By Corwin, New York, Henry Holt, 1944.

drop his impedimenta and turn up the volume of his radio to give the program an "ear."

If the radiowright is to accomplish this end, he cannot afford to waste time in the opening lines of the play with dull background material explaining what is happening. Usually the setting and initial characters are introduced briefly by the program announcer or narrator. Occasionally the show opens cold, and a snatch of dialogue is used to set the scene. Just enough information is given to allow the listener to hear the opening lines of the play without the shock of complete unfamiliarity. Once this point is established, something must start happening, and the remainder of the exposition is brought in unobtrusively by the dialogue of the characters.

Time is limited in radio, and often a great deal has to happen in a very short interval. In order to meet radio's time limitations and to keep the listener glued to his loudspeaker until the last syllable is uttered, it is necessary for the play to build to a rapid climax and have a very short denouement.

The second element required for keeping the audience "with" the program from the opening theme

to the station break is a high note of suspense interwoven with the action. The plot must contain enough uncertainty in its method of unfolding so that the listener feels he must hear the solution before he can abandon his radio.

Character Creation

Still another point must be settled by the radiowright before he can begin writing. That is the problem of characters. Logically the characters are, consciously or unconsciously, created simultaneously with the plot. There have to be characters before the problem is of use, but these characters must become real individuals to the writer before he can begin composing his dialogue.

The characters are the people who make the plot real; they are the living, breathing force which gives the play its personal appeal. In radio drama, it is necessary to keep the number of these characters at a minimum. The ideal number is four. The maximum should be six or seven, including doubles, unless the writer is planning a pageant. The reason for this is to avoid confusion on the part of the listener as to identity; to avoid

expense in a professional show; and to avoid unnecessary complications in handling large numbers of people when dealing with amateurs.

Each of the characters decided upon must be an individual--a person one might meet on a bus, at a football game, or on a fishing trip. Or at least someone who might be met in the particular situation the writer has created for him. In a single play each character must be very different from every other character. Each must have his own personality. He must have his own thoughts, and he must talk as a person with those thoughts would talk. Thus, if we have three young college girls, we must not have each of those college girls talk and think exactly like the other two, but each must be different from the other. One might be talkative, gay, and have a riotous sense of humor; another might be shy and retiring and perhaps afraid of men; the third could be neurotic and complaining, always dissatisfied with her lot. Thus, we see that with three individuals, all of approximately the same age and intelligence, there can and must be fundamental differences to distinguish one from the other. Further differences

must develop as the story progresses and each girl fits into the pattern of action.

The Writing Process

The process of writing a play for radio involves the preparation of a detailed outline, including plans for scenes and scene transitions, and the creation of dialogue.

The outline of the play must contain in detail the arrangement of scenes from the opening curtain to the final "tag" line. It is also a good idea to include possibilities for types of transitions suitable for introducing each scene, although the final decision on this point must be left until the writing of dialogue is under way.

With this detailed outline before him, the radiowright can begin the actual creation of dialogue. Perhaps the most difficult of the problems involved in playwriting of any kind is the element of natural-sounding dialogue. Each line must be in keeping with the character for whom it is intended, and it must be suited to conversational speech. Dialogue must be fresh and informal. It may have sloppy diction and poor grammatical construction. It may be written in dialect. But

regardless of how it looks on paper, it must sound natural, informal, and "talkable."

An effective test of conversational dialogue is to read the material aloud. In this way clumsy sentence structure and awkward combinations of words which might cause the actor to stumble in his reading are immediately made obvious.

When beginning a new scene it is well to identify each character unobtrusively in the first two or three lines of dialogue, so the audience is immediately aware of who is present. For instance:

MARY: Oh, John, I thought you were never coming.

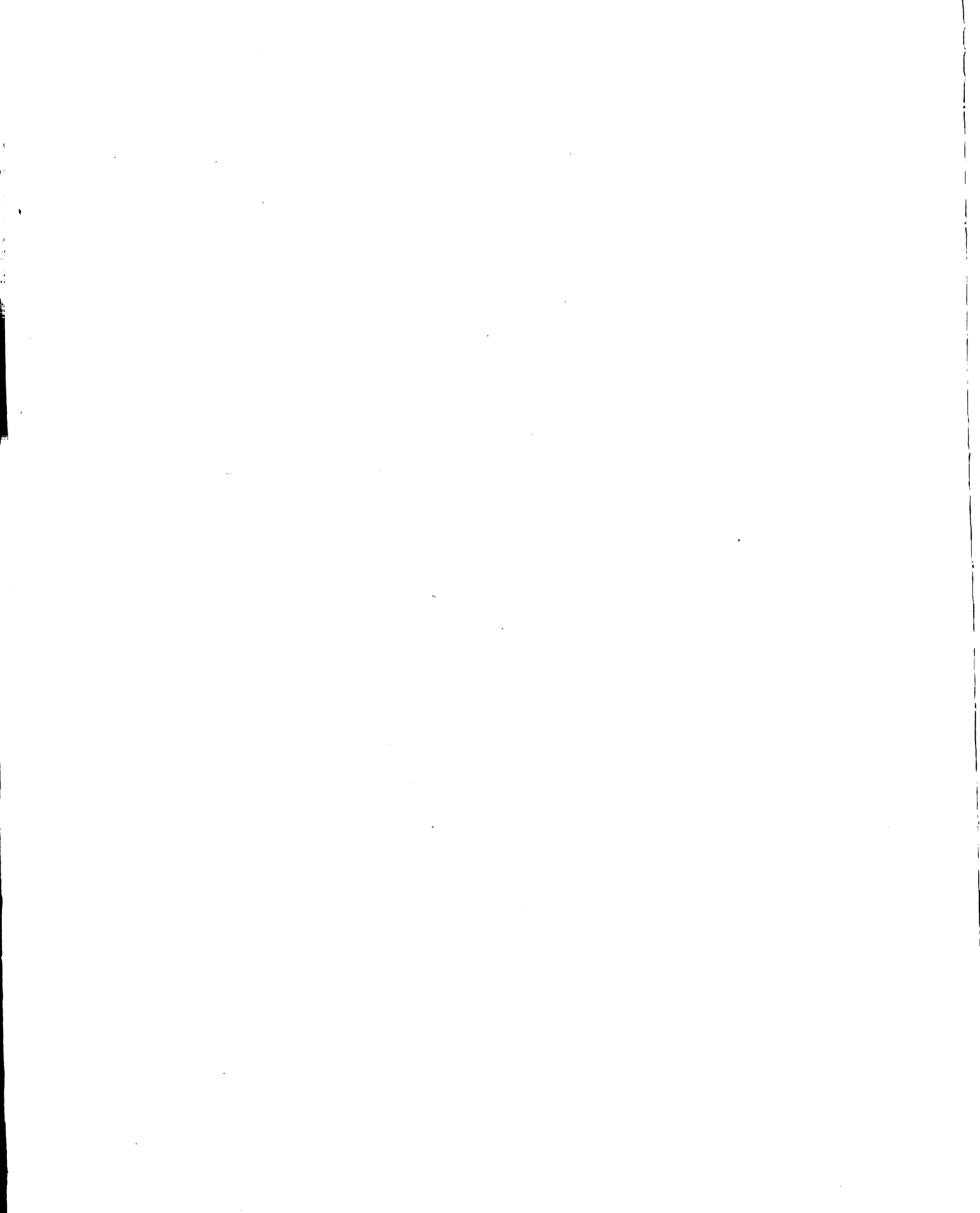
JOHN: But you knew I had to work late tonight, Mary.

This way the listener knows exactly where he stands. Also, in each scene, the setting must be immediately established. If the last scene ended in the barroom and the next scene takes place in the garden, the dialogue must clearly indicate that Joe, the barman, is no longer slinging mugs of beer down the counter but that the major characters are now wandering leisurely down lovers' lane in the moonlight. This is also necessary to enable the

listener to visualize the scene, so that the characters will not be floating about in a vacuum.

We have mentioned the problem of scene transitions, the means by which the radio writer gets his characters from one point to another in his play. These transitions serve much the same purpose as "curtains" in the theater. They break up the action and indicate that a certain amount of time has elapsed since the preceding scene. Frequently they also transfer the characters to an entirely new setting.

The scenes themselves must not be too brief, lest the writing appear choppy and disjointed and the resultant situation call for an inordinate number of transitions. These scene shifts may be made with musical bridges, sound effects, or with very brief intervals of dead air prefaced and followed by fade-outs and fade-ins, respectively. If the play has a narrator, then bridges may be accomplished with short passages of narration. The transition should suit the mood of the play and the situation at hand, and it should be relatively brief. The writer should avoid peppering



his scripts with an abundance of musical bridges closely following one another, because this will give both director and engineer many unnecessary headaches and will rarely improve the quality of the play.

He should also avoid the over-use of sound effects because these can be confusing and unnecessarily difficult in production. The writer should be sure the situation calls for a sound effect before it is inserted. Even scripts planned for professional use should be as simple technically as possible. Unneeded sound effects include such things as useless footsteps and loud or confusing background noises in public places, or the attempt to convey complicated action and movement by means of sound alone without support of explanatory dialogue.

Cautions in Procedure

There are several pitfalls to be guarded against by the beginning writer. First of all, he must avoid the mistake of allowing his imagination to run ahead of his typewriter. Frequently the writer will find himself speeding

ahead to the final clinch while his typewriter is still set on page one. The shock of bringing himself back from the triumphant curtain to page one with only two lines of dialogue written is sometimes so great as to discourage further typewriter-pounding for that day and is the best way to delay the writing process so that the play never achieves reality. The important point is to get something down on paper no matter how silly it sounds. Awkward lines can be smoothed out in the rewriting, but they cannot be smoothed out if they have never been conceived.

Another point is this: this writer has found it wise never to abandon a script when it is partially finished in order to rush on to another idea, intending eventually to return to the first one. If he does, without doubt, that is the last that he or anyone else will ever see of Play Number One. He should stick to the first play until it is finished, even if he feels it is inferior. He will profit by his mistakes, and if Plot Number Two is a worthwhile idea, it will not grow cold with waiting.

Rewriting the Script

Having completed the first draft of the play, the radiowright must devote himself to the task of rewriting. Hours must be spent in reworking, rearranging, and revising. The play must be examined in detail. Every extraneous scene must be cut out. Every line, every word of dialogue which does not materially contribute to the progress of the plot must be deleted. The best scene ever written has no business in any play unless it has some point and unless it moves the plot along in the desired direction.

The writer should be very sure that every line of dialogue is worded in the most effective way. He should not be satisfied with something that "will do." He should go out of his way to devise something fresh, different, and unusual. Tag lines to scenes are particularly important. A scene should never end with an inconsequential line. It should be purposeful, clever, and should contain an element of suspense preparatory to the next scene.

Finally, the script must be checked for technical details. At the same time that he must

guard against excessive use of sound and music, he must also be sure that he has all that he needs. If a telephone receiver is removed and the wire conversation ends during the course of the scene, the sound cues must provide for the replacing of that receiver. Directions for the beginning of background noises must terminate at the proper place with a similar cue. Cross-fades in music and sound for scene transitions must be clearly indicated, and microphone perspectives for the characters noted (i.e., off mike speeches, fade-ins, and fade-outs denoting positions of other characters with regard to the person at the microphone). All this is done to save time and avoid confusion once the play goes into rehearsal.

Summary of the Writing Process

Rules for preparation of the average radio play might be summarized as follows:

1. Build the plot with three specifications in mind:
 - a. Situation
 - b. Obstacle or conflict
 - c. Conclusion
2. Bear in mind that effective radio drama must:
 - a. Have initial and sustained action.

- b. Maintain a high note of suspense.
3. Create characters which are:
 - a. Unique individuals.
 - b. Sharply contrasted within a single show.
 - c. Limited in number, preferably to six or less.
4. Go about the writing process by:
 - a. Preparing a detailed outline of the play, scene by scene.
 - b. Creating dialogue on the pattern of the outline.
 - c. Carefully planning appropriate scene transitions.
 - d. Avoiding excessive musical bridges and unneeded sound effects.
5. Remember:
 - a. Don't let the imagination run too far ahead of the typewriter.
 - b. Don't begin a second play before finishing the first.
6. Rewrite the play with these specifications:
 - a. Cut out all unnecessary dialogue and scenes which do not contribute to the progress of the plot.

- b. Be sure lines are worded in the most effective way.
- c. Check the script for technical details.

Producing the Play

Once the script is in its final form, the play is ready for casting. An adequate number of scripts must be provided to enable each person participating to have a complete script for himself.

The actual procedure for the production of any play varies materially with the mechanical set-up of the studio in use and with the talents and abilities of the actors playing the parts. With the plays included in this thesis, production was accomplished with student actors and sound technicians and with the broadcasting facilities of radio station WEAR.

The problem with student actors is to find persons with the ability to portray certain parts who also have the time and interest to devote to rehearsals. Fortunately the plays of this writer were broadcast as part of a regular weekly drama series, and points for participation were gained toward membership in Alpha Epsilon Rho, national

honorary radio fraternity. This gave added incentive which might not have existed had the plays been presented only as laboratory projects.

Each of the plays had a total of approximately four hours of rehearsal time, with initial read-through, two-hour general rehearsal, and dress performance prior to the broadcast. In isolated cases a slightly longer time was used, but the writer-director attempted to fit production into as nearly a professional radio situation as possible. And professional radio rehearsals are extremely brief.

It became the problem of the writer-director to bring to life the play which had theretofore existed only on paper--to give it warmth and reality. The pattern of sound and music had to be integrated into the drama to make it a coherent whole. Sometimes separate rehearsals with the engineers were required for recorded musical bridges and recorded sound effects. Because no live orchestra was available, as there frequently is in a professional situation, musical bridges had to be selected from records and transcriptions contained in the WEAR transcription library or in private record collections. The records were spotted and timed to

fit the situation required. In most cases an undergraduate student was chosen to help select and run the music.

It was found that, on the whole, much better results were obtained if the show was allowed to run through uninterruptedly from beginning to end each time after the initial read-through, in order to give the students a sense of "playing" the show and to enable the director to obtain a tentative timing schedule. Suggestions for minor script changes and hints for characterization were given between read-throughs.

Unlike professional radio writers, the writer of this thesis had the opportunity of listening to recordings of her plays and of revising and editing the scripts. This is an added advantage to the student of radio writing, but it is a technique which cannot be depended upon by professional radio writers who must prepare their material against a deadline and who hear it produced only once. It is a rare professional radio show which is popular enough to be called back for a second or third performance, particularly on the networks.

Unless the play is being repeated there is little point in the radio writer's revising the material.

CHAPTER II

WRITING COMEDY FOR RADIO

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WRITING COMEDY FOR RADIO

Three of the plots employed by the writer in composing her thesis plays might be listed under the heading "modern comedy romance." Each presents normal everyday characters in unusual situations, thereby gaining much of its humor from the awkward predicaments in which the characters find themselves.

In commercial radio today there is a demand for light romantic comedy, and a large percentage of it is poorly, even shoddily written. It is easy to make the glib statement that radio's comedy writing should be improved; it is not so easy to go about improving it.

The radio listener would hardly guess that a humorous quip which takes perhaps ten seconds or less for the actor to deliver and which the listeners remember for scarcely more than that time, may have taken the author hours to create.¹ And having once devised it, he may have taken even more time in arranging the wording of it so as to achieve the

¹

Jerome Lawrence, ed., Off Like! New York, Essential Books, 1944, p. 13.

best effect.

Radio comedy writers will tell you that economy of language in this type of material is a "must." The writer must pepper his script with humorous quips and clever remarks, ending each scene with an especially effective "punch" or "tag" line which will carry the listener across the transitional period of music or announcing and find him ready and eager for the next scene or act.

There is a definite technique to writing a funny line. In the first place the idea behind the line must be humorous and unusual. Secondly, it must be worded so that the "laugh" part of the line comes at the end and so that the funny key word is not given away until the sentence is finished.¹ An ill-placed key laugh word can ruin an otherwise clever line, because the audience will not laugh while the actor is still talking. There is a tradition in the theater which says that an actor must tell his audience when to laugh. He does this by "plugging" the funny lines, by emphasis, inflection, innuendo and gesture. The writer must also tell his

¹

Ibid., p. 23.

audience when to laugh, and he must do it by economical wording and by cleverly placing the lines with proper psychological preparation in the preceding dialogue.¹

The comedy writer should avoid mistaking jolliness for humor. The writer of this thesis made several such errors in first drafts of her material, and a basically gay situation would go along for two or three pages without any one specific line at which the audience could be expected to laugh. The writer of comedy should remember that his material must have laughs coming in rapid succession in order to qualify for this type of comedy, and that as soon as one laugh line is over, he must begin preparation for the next.

This does not mean that the only consideration of the comedy writer is the "gag" lines. He must devote fully as much time to character portrayal and to logical plot development as the writer of much more serious material if he is to have a worthy play. He must not distort the naturalness

¹

Ibid., p. 21.

of the dialogue by laugh lines ill-suited to the character for whom they are intended,¹ nor must his technique of laughs following each other in fairly rapid succession be obvious to the listener. The laugh lines must be integrated naturally into the dialogue to make a coherent, smooth-flowing and logical whole.

It is also to be remembered, though not to be depended upon by the writer, that an actor can make or break a laugh line by the manner in which he delivers it. An actor can spoil the best laugh line ever written, if he fails to "plug" it adequately or if he pauses at the wrong time. Too many amateur actors make the mistake of pausing just before the key word in the laugh line, thereby killing the humor of the situation and failing to get a laugh. The majority of humorous lines must be delivered straightforwardly, with emphasis and without a pause.

It is quite obvious, then, that in comedy as well as in any other type of dramatic writing, the author, director, and actor must work together to

¹
Ibid., p. 13.

get the most out of the lines on the paper; drama is not drama until it has been lifted from the printed page and given life through characterization.

SCRIPTS AND PRODUCTION NOTES
FOR
THREE ROMANTIC COMEDIES

BABY BE GOOD

ANNCR: A baby is sometimes referred to as a "blessed event." But when the baby arrives the day before the wedding, the event is not likely to be so blessed! At least that's the opinion of Chuck Weston. Chuck's marriage to Joan Todd is just one day off, and he expects at any moment to get a telephone call from his bride-to-be announcing her arrival from East Orange for the wedding. At the moment Chuck is sitting peacefully in his apartment smoking his pipe, when the door bursts open unceremoniously, and Chuck's married, but far from settled sister, Sylvia, (FADING) bears down upon him....

SOUND: DOOR OPENS AND CLOSES WITH A BANG.

SYLVIA: (FADING IN) Chuckie, darling, how are you?

CHUCK: Oh, hello---

SYLVIA: I'm fine, too. Isn't this just glorious weather for April? Makes you think life is real, life is earnest. Oh, I feel wonderful!

CHUCK: So I see.

SYLVIA: And how's the dashing bridegroom-to-be?

CHUCK: Well--

SYLVIA: Chuckie, darling, you look so settled in that chair with your pipe. You really look quite married already.

CHUCK: I am practically.

SYLVIA: Mmm. Tomorrow's the big day. Where's Joan? Hasn't she arrived yet?

CHUCK: I'm expecting a call from her at any moment. She wasn't sure which train she'd be able to catch.

SYLVIA: Then you're going to be home all evening.

CHUCK: Wouldn't budge an inch--until Joan calls.

SYLVIA: Mmm-hum. (TENTATIVELY) Chuckie, dear....

CHUCK: (GOOD-NATUREDLY BUT FIRMLY) Oh, no you don't. If I know you, Sylvia Stewart, that kittenish gleam heralds some innocent sounding request that will leave me in hot water. No, thanks! Chuck Weston wants no part of it, see?

SYLVIA: (PROTESTING) But, Chuck, I didn't say a word. Besides, it's only a very small favor.

CHUCK: Look, Sylvia, I'm being married tomorrow, remember? And I want this evening to be nice and peaceful. So don't get any bright ideas about dragging me off on a fox hunt or something.

SYLVIA: (SWEETLY) Foxes are out of season, dear.
But really, what I want will be no trouble
at all.

CHUCK: I'll bet.

SYLVIA: Don and I are on our way to the Kincaids
for dinner. You know Marshall Kincaid is
that big theatrical producer. And I've just
got to make a whale of an impression on him.

CHUCK: Sylvia, darling, just turn on the glamour.
You don't need me.

SYLVIA: Oh, but I do. That's just what I was coming
to. You see, little Chuckie can't possibly
be left alone, and....

CHUCK: (QUICKLY) Oh, no! I refuse to play nurse-
maid to any three month's old child, even if
he is my nephew!

SYLVIA: But, Chuckie darling, my career!

CHUCK: But, Sylvia darling, my wedding!

SYLVIA: Now look, Chuck, he's already asleep out in
the car. All you have to do is put him to
bed up here. He's positively angellic. He
won't be a bit of trouble.

CHUCK: But, Sylvia--

SYLVIA: Now you wait right here, and I'll dash
down (FADING) to the car and get him...

SOUND: DOOR OPENS AND CLOSSES.

30

CHUCK: (PROTESTING) Sylvia, wait a minute! I can't...

SOUND: TELEPHONE RINGS.

CHUCK: (DEFINITELY IRRITATED) Oohhh, fizzle!

SOUND: PHONE RINGS AGAIN.

CHUCK: All right, all right, I'm coming. Don't bust your buttons!

SOUND: PHONE RINGS. RECEIVER OFF.

CHUCK: (GRUMPILY) Hello.

JOAN: (ON FILTER) Chuck, darling, I'm here.

CHUCK: Huh?

JOAN: (ON FILTER) I said I'm here. This is Joan, remember? Your bride-elect?

CHUCK: Oh, of course, darling. When did you get in?

JOAN: (FILTER) Just now. And, Chuck, I'm so excited! Is everything under control--all arrangements made and everything?

CHUCK: Yep. Everything's set for tomorrow at noon. I've even got you a bridesmaid.

JOAN: (FILTER) Wonderful! Listen, darling, I'm at the station now. Can you pick me up right away?

CHUCK: You betcha. I'll be right down.

SOUND: DOOR OPENS AND CLOSSES WITH A BANG.

SYLVIA: (FADING IN) Well, here he is. Isn't he just

a little darling?

BABY: GURGLES.

CHUCK: (DRILY) Yes, isn't he?

JOAN: (FILTER) What did you say, Chuck?

CHUCK: (QUICKLY) Nothing, I just cleared my throat.
(DOES SO). Can you hold on a minute, Joan.
(MUTTERING) I have to see a gal about a baby.

JOAN: (FILTER) What?

CHUCK: (HASTILY) Nothing, just hold on a second.

JOAN: (FILTER) Okay.

CHUCK: (SOTTO VOCE) Look, Sylvia, I can't possibly
mind the baby tonight. Joan's in town, and
I've got to pick her up at the station. In
a situation like this, three's a crowd!

SYLVIA: Three's a crowd where I'm going, too dear.
I can't very well be glamorous with a baby
tucked under one arm.

CHUCK: You should have thought of that a year ago!

SYLVIA: Why, what a thing to say! You know I adore
little Chuckie. But there are moments when
he doesn't exactly fit into the social
picture.

CHUCK: And this is one of them!

SYLVIA: But dear, it's much easier for you than it is
for me. I have my career to think of. Be-

sides, remember, little Chuckie is really part yours.

CHUCK: (ASTONISHED) What?

SYLVIA: Well, Don and I named him after you as sort of a special tribute. You should be more appreciative.

CHUCK: Sylvia, for heaven's sake, listen. I can't take care of a three-months' old child on the eve of my wedding. I have the bride to consider. What will I tell Joan?

JOAN: (FILTER) What did you say, dear?

CHUCK: Nothing, Joan darling. Just a second.

SYLVIA: Well, why not tell her the truth, dear?

CHUCK: Because Joan doesn't know I've even got a sister. Everything happened so quickly I didn't get around to tell her. And besides--

SYLVIA: Well, there's no time like the present. And, after all, Chuck, if you should want to take care of your sister's child for an evening--

CHUCK: But I don't want to take care of it.

SYLVIA: (IGNORING HIM) If you should want to take care of him, you have a perfect right to do so. I think your bride-to-be is extremely inconsiderate if she interferes with your-- your extra-curricular activities.

CHUCK: That's just the point. Joan thinks I've had far too many extra-curricular activities already.

SYLVIA: Chuck, darling, what have you been doing, or rather-- telling her?

CHUCK: I haven't told her anything. But others haven't been so reticent.

SYLVIA: You mean your past is catching up with you?

CHUCK: Not my real past. But Joan met a girl I used to go with a long time ago quite by accident about a week ago. The girl and I had parted on not too friendly terms, and to get even with me she told Joan a lot of crazy stories--most of which I didn't get details about.

SYLVIA: Well, what's that got to do with this?

CHUCK: Well, it's all very awkward because it makes Joan awfully suspicious of my--social activities. And if I suddenly turn up with a baby--

JOAN: (FILTER) What did you say?

CHUCK: (QUICKLY) Nothing, dear! (TO SYLVIA) See what I mean!

SYLVIA: Well, I think you're exaggerating Joan's gullibility, but just to be sure, what about

this for a solution. If you're so shy about becoming a father for the night, why not get Susie Smith from next door to come in and mother the child. That'll take care of everything, and Joan needn't know about Chuckie being here at all.

CHUCK: Well, I don't know--

SYLVIA: Then it's all settled. (FADING) We'll be back around midnight or a little later.

CHUCK: Sylvia, wait!

SYLVIA: (OFF MIKE--SWEETLY) Good-bye, dear.

SOUND: DOOR CLOSES.

CHUCK: (PAINED) Sylvia!

BABY: WHINES SLIGHTLY.

CHUCK: (DESPERATELY) Look, kid, be a sport, and go back to sleep, huh?

BABY: WHINES LOUDER.

CHUCK: Ssh, Chuckie! Be quiet, please! My wife isn't going to appreciate you at all.

BABY: REALLY CRIES THIS TIME.

CHUCK: (HASTILY) I'm sorry, kid, I didn't mean it! Just forget I mentioned it.

BABY: SUBSIDES TO A GURGLE.

JOAN: (ON FILTER--IMPATIENTLY) Chuck! Chuck, for heaven's sake, what's going on?

CHUCK: (UNCOMFORTABLY--TRYING TO GRIN AND BEAR IT)
Joan, darling, I'm sorry to keep you waiting.

JOAN: (FILTER--RELIEVED) Well, thank heaven, I
wondered what had happened to you. What's
going on over there?

CHUCK: (QUICKLY) Oh, nothing, darling. Nothing at
all.

JOAN: (FILTER) Who were you talking to?

CHUCK: I had a visitor. But she's--I mean he's gone
now--(GULPING)--I'm afraid.

JOAN: (FILTER) Chuck, you sound awfully queer. Do
you feel all right?

CHUCK: (IRONICALLY) Oh, I feel wonderful! I never
felt better in my life. (UNDER HIS BREATH)
I just became a father!

JOAN: (FILTER) What!

CHUCK: (QUICKLY) Look, dear, something awfully im-
portant has come up. I can't very well meet
you at the station.

JOAN: (FILTER) Oh. Well, then, I'll take a cab
and come out there by myself right away.

CHUCK: (HASTILY) Oh, no, dear!

JOAN: (FILTER) What?

CHUCK: Well, what I mean is...uh, don't you think it

would be better if you went right to a hotel?
I have something to attend to here, first, and
then I'll meet you later.

JOAN: (FILTER) Chuck, what's the matter? You act
awfully funny.

BABY: WHINES LOUDLY.

CHUCK: Nothing's the matter. Nothing at all. (UNDER
HIS BREATH) Please, Chuckie, have a heart!
(TO JOAN) Shall we say about nine?

BABY: BEGINS TO HOWL.

JOAN: (FILTER) What's that noise, Chuck?

CHUCK: Noise? I didn't hear any noise. (SOTTO)
Quiet, Chuckie, you're ruining my act.

JOAN: (FILTER) That sounds like a baby.

CHUCK: (LAUGHING NERVOUSLY) Baby? Don't be silly.
Where would a baby come from?

JOAN: (FILTER) Darling, don't tell me you don't
know!

CHUCK: (HASTILY) Look, Joan, you go to the Hotel
Plaza, and get a room. I'll be down as soon
as I can get there. Then I'll explain every-
thing.

JOAN: (FILTER) Okay, pet, but it had better be good!

CHUCK: (SOTTO) Yes, it certainly had!

JOAN: What are you muttering about?

CHUCK: (HASTILY) Oh, nothing, darling. I'll see you

shortly.

SOUND: RECEIVER UP.

CHUCK: What a mess! The night before the wedding, and I develop a family!

BABY: GURGLES.

CHUCK: Well, you needn't look so angellic. The harm's already done, chum.

BABY: GURGLES IN ANSWER.

CHUCK: Let's see, now, what would be the most strategic attack?

BABY: GURGLES AS THOUGH ANSWERING HIM.

CHUCK: You don't say? You know, I think maybe you have a point.

BABY: COOS.

CHUCK: I'll have to dash. Now, you stay put, Chuckie, and I'll send Susie Smith over here to look after you. You'll like Susie. She's--(SIGNIFICANTLY)--well, she's not bad--if you get what I mean.

BABY: COOS IN ANSWER. ALMOST GIGGLING.

CHUCK: Now I want you to behave yourself. No rough stuff, see? Susie's a nice girl--not awfully bright, but very, very attractive. Blonde.

BABY: COOS IN AWE AT THIS.

CHUCK: Yeah, so you just sit tight. And I'll send

you over a girl friend.

MUSIC: SEVERAL GAY LITTLE NOTES.

CHUCK: (FADING IN)....so you see, Susie, I'm getting married tomorrow and I can't very well explain to my wife about the baby. You know how women are.

SUSIE: (NOT A BRAIN IN A CARLOAD) No, how are they?

CHUCK: (AWKWARDLY) Well--sometimes I wonder myself. Anyway, the baby's mother is out for the evening, and I have to go meet my wife.

SUSIE: (ASTONISHED) You--what? ..(VACANTLY) I don't get it!

CHUCK: Well, I realize it sounds complicated, Susie, but I can't explain now. Will you go?

SUSIE: Well, yes I guess so, Chuck, only this is awfully mixed up--

CHUCK: (DRILY) Yes, it certainly is. Well, look, Susie, here's the key (FADING) to my apartment, and.....

MUSIC: SEVERAL QUIET LITTLE NOTES.

JOAN: (IMPATIENTLY) Oh, desk clerk, what is the number of Mr. Weston's apartment? Mr. Chuck Weston.

CLERK: (THE FRANKLIN PANGBORN VARIETY) Mr. Weston is

in room 305. But who's calling, please? It's rather late.

JOAN: Miss Joan Todd.

CLERK: (SIGNIFICANTLY) A special friend?

JOAN: His fiancée.

CLERK: (CLEANS THROAT) Oh, yes, of course. I--

SUSIE: (FADING IN) Could you tell me which is Mr. Weston's apartment?

CLERK: Not you, too?

SUSIE: Oh, yes, Mr. Weston asked me to come.

JOAN: Really?

CLERK: (DRILY) He seems to have asked a number of people. If this is going to be a party, I think I should warn you to be very quiet. The management does not tolerate any disturbance.

SUSIE: Oh, I'll be very quiet, sir.

CLERK: Well, I certainly hope so. Now--

SUSIE: Please, may I go right up. It's very urgent.

JOAN: Urgent?

SUSIE: Yes, Chuck--er, Mr. Weston asked me to hurry. He gave me the key.

JOAN: (INCREDULOUS) You mean you have a key to his apartment?

CLERK: (FUSSILY) Young lady, that is against the rules!

JOAN: It is also a little unusual, to say the least.

CLERK: If you'll give me your name, Miss, I'll buzz Mr. Weston and announce you both at the same time.

JOAN: Oh, you needn't bother. He might not answer anyway. He seems to have several "dates" this evening. I waited for him for over an hour. I'll go right up.

SUSIE: It won't do you any good. He's not home anyway. (FADING) I'll go right up, clerk.

CLERK: You what?--Well--

JOAN: (MUSING--HAIR TO HERSELF) Say, how does she know so much about Chuck's activities? I think I'd better look into this. (UP) Uh, just a minute....

CLERK: (PROTESTING--FADING) Now just a moment, ladies. This is very irregular!

SOUND: TWO PAIRS OF FOOTSTEPS.

JOAN: Uh, I don't believe I caught your name...

SUSIE: I didn't tell it. But it's Smith.

JOAN: (DOUBTING IT) Smith?

SUSIE: Susie Smith.

JOAN: Hmm. Have you known Mr. Weston long?

SUSIE: Oh, yes, for a very long time. Both Chuck and his sister.

JOAN: He has a sister?

SUSIE: Oh, yes.

JOAN: Does she approve of your visiting him at this hour of the night--alone?

SUSIE: (GIGGLING SELF-CONSCIOUSLY) Well, she doesn't know anything about it. You see, it's a secret.

JOAN: Oh, it is!

SUSIE: Yes.

JOAN: Well, do you think it would be all right if you told me? You see, I'm an old friend of the family, too.

SUSIE: (SURPRISED) You are? Oh, well, then I suppose it's all right....It seems there's a baby mixed up in it some way.

JOAN: (ASTONISHED) A baby!

SUSIE: Yeah, from what he said I gathered there was a baby and two wives.

JOAN: Two wives!

SUSIE: You know, I thought it was kinda funny, too. But that seemed to be the angle. He said he couldn't very well leave the baby alone because the baby's mother had gone out for the evening and he had to go and meet his wife. I think he said it was his wife. Or maybe it was his girl friend.

JOAN: Two wives, a baby, and maybe a girl friend!

Good grief! (WITH RESOLUTION) I've had enough. When Mr. Weston comes back, Miss--

SUSIE: Smith.

JOAN: Miss Smith, you can tell him that I came, I saw, and that I left him to his--his harem!

SUSIE: Who shall I say called?

JOAN: Miss Todd. Miss Joan Todd. His fiancée. As of immediately, his ex-fiancée!

SUSIE: Oh, my goodness!

MUSIC: FEW GAY LITTLE NOTES.

SUSIE: (FADING IN)...and she said your ex-fiancée. She seemed kind of upset about something.

CHUCK: Oh, Susie, how could you!

SUSIE: Did I do something wrong?

CHUCK: (WAILING) Did you do something wrong? Susie, darling, all you did was to break up my happy home. I was going to be married tomorrow. Married! Ha! I laugh when I think of it. Now I'll be lucky if she ever speaks to me again. Two wives, a baby, and a girl friend! Great guns!

BABY: WHIMPERS.

CHUCK: (GRINDING HIS TEETH) Oooohh! Whoever decided to call a baby a blessed event was a wretched idealist!

SUSIE: I'm sorry, Chuck.

CHUCK: Oh, it wasn't your fault, Susie. It's just an unfortunate combination of circumstances.

SUSIE: Yeah.

CHUCK: (IDEA) Say, I wonder!

SUSIE: (HOPEFULLY) You got an idea how to get us out of this mess?

CHUCK: Wait! You mentioned to Joan that I had a sister, didn't you?

SUSIE: Yes, I said--

CHUCK: That establishes the sister angle. I never happened to mention it to her before. And if I told her now, she'd never believe me. But, since you did--

SUSIE: Yes?

CHUCK: Susie, I think that's the answer. I'll call Sylvia immediately.

SOUND: RECEIVER OFF. DIAL "O".

CHUCK: Hello, operator? Give me the Kincaid residence.

(FADING) Yes, Marshall Kincaid....

MUSIC: FEW GAY LITTLE NOTES.

CHUCK: Now, Sylvia, did you explain everything to Joan?

SYLVIA: Not yet, but I called her and invited her over here. I told her I had some information I thought she'd be vitally interested in. It's

easier to explain things like this in person than it is over the phone.

CHUCK: Yeah. But I wish she'd hurry----You're sure she's coming?

SYLVIA: Of course, Chuck darling, just relax.

BABY: GURCLES HAPPILY.

CHUCK: I don't see how he can look so angelic after all the mischief he's caused tonight.

SYLVIA: He takes after his mother, dear.

CHUCK: Hmm. Sylvia, you aren't planning on a very large family, are you?

SYLVIA: (SURPRISED) Why, I hadn't thought about it. Why?

CHUCK: Nothing. I was just thinking it was lucky you didn't have twins!

SYLVIA: (HALF LAUGH) You're so cute! (COOING)
Chuckie, darling...when I get you safely out of this mess with Joan, how about doing me another little favor?

CHUCK: Oh, no! One of those monstrous "little favors" of yours per evening is quite sufficient!...
Hey, quit messing up my hair!

SYLVIA: Aw, come on, Chuckie, be a sport. I left a perfectly wonderful party with the Marshall

Kincaids to come over here and get your love life straightened out. Now, the least you can do is watch Chuckie for the rest of the evening.

CHUCK: No! That kid has gotten me into enough trouble for one evening. ---Quit running your fingers through my hair..!

SOUND: KNOCK ON DOOR.

CHUCK: That must be Susie coming back for her money.
(UP) Come in, Susie.

SOUND: DOOR OPENS.

JOAN: (FADING IN) It isn't Susie, but I thought...
(ABRUPTLY) Well, pardon me if I intrude, Mr. Weston.

CHUCK: (STARTLED) Joan!

JOAN: Which one of your two wives is this one?

CHUCK: Neither one. I mean--

JOAN: Oh, so you admit you have two wives?

CHUCK: I admit nothing of the kind. Joan, this is my sister, Sylvia Stewart, who called you about the baby.

JOAN: (ICILY) Since when do brother and sister engage in such warm little love scenes?

SYLVIA: Oh, oh. I think this is where I came in.

Come, little Chuckie, let's you and I vacate.

(FADING) The temperature is falling by degrees.

BABY: (GURGLES OFF)

SOUND: DOOR CLOSSES.

CHUCK: Sylvia, wait!

JOAN: Don't let me keep you from your charming little family scene. I was just leaving.

CHUCK: Now, Joan, be reasonable. Sylvia really is my sister. But she's sort of the affectionate type. (LAURELY) Anyway, she was only messing up my hair.

JOAN: You don't expect me to believe that?

CHUCK: Well, I admit the situation is a little unusual. But I can explain, if you just won't get excited.

JOAN: Excited! Who's getting excited? Anyway, how do you expect me to feel. I arrive the day before I'm to be married and find my husband-to-be already nicely settled down with a wife and family--maybe even two wives and a family. That's not exactly my idea of a blueprint for happiness!

CHUCK: I know, dear. But Sylvia can explain. (CALLING) Sylvia?...Where did she go?

JOAN: I think your glamorous Sylvia has made a timely exit. And I think that I shall do likewise! (FADING) Good-bye, you----Bluebeard!

SOUND: DOOR SHAM.

CHUCK: Joan, wait! ...Oohhh! women! Life would be so darned much simpler if I'd stay a bachelor!

MUSIC: GAY LITTLE INTERLUDE WITH TOUCH OF SOUR NOTES.

SYLVIA: I thought that dinner party would never break up. But I got the job, Chuck. Marshall Kincaid wants me for a part in his new show.

CHUCK: (GLUMLY) That's fine. That's just dandy, Sylvia. You get the job, but I lose my girl.

SYLVIA: (ASTONISHED) You mean, she actually walked out on you?

CHUCK: If I recall correctly, Sylvia, you did your share of walking out, too. Just when I needed you most.

SYLVIA: That was what might have been termed a strategic exit. I expected you to take the strong-arm approach, and sweep her off her feet. You could hardly do that effectively with an audience of one and a baby.

CHUCK: So you limited the audience to the baby.

SYLVIA: Has Joan gone back home?

CHUCK: She may be in the South Pacific dancing the

hula for all I know.

SYLVIA: You mean you didn't do anything to stop her?

CHUCK: I tried calling her. She won't answer. What else can I do?

SYLVIA: The most obvious thing, stupid. Just what I mentioned a minute ago. Sweep her off her feet. From what you told me, that's what you must have done when you first met her.

CHUCK: (PATIENTLY) Sylvia, it just so happens there's a little matter of two wives and a baby who have messed things up in the intervening period.

SYLVIA: Nonsense. Where's the good old Weston appeal? Use the masterful approach, and she'll forget all about the two wives and the baby.

CHUCK: You don't know Joan. She already has a grudge against my past.

SYLVIA: Stupid Chuckie, all women are like that. We can't afford to let men think the worldly type appeals to us, because if we did we'd never be able to handle the brutes.

CHUCK: But I--

SYLVIA: Now you take my advice and go over there now. Do a little plain and fancy love-making, and that wedding will go off tomorrow as scheduled.

CHUCK: Well, I don't know. I suppose it's worth a try.

SYLVIA: That's the spirit. Now get going!

MUSIC: BRIEF INTERLUDE.

SOUND: BAG BANGED ON FLOOR.

JOAN: (SNIFFLING) There! I guess that's the last bag.

SOUND: RECEIVER OFF. DIAL.

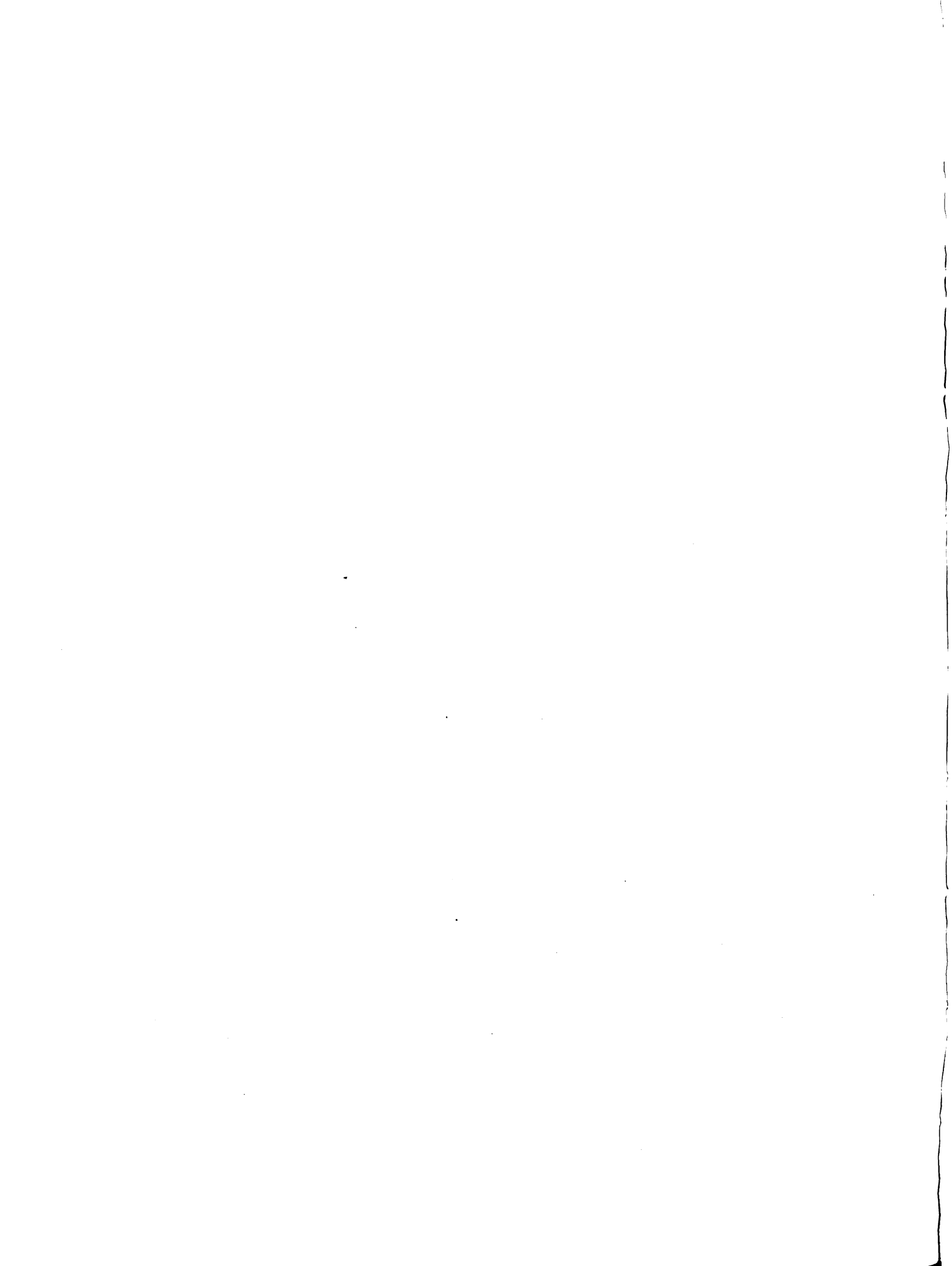
JOAN: (STILL SNIFFLING) Hello, Grand Central? I want to make a reservation on the first train back to East Orange....Yes. Not until morning? Well, yes, I suppose that will have to do. The name is Todd. Joan Todd. (GRINDING HER TEETH) Miss Joan Todd. Thank you.

SOUND: RECEIVER UP. PAUSE. PHONE RINGS. RECEIVER DOWN.

JOAN: Hello? ...Oh, my long distance call. Thank you, operator....Hello, Mother? This is Joan.

SOUND: DOOR OPENS QUIETLY.

JOAN: (STARTING TO CRY COMICALLY) Oh, I'm so miserable!...I'm coming home...tomorrow morning. No, I'm not getting married. I'm going to be an old maid! Beginning right



now I hate men!Well, it seems Chuck already has two wives--and a baby....

(DESPERATION) Oh, I don't know. I can't really believe Chuck is the bigamist type. I know he has quite a past, but---well, I'm sure he wouldn't stoop to bigamy, only....

CHUCK: (CHUCKLES SOFTLY--FADING IN) Thanks, kitten. That's quite an admission coming from you.

JOAN: (STARTLED) Chuck! (SUSPICIOUSLY) How long have you been standing there?

CHUCK: (EVASIVELY) Oh, for quite a spell.

JOAN: How dare you! I---Just a minute! (INTO PHONE) Mother? Something's come up. I'll call you back. 'Bye!

SOUND: RECEIVER UP.

JOAN: You have your nerve, Chuck Weston, barging in here like this.

CHUCK: Come here, kitten.

JOAN: I will not!

CHUCK: Come here!

JOAN: But--

CHUCK: There, that's better.

JOAN: Now, look here, Chuck Weston, if you think you can come in here and--and----- I'm

going home, I'll have you know, on the very next train.

CHUCK: (GRINNING) Are you?

JOAN: What are you grinning at?

CHUCK: Come here.

JOAN: Don't you touch me! Don't you dare touch---

(SMOTHERED AS HE KISSES HER). Let me go!

If you think you can get away with this, you're crazy. I have no intention of becoming Mrs. Charles Weston, the fourth!

CHUCK: The third. I have only two other wives.

JOAN: And you stand there boldly and admit it!

CHUCK: (GRINNING) Sure, why not? I'm having quite a career for myself. Kiss me again.

JOAN: No! (SMOTHERED--WEAKLY) Chuck, I---

CHUCK: (GRINNING BROADLY NOW) Ahmm. And again.

(PAUSE FOR KISS) There now, that's much better.

JOAN: (EXASPERATED) Chuck, what am I going to do with you? How am I supposed to cope with all these other wives of yours?

CHUCK: (CASUALLY) Oh, I'll just kill 'em off.

JOAN: Chuck, you wouldn't dare!

CHUCK: (LAUGHING LOUDLY) You monkey....

JOAN: (COVLY) Chuck.

CHUCK: Hmmm?

JOAN: You haven't really got two other wives...
have you?

CHUCK: Oh, sure, I've got half a dozen scattered
around the country.

JOAN: (PAINED) Chuck!

CHUCK: You remember once I told you I had a past?
In fact, if I remember correctly, you fabricated a large part of it yourself. Well, this is just part of my baser nature coming to light.

JOAN: But, Chuck, it's not legal.

CHUCK: No, but it's a lot of fun!

JOAN: (PAINED) Chuck!What about the baby?

CHUCK: Oh, him. Well, he belongs to my third wife.

JOAN: Your third?

CHUCK: (MUSING) Or is it the fourth?

JOAN: Chuck!I think you're awful! (GIGGLING)
And I think you're spoofing me.

CHUCK: (INNOCENTLY) Why, I'd never do that.

JOAN: (GIGGLING) Oh, no?Chuck..

CHUCK: Mmm?

JOAN: You know what time it is?

CHUCK: Haven't the faintest idea.

JOAN: It's one a.m.

CHUCK: You don't say.

JOAN: April fourteenth.

CHUCK: The date has a familiar ring. I wonder which
of my wedding anniversaries this is.

JOAN: I think I know.

CHUCK: You do? Which?

JOAN: Your first. And the time--high noon.

CHUCK: And who would you say is the lucky bride?

JOAN: Why you conceited thing!

CHUCK: Come on, tell me. Who's the bride?

JOAN: Well, I'd say it might be...me!

CHUCK: Why you conceited thing!

CHUCK AND JOAN: BURST OUT LAUGHING. SWEEP OUT BY.

MUSIC: HAPPY LITTLE INTERLUDE CROSS FADING INTO
WEDDING RECESSIONAL

SOUND: DOOR OPENS.

CHUCK: Well, Mrs. Weston, take a good hold and I'll
heave you across the threshold.

JOAN: Kiss me first, Mr. Weston.

CHUCK: Hmmum. (COMIC KISS) Come on, feather weight,
let's get going. (WITH EFFORT) There!

SOUND: DOOR CLOSES.

JOAN: Kiss me again.

CHUCK: Why you little glutton. (PAUSE FOR KISS)

That enough?

JOAN: (SIGNIFICANTLY) For now!

BABY: OFF--WHIMPERS.

JOAN: What was that noise?

CHUCK: I didn't hear anything.

BABY: OFF--WHIMPERS LOUDER.

JOAN: Well, I did. And it sounded like---

CHUCK: (GROANING) Don't tell me...

BABY: OFF--REALLY CRIES THIS TIME.

CHUCK: Oh, no. Not again!

JOAN: (THREATENING) Chuck!

CHUCK: Now, don't be hasty, Joan. There must be a logical explanation for this. Where is he?

JOAN: I think that's the little cherub over there on the couch.

CHUCK: Ah, yes. (GRINDING HIS TEETH) The little darling.What's this? A note?

JOAN: Sure enough. Let's see it. (READING)
"Dear Chuckie, I realize this is a bit irregular--"

CHUCK: Is she kidding?

JOAN: --"but we're starting rehearsals on Kincaid's new show immediately, and there was no one to leave little Chuckie with. So I brought him over here after the wedding ceremony. I know

a honeymoon is a poor place for a baby, but he's really no trouble. Just put him in some out-of-the-way nook and ignore him. I'll come around for him in the morning. Love, Sylvia."

CHUCK: It seems to be inevitable that you and I are to have a family--ahead of schedule!

JOAN: (GIGGLING) You know, this situation really has its funny side.

CHUCK: (DRILY) If you can see it. Personally, I can't!

BABY: GURGLES CONTENTEDLY.

CHUCK: Joan, are families always this much trouble?

JOAN: (GOOD NATUREDLY) You should know, dear. You've had five!

CHUCK: Don't be funny! (IDEA) I know! I'll call Susie again. She can take little Chuckie home for the night. Then we'll have the whole apartment to ourselves.

JOAN: Um-humm. Shall we--?

CHUCK: Kiss me first. (PAUSE FOR KISS) Darling Joan!

JOAN: (TENTATIVELY) Chuck?

CHUCK: Hmm?

JOAN: You know, (SIGNIFICANTLY) I think little

Chuckie needs a playmate!

BABY: GURGLES QUICKLY.

MUSIC: COMIC SWEEPING INTERLUDE TO FINISH.

Notes on Writing and Production of
BABY BE GOOD

Plot Creation

The major problem in creating the plot of BABY BE GOOD involved the character of Susie. Chuck needed someone to take the child off his hands for the evening. In the first draft, Chuck himself decided that he would call up Susie, an acquaintance, to come and look after the baby. The transaction was made by telephone and involved a lot of unnecessary repeated exposition as Chuck had to explain the situation (which the audience already knew) to the rather brainless baby-sitter. This slowed the action, added nothing in the way of humor, and made for rather awkward plot progression.

In the revised edition, it was decided that Sylvia should suggest getting Susie to look after the baby, thereby offering an apparently plausible solution to Chuck's problem and allowing her to leave in free conscience for an evening of fun. Then instead of calling Susie on the telephone, it was decided that Chuck should go after her personally, thereby establishing the character of Susie in one brief scene before the clash in the hotel.

lobby between Susie and Joan. Further hints as to Susie's attractive appearance but rather vague brain-power are dropped in an added scene when Chuck tells the baby "man to man" about the "cute little blonde." Additional humor is injected here in the character of the baby's responses to Chuck's description of the girl.

A further minor revision was made in the character of the hotel clerk. In the first draft he was "straight," but it was decided that for purposes of comedy and to add zest to the scene between Joan and Susie, the clerk should be made into a comedy character of the fussy Franklin Pangborn variety. Still another minor revision occurred in the telephone conversation between Chuck and Joan when Sylvia is trying to convince Chuck he should keep the baby. Two or three interruptions on the part of Joan were deemed necessary to keep her presence on the other end of the wire in the minds of the audience.

Acting

The casting of BABY BE GOOD offers few problems. The player who portrays Chuck must have a pleasant voice and must not, under any circumstances, be allowed to sound cross or disagreeable

even when harrassed beyond endurance. His "wit's end" reactions must be humorous, not sordid and villainous. Above all, he must "enjoy" the part.

Joan is an ingenue type with a few minor variations. Sylvia must be sophisticated but not affected; she is probably in her twenties. She must gush without overdoing it; she is not a busybody.

Susie's character might best be described as "vacant." She just doesn't have the usual amount of intelligence; if she did have, there wouldn't be any play. The actress doing Susie should play her wide-eyed, innocent, and well-meaning; she is not a villainess. She upsets things because she doesn't know any better, not because she wants to cause trouble.

The baby is really a full-length character in the play, and in this particular production the baby very nearly stole the show. Obviously, the child is precocious; otherwise he would not react as he does. When Chuck describes Susie to the child, the baby's gurgles and coos furnish most of the laughs in the scene. The baby must be played "live." Under no circumstances should

he be recorded because this would ruin the entire effect, unless, of course, a special recording was made for this play. An experienced actor can have fully as much fun developing the character of the baby as he could in developing a character with definite lines.

The hotel clerk, as we mentioned before, should be played the fussy Franklin Pangborn type.

Directing

In directing BABY BE GOOD, the same as in directing any light comedy, it must be remembered that the play needs expert timing and pace. It must move rapidly, and cues must be snapped up on the split second. In a play such as this, in which the dialogue must move rapidly, emphasis plays an important part to insure the fact that the audience catches the meaning of the lines as they are read. Emphasis is important in any type of drama, but it is particularly important in comedy.

Sound and Music

Sound effects offer no special problems. The music, as in the cases of all the other comedies in this series, should have facetious "laugh" notes in keeping with the moods of the various scenes, and

bridges are best described in the script directions calling for them.

Script Changes

There were only two minor changes made in the script after it went into production. One was made because of the mis-reading of a line by an actor during try-outs, and it pertained to the telephone conversation between Chuck and Joan when the baby howls at an unstrategic time. Chuck says in an aside to the child, "Quiet Chuckie, you're ruining my act." Originally this line read, "You're ruining everything." The chance twist in dialogue seemed better to fit the situation, so the line was changed. The other revision came in the love scene at the end of the play. Originally there were two or three too many kisses, and this became evident during rehearsals.

HONEYMOON BY PROXY

ANNCR: Careers for women used to be a fad. Now they're an everyday occurrence. By and large, men have acclimated themselves to this business of having wives who work, but for some it occasionally gets to be a bit trying. Witness, for instance, the case of Bill Early. Bill's story really begins a little while before the wedding.

SOUND: SNEAK IN BACKGROUND OF NEWSPAPER OFFICE. NOISE AND TYPEWRITERS.

ANNCR: To be specific, it all begins early one evening in the office of the Lake Forest Chronicle where Bill's fiancée, Nikki Taylor, is chief writer in the special features department. Bill sits patiently in a chair in Nikki's office as she flits in and out gathering information and dispensing news stories in the various news "baskets" in the editorial room. After about the fifth or sixth of these trips, Bill finally decides (FADING) to put a stop to this reportorial goose-chase....

BILL: Now, look, Nikki, how much longer does this go on?

NIKKI: What do you mean?

BILL: I mean how much longer does this rat-race go on? I've been waiting nearly an hour. I thought we had a dinner date.

NIKKI: We have, darling. But I had to get some of these odds and ends written before the deadline. Just be patient, Bill. I have one more item, here. ---Now where did I put that dog story? Oh, yes, here it is. I just have to put this in Burt's basket, and then I'm all set.

BILL: (LONG BREATH) At last! Then can we eat?

NIKKI: Yes, pet, then we can eat. (FADING) I'll be right back.

BILL: Fine! (WHISTLES GAILY TO HIMSELF A MOMENT).

BURT: (FADING IN) Nikki! Nikki! I've got a special story here--. Oh! Where's Nikki?

BILL: (CROSSLY) Out.

BURT: Out of the office?

BILL: She will be very shortly. At the moment, Burt, she's busy depositing dog stories in your news basket.

BURT: Oh, she's--occupied, I gather.

BILL: You gather correctly. She has an engagement --a very special engagement that will last all evening.

BURT: (GRINNING) I get it. Okay, Bill, I'll give the assignment to someone else. Have fun!

BILL: Thanks, Burt. Do you realize this is the first honest-to goodness full-evening date I've had with Nikki for more than a month? What does she do down here till all hours of the night?

BURT: (CASUALLY) Oh, people murder each other, set fire to large buildings, and kidnap mayors' daughters regularly and with great abandon. It's Nikki's job to write the human interest angle on all that stuff.

BILL: (GRUMPILY) Well, just for tonight I need a little human interest, so kindly delay any major catastrophes until morning.

BURT: (LAUGHING-FADING) I'll see what I can do.

BILL: (LONG BREATH--WHISTLING AGAIN A MOMENT).

NIKKI: (FADING IN) Wasn't that Burt I just saw leaving the office?

BILL: It was.

NIKKI: What did he want?

BILL: He promised me confidentially not to allow any murders, fires or kidnappings until morning. So come on, Nikki, darling, let's get some food. I'm famished.

NIKKI: Okay, Bill, where do we go?

BILL: I found a wonderful Italian restaurant down at the other end of town, and I hear they have terrific food. It's called Joe's Place, and it's not very elegant, but it's nice and secluded, and that's important in our case.

NIKKI: What do you mean?

BILL: I mean, so we don't keep getting urgent phone calls from Editor Burt West of the Lake Forest Chronicle demanding Miss Nikki Taylor's presence at the scene of the latest axe murder. Come on, chum, I'm determined to make this a very special evening.

NIKKI: (GRINNING) Okay, just a second while I leave a note for Burt....There! Now let's go stir up some excitement in the Italian quarter!

MUSIC: ITALIAN MUSIC REMINISCENT OF ITALIAN CAFE.
IN A MOMENT, THEN HOLD BEHIND.

SOUND: RESTAURANT NOISES. VERY FAINT IN BACKGROUND.

NIKKI: (SIGHING) Oh, Bill, this is wonderful! It's so peaceful and quiet compared to the office. I wish we could do this more often.

BILL: We could, darling, if you'd just give that boss of yours the gate, and marry me.

NIKKI: But Bill, we've gone all over that a million times. I'm just not the stay-at-home type. You know how much I love to cover murders and fires. They're exciting and loads of fun! Why, I'd die if I had to be cooped up at home all the time. I'm built to be a career girl, not a doting wife.

BILL: And I can't change your mind?

NIKKI: Nope.

BILL: (STRUGGLING WITH HIMSELF) Well, would you consider getting married....if I let you keep your job?

NIKKI: Bill, darling, that's what I've been fighting for for the last three years.

BILL: (ALMOST UNBELIEVING) You mean you will?

NIKKI: Of course, darling. I've wanted to get married all along, but...well, I know how you felt about career wives, so I just

decided that was that.

BILL: Well, understand I don't like it, but if it must be, it must be. Only one thing, Nikki darling...

NIKKI: What's that?

BILL: Do you think you could manage a little less night work?

NIKKI: (LAUGHING) I'll speak to the boss about it in the morning.

BILL: Let's go.

NIKKI: (SURPRISED) Where, for heaven's sake?

BILL: (VERY PRACTICAL) To get married, of course.

NIKKI: But Bill darling, not tonight!

BILL: Why not? It's the first time I've seen you alone for a whole month. How do I know when you'll have another whole evening free?

NIKKI: But Bill, that's silly.

BILL: Silly, nothing! I'm getting desperate!

NIKKI: But, Bill, I want a wedding. A big wedding with lavender and old lace, a wedding veil and a cake, and a church and an organ to make it all very official.

BILL: Can you arrange to take next month off?

NIKKI: (SURPRISED) Why, no, of course not. You

know I'm the only feature writer Burt's got. In fact, I'm the only girl reporter he's got--since Marge got married last week.

BILL: (RESIGNEDLY) See what I mean! You hardly even get one night off, and you expect to find time for a fancy wedding. What about a honeymoon?

MIMI: Oh. (HOPEFULLY) Well, I might get a week-end. Would that help?

BILL: This week-end?

MIMI: (DOUBTFULLY) Well, I don't know. Of course, tomorrow's Saturday, and Saturday's my day off. And then there's Sunday...But--

BILL: Fine. Let's go.

MIMI: (PROTESTING) But, Bill this isn't practical.

BILL: Love is never very practical, dear. If you wait for it to be practical, you'll die an old maid.

MIMI: (LAUGHING) Oh, Bill, you're cute!

BILL: (OVERLY CASUAL) By the way, I think I might even arrange for the church and the organ. There's a little chapel just a couple of blocks away. I noticed it when I first discovered Joe's Place, and--

NIKKI: Bill--

BILL: And it's really--

NIKKI: Bill, did you have all this planned for tonight?

BILL: (INNOCENTIY) Why, where on earth did you get that idea?

NIKKI: Bill, you're sweet. But a wedding takes planning.

BILL: But we're not having a wedding, darling. We're just getting married. All we have to do is pick up some flowers as we go by the florist's shop.

NIKKI: But, Bill, I look a sight. I'm not dressed for a wedding.

BILL: Darling, you've got points enough to be discharged! What do you say?

NIKKI: (DOUBTFULLY) Well....

BILL: Come on. Ditch that horrid newspaper for at least one week-end, and let's get married, huh?

NIKKI: (SUDDENLY) All right, I will! A girl has to think of her own private life once in a while. ...So the paper can wait!

BILL: (WITH ENTHUSIASM) Now you're talking my language!

MUSIC: ITALIAN MUSIC UP A MOMENT. CROSS FADE INTO

WEDDING RECESSIONAL. THEN OUT.

SOUND: TWO PAIRS FOOTSTEPS.

BILL: My apartment is hardly the most romantic place for a honeymoon, but it was the best I could do on such short notice.

SOUND: FOOTSTEPS STOP. DOOR OPENS.

NIKKI: It's fine, darling. Any place would be fine as long as we can be together.

BILL: (SOFTLY) Nikki, darling!

SOUND: ONE PAIR FOOTSTEPS A SECOND.

BILL: (CALLING) Hey, wait, Nikki!

NIKKI: (OFF MIKE) What's the matter, Bill?

BILL: I have to carry you across the threshold. Otherwise it's not official.

NIKKI: (OFF MIKE) What's not official?

BILL: Uh...Well, I don't know. It's just not supposed to be official. So come back here, and let's do it according to Hoyle.

NIKKI: (LAUGHING) (FADING IN) Okay, you win. I really enjoy being pampered anyway.

BILL: (WITH EFFORT) There you go. (BREATH OUT) Now--how about a kiss, Mrs. Early?

NIKKI: With pleasure, Mr. Early. (PAUSE FOR KISS --SLIGHT GIGGLE) Mrs. Early...Sounds funny, doesn't it?

BILL: (DEFENSIVELY) It sounds just like it ought to sound.

NIKKI: Of course, darling, I only meant it's strange and new. I like it. (WITH FEELING) I like it very much.

SOUND: PHONE RINGS.

BILL: (CASUALLY) Kiss me, darling.

SOUND: PHONE RINGS. PAUSE. AGAIN.

NIKKI: Bill, darling, I hate to be prosaic, but isn't that a phone I hear ringing?

SOUND: PHONE RINGS.

BILL: (DETERMINEDLY) I didn't hear anything.

NIKKI: Bill, darling, you might as well answer it. Whoever it is sounds pretty determined.

SOUND: PHONE RINGS.

BILL: Oh, it can't be very important, and--

SOUND: PHONE RINGS AGAIN.

NIKKI: Well, if you won't answer it, I will.

SOUND: RECEIVER OFF.

NIKKI: Bill Early's residence.

BURT: (ON FILTER--RELIEVED) Is that you, Nikki?

NIKKI: Why, yes, Burt, what's the matter?

BILL: (ABRUPTLY--OFF) Tell him you're busy. Tell him you can't possibly make it.

NIKKI: (SOTTO VOCE) Ssh, Bill! (UP) What is it,

Burt?

BURT: (ON FILTER) Nikki, I've been calling and searching all over town trying to find you. I got your note about Joe's Place, but you didn't leave word where you were going from there.

NIKKI: Well, it was sort of special, Burt. We didn't want to be disturbed.

BURT: (FILTER) Well, brace yourself, darling. Because you're going to be more than a little disturbed--maybe for the next several days. There's been a prison break at Lockport, and you've got to get up there-- immediately.

NIKKI: (PROTESTING) But, Burt, I can't leave now. I just got married!

BURT: (FILTER) You what?

NIKKI: I said I got married tonight. We just arrived at Bill's apartment. I can't leave now--not even possibly.

BURT: (FILTER) Look, Nikki. You can get married any day of the week. Next month--next year --any time.

NIKKI: But Burt--

BURT: (FILTER) Right now I need you to cover this

prison break. Mortimer "Baby Face" Morton has escaped. He's a killer--a life-sentence guy. He'd have had the chair, except this state doesn't have a death penalty law. And he's at large.

NIKKI: But can't you send someone else?

BURT: (FILTER) All the boys are gone, and I can't leave because I've got to stay here and get any wire news coming in about the prison break. I'll send Butch, the photographer over there right now with a car to pick you up. And I want a story, you understand, a big story?

NIKKI: But, Burt, this is my wedding night!

BURT: (FILTER) Look, getting married is for life, isn't it?

NIKKI: Well, sure, but--

BURT: (FILTER) Then you've got the rest of your life for a wedding night. Now a story comes like this only once in a life-time. And I need you, Nikki--BAD! You will do it, won't you?

NIKKI: Well, I don't know--.

BURT: (FILTER) If you're really lucky, you might get back before morning. It's only about

fifty miles to Lockport, and they might even catch "Baby Face" before you get there. They've got out a terrific dragnet.

NIKKI: (DOUBTFULLY) Well, if you're sure I'll be back before morning.

BURT: (FILTER) Oh, it's a cinch for you, baby. You move a lot faster than these other reporters. Now I want a big story, see? Something terrific--page one stuff. Then, if you can get any human interest or features to go with it, fine. Butch will take the pictures for you. Okay?

NIKKI: (WEARILY) I guess so.

BURT: (FILTER) That's the spirit! Good old Nikki!

NIKKI: (WITHOUT ENTHUSIASM) Yeah.

SOUND: RECEIVER UP.

BILL: Well?

NIKKI: Now, Bill, don't be angry. Burt needs me.

BILL: Nikki, you didn't say you'd go?

NIKKI: I couldn't help myself, Bill. He--he talked me into it.

BILL: He must be quite a guy--to talk you out of--of this.

NIKKI: Oh, Bill, I'm sorry. But it can't be helped. There's no one else who could go. I'll be

back before morning, and then we'll have all day Saturday and Sunday.

BILL: (DISGUSTED) Yeah.

NIKKI: Bill?

BILL: Hmm?

NIKKI: You aren't angry, are you?

BILL: Well, I'm not exactly ecstatic with joy!

NIKKI: Bill, to make up for it, maybe I could even get Monday off.

BILL: (GRUNTS) Uhh.

NIKKI: Don't you believe me?

BILL: Oh, I believe you'd try. But, knowing Burt, I'd say you don't stand a ghost writer's chance of recognition. But go get your by-line. Never let it be said that Bill Early stood in the way of his wife's career, even on his wedding night!

NIKKI: Oh, Bill, you're wonderful! And I'll hurry back. I'll be here before you know it.

SOUND: CAR STOPPING OUTSIDE. HORN HONKS.

NIKKI: That must be Butch now. Kiss me, Bill darling.
(PAUSE FOR KISS).

BILL: (FIERCELY) If that Baby would show his face around here, I'd strangle him with my bare

hands for this!

NIKKI: I'm sure you would, darling. But now I've got to go. Relax dear--read a magazine. Let's see--here's Intimate Revelations!

(FADING) I'll hurry. 'Bye!

SOUND: DOOR OPENS AND CLOSES.

BILL: (GRUNTS DISGUSTEDLY) Magazine! Ha! Fine substitute! Well, let's see....

SOUND: LEAFING THROUGH PAGES.

BILL: Hmm. "Murder in the Editorial Room"!

(GRINDING TEETH) That ought to do just fine!

MUSIC: SEVERAL IRONIC LITTLE NOTES.

SOUND: CLOCK CHIMES THREE.

BILL: (GROANS HALF ASLEEP) Three o'clock! Great guns! I wonder how much longer this goes on. I always thought it was supposed to be the bride who got left at the church. This time I guess it's the bridegroom!(YAWNS--FADING) Nuts!

SOUND: CLOCK CHIMES FOUR.

BILL: (YAWNING STILL HARDER--ALMOST IN HIS SLEEP) Nikki! Nikki, darling! (SMILING, GROANING SELF-SATISFIEDLY IN HIS SLEEP) Nikki!

SOUND: PHONE RINGS STRAPLY.

BILL: (WAKES WITH A COMIC SNORT) What's that?

Oh, the phone.

SOUND: PHONE RINGS AGAIN. RECEIVER OFF.

BILL: (YAWNING SLEEPILY) Hello.

NIKKI: (ON FILTER) Hello, Bill darling. It's
Nikki.

BILL: When are you coming home?

NIKKI: (FILTER--HEDGING) Well, it's like this, Bill.
I don't exactly see how I can make it tonight.

BILL: What!

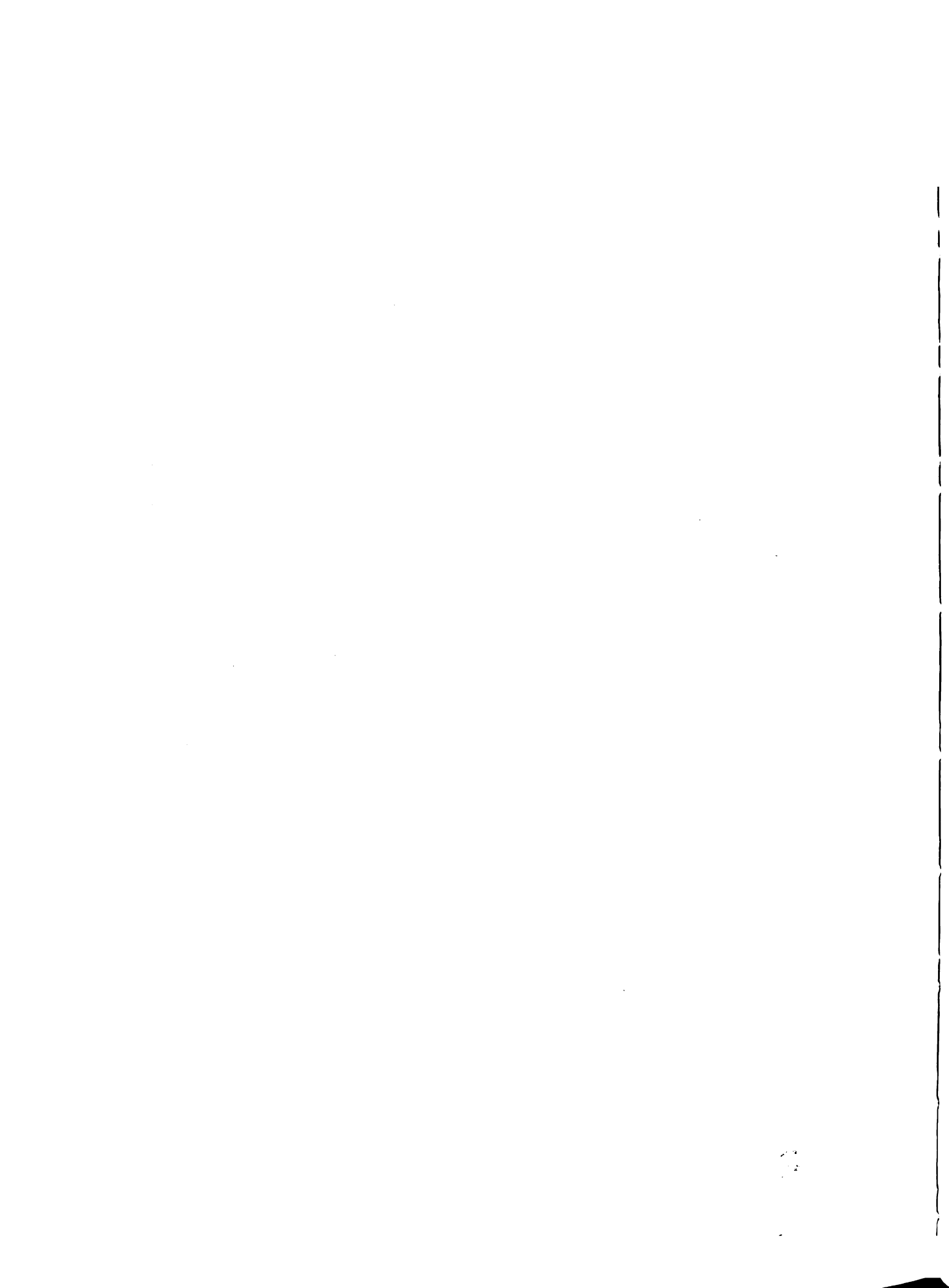
NIKKI: (FILTER) I know it's awful. But--well they
haven't caught Baby Face yet, and the whole
town of Lockport is in quite an uproar.
People are afraid for their lives. I can't
leave until morning--maybe not until after-
noon.

BILL: (PROTESTING) But, Nikki, darling---

NIKKI: (FILTER) Bill, please try to understand.
I didn't do this on purpose. But a prison
break is a prison break. It's big news, and
I don't dare leave. Burt would kill me.

BILL: But our wedding night....

NIKKI: (FILTER) Bill, darling, let's make it to-
morrow night. It really won't matter too



much, will it? I mean, one night's as good as another for a wedding, and----

BILL: But, Nikki---

NIKKI: (FILTER) Bill, I'll be home tomorrow night for sure. I promise you, even if I have to quit my job.

BILL: You mean that?

NIKKI: (FILTER) I mean that--honestly. Now, try to get some sleep, dear, and I'll see you tomorrow night.

BILL: (RESIGNEDLY) Okay.

MUSIC: BRIEF LITTLE INTERLUDE.

NIKKI: (WEARILY) Gosh, Bill, I'm tired. What a day!

BILL: (SUSPICIOUSLY) Nikki, darling, you're really staying this time? There isn't some new trick up Burt's sleeve?

NIKKI: No, I told Burt I was much too tired to write another word about Baby Face. I told him I was going home to my adoring husband.

BILL: Ah-hah! That's more like it.

NIKKI: Of course, they haven't found Baby Face. He's still at large--

BILL: Look, chum, let's not let that heel spoil our second wedding night!

NIKKI: All right, Bill darling.

BILL: And just to be sure, I'll take care of the phone.

SOUND: RECEIVER OFF. DIAL "0".

NIKKI: What are you doing?

BILL: Fixing it so Burt will leave us alone.

NIKKI: But, Bill--

BILL: (INFO PHONE) Hello, Operator? I want to see that this phone is temporarily disconnected or out of order or something. We want no more calls on this phone tonight, is that clear?
....Okay, thanks.

SOUND: RECEIVER UP

NIKKI: (GIGGLING) Bill, you're cute.

BILL: Oh, I'm just full of initiative right now. I refuse to be thwarted again. We are officially, as of right now, just married. Newlyweds, you might say. Any objections?

NIKKI: None.

BILL: Fine, now let's go....

BABY F: (FADING IN TROUGH) You two ain't goin' no place.

NIKKI: (GASP) Bill, darling, we have a visitor.

BILL: (GULPS) So I notice. To whom, may I ask, do we owe this sudden popularity!

BABY F: Huh?

BILL: Who are you?

NIBBI: (SUDDENLY) Bill, he looks like--. He is!

BILL: He is--what?

NIBBI: Baby Face Morton.

BABY F: (CORRECTING HER) Mortimer Baby Face Morton,
if youse please!

NIBBI: (SWALLOWING A GRIN) By all means, Mr.--
Mortimer Baby Face Morton. But tell me--what
are you doing here? You're supposed to be
across the state line by now.

BABY F: Dat's jist the point. Baby Face ain't so
dumb. I allus goes jist where da coppers
least expects me, see? Dat's why I'm such a
big shot. Nobody kin stop me. I'm da boss
a da outfit, see? So sit down. I'm hidin'
out here fer tonight.

BILL: (OUTRAGED) Oh, no you don't!

BABY F: (PUNINGLY) I begs ya pardon?

BILL: I said--quote--No you don't--Unquote. This
is our wedding night, see? And we intend to
take advantage of it. Officially it was last
night, but because of your prison break, it
got postponed.

BABY F: (GRINNING) Geez, ya don't say! Tell me, what

did I have to do wid it?

BILL: My wife here is the news reporter
assigned to cover your case.

BABY F: Vouse don't say?

BILL: Yeah.

BABY F: (IDEA) Say, girlie,--

NIKKI: What is it, Mr. Morton?

BABY F: Are day likely to run my pitcher wid the
story?

NIKKI: Why yes, I expect so. Why?

BABY F: Well, couldja manage to get the one in
wid the striped jacket? I'm partial ta
dat one. The oder pitcher the papers
got makes me look--unsympatetic!

NIKKI: (SUPPRESSING A GIGGLE) Why, yes, I
think I might arrange that.

BABY F: (HASTILY) When day discover I've es-
caped fer good, of course.

NIKKI: Oh, of course!

BABY F: Now, ta git back ta da weddin'...

BILL: Yeah, it's high time we did. You post-
poned our wedding night once, Mr. Baby
Face Morton, but you have my word of
honor I don't intend to let that happen

again. Not while I'm alive to stop it.

BABY F: Not while youse is dead, neither. So ya wanna git tough, huh? Well, ya see dis gun? It's loaded, see? And I ain't shy about usin' it neither, see? I trust youse gits the point.

BILL: Now see here--

BABY F: I said sit down.

NIKKI: Bill, darling, you'd better do as the man says.

BILL: (PROTESTING) But, Nikki, our wedding celebration!

NIKKI: It can wait, dear--so we'll both be alive to enjoy it! (IDEA) Or maybe Mr. Mortimer Baby Face Morton would like to join us in our celebration, would you, Mr. Morton?

BILL: (ASTONISHED) What?

NIKKI: Ssh, Bill. (INVITINGLY) Would you, Mr. Morton?

BABY F: (SUSPICIOUSLY) What kind a celebration?

NIKKI: A wedding celebration. Bill and I here just got married.

BABY F: Youse don't say?

NIKKI: Sure. And we've got champagne. Will you join us?

BABY F: (FLATTERED) Don't mind if I do.

NIKKI: Good! Go get the champagne, Bill.

BILL: (NOT GETTING THE IDEA) Have you gone crazy, Nikki? We're not having any party. I had trouble enough just getting the two of us together.

NIKKI: (SOTTO VOCE) Do as I say, Bill. I've got an idea for getting rid of Baby Face.

BILL: (LOUDLY) Getting rid--

NIKKI: Ssh!

BABY F: (SUSPICIOUSLY) Hey, what's goin' on?

NIKKI: Er, Bill was just saying he'd gotten rid of a --a rat who's been giving us trouble.

BABY F: You troubled with rats?

BILL: (DRAIV) Yeah, quite frequently lately. (FADING) I'll be right back.

BABY F: (SUSPICIOUSLY) Hey, where's he goin'?

NIKKI: Oh, it's quite all right, Mr. Morton. Bill's just going to the kitchen for some champagne.

BABY F: Oh, well dat's okay den. I jist can't afford to take no chances. Ya know, in

my business it ain't safe.

NIKKI: No, Mr. Morton, I'll bet it isn't. But you just relax, and we'll get some champagne and food, and then the three of us will have a little party. Okay?

BABY F: (GRINNING LIKE A KID) Sure. A party, huh? Geez, I ain't bin to a party since I knocked off Muscles Montgomery!

NIKKI: All right Mr. Morton, now you just sit tight.

BABY F: Okay. But no funny business. I got my eye on ya. I'd come out there wid ya but my feets hurt me. (EFFORT GETTING SHOES OFF)

SOUND: SHOE DROPPED.

BABY F: There, that's better. (FADING) Next time I'd better get a size 13D.

NIKKI: (SOFTLY) Listen, Bill, darling, here's the exclusive news story of a lifetime.

BILL: Now, look, Nikki, you promised that tonight--

NIKKI: I know dear, and I will, but right now, we've got to get rid of Baby Face first.

BILL: (WHEATFLY) Amen! He cramps my style!

BABY F: (OFF) Hey, what you two whisperin' about?

NIKKI: It's a surprise. Part of the party.

(DOWN) Rattle some dishes so he'll think we're busy.

BILL: Okay.

SOUND: DISHES RATTLING.

NIKKI: Now, you get him wrapped up in the drinks and keep him occupied with poker or something while I sneak into the next apartment and call Burt.

BILL: (SARCASTICALLY) You'd better call the police, too, darling. Burt can hardly handcuff Baby Boy and haul him down to headquarters alone.

BABY F: (OFF) Hey! Ya got any horse derveys? I like horse derveys.

NIKKI: Comin' right up! (DOWN) Now you keep him amused at poker while I run and call Burt.

BILL: And the police.

NIKKI: And the police. (RADING) I'll hurry, before he gets suspicious.

BABY F: (OFF) Hey, hurry up, youse guys. Where's da champagne?

BILL: (CALLING) Coming right up, Mr. Lorton.

BABY F: (FADING IN) Well, pal, you sure took your time. I could use something to wet my whistle. (SUSPICIOUSLY) Hey, where's da goil?

BILL: Goil?

BABY F: Yeah, da skoit. Ya wife.

BILL: (LAUGHING SLIGHTLY) Oh, my wife. You mean Fikki.

BABY F: Yeah, where is she?

BILL: (CASUALLY) Oh, she's just fixing some sandwiches and maybe some cake.

BABY F: (SATISFIED--GRINNING) Oh. Yeah. (CALLING) Hey, girlie, make 'em outa tuny fish if ya got some ...I said--

BILL: (QUICKLY) Have some champagne, Mr. Morton.
(CASUALLY) It's going to be like a real party. A fellow only gets married once, you know.

BABY F: Yeah. Ya know I never got married.

BILL: You never did?

BABY F: Naw, I was gonna. But I ended up in the pen before we could get hitched legal. A ting like dat's tough, ya know. When business gits in the way of a guy's family life.

BILL: (SIGNIFICANTLY) Yeah, I know exactly what you mean!

BABY F: Huh?

BILL: (LAUGHING NERVOUSLY) Nothing. Have some more champagne.

SOUND: DRINK Poured.

BABY F: Oh, sure. Hey, you ain't by chance got any beer, have you?

BILL: Why, yes, I think so.

BABY F: (CONFIDENTIALLY) Ya know, I really like beer better. It's got a much more poignant flavor. Dontcha think so?

BILL: Oh, I certainly do. (FADING) I'll get you some.

BABY F: (CALLING) And tell da skoit to make da sandwiches a little quicker. I'm gettin' hungry.

BILL: (OFF MIKE) Yes, darling, do hurry with those sandwiches. Mr. Morton is getting very hungry.

BABY F: (SIGNING WITH SATISFACTION) Ahh! (CALLING) Ya know, I got a appetite like a kangaroo!

BILL: (OFF MIKE--CALLING) What do you say to a little card game, Mr. Morton?

BABY F: Cards? (BOASTING) Sure, I'm da champeen
player in da whole outfit.

SOUND: POLICE SIREN WAY IN THE DISTANCE. GETS
SLOWLY LOUDER BEHIND FOLLOWING LINES.

BILL: (FADING IN) Here's your beer, Mr. Morton.
Nikki'll be right in with the sandwiches.
They're the fancy variety that takes longer
--you know, olives on top and everything.

BABY F: Chee, olives!

BILL: How'd you like to play a little poker?

BABY F: Poker? Uh--well, I don't know how ta
play poker. That's awful complicated.
(EAGERLY) But I do play gin rummy!

SOUND: DRAWER OPENED. RUMMAGING.

BILL: I was sure I left a deck of cards here some-
place. Yeah, here they are.

SOUND: DRAWER CLOSED.

BABY F: (IMPATIENTLY) Hey, where's them sandwiches.

BILL: (HASTILY) Have some more beer, Mr. Morton.
Your glass is nearly empty.

SOUND: POURING DRINK.

BABY F: Yeah. (CALLING) Hey, girlie, hurry!
(EFFORT) I'd better go see what happened
to her...

BILL: Now don't be hasty, Mr. Morton.

NIKKI: (FADING IN) Here are the sandwiches, Mr. Morton.

BILL: Nikki! Whew! I think I'll have a drink on that one, too. Here, Mr. Morton, have another drink.

SOUND: POURING DRINK.

BABY F: Oh, I dunno, I--. Well, if youse insists. I might have just one more glass of beer.

BILL: Sure. And here's another bottle for when you've finished that one.

BABY F: (SUSPICIOUSLY) Hey, I hear a police siren!

BILL: (QUICKLY) Oh, I'm sure it's nothing. Here, have another beer.

SOUND: POURING DRINK.

BABY F: Naw, I was sure I heard something. (STRUGGLING TO RISE) Lemme look out the window. (FAUSE--SUSPICIOUSLY) That sounds like a police car.

NIKKI: (QUICKLY) Oh, no, Mr. Morton, I'm sure you're mistaken.

SOUND: CAR STOPPING. SIREN OUT.

BABY F: It is a police car--just stopping at the curb. (THREATENING) Why you---

NIKKI: Now, don't be hasty, Mr. Morton!

BABY F: (ANGRILY) You double-crossed me. Outa the kindness a my heart I help ya celebrate ya weddin' anniversary--

BILL: Wedding night.

BABY F: And this is the thanks I git. Well, I'll fix ya, I will. You're gonna walk outa here in fronta me right past them coppers, see? And if they try ta shoot at me er stop me, I'll let ya have it, see?

BILL: You draw a very graphic picture, Mr. Baby Face. We could hardly misunderstand.

BABY F: Okay, youse guys, start walkin!

SOUND: DOOR OPENS SOFTLY.

BILL: (CALMLY) Don't look now, Mr. Mortimer Baby Face Morton, but I think we've got company.

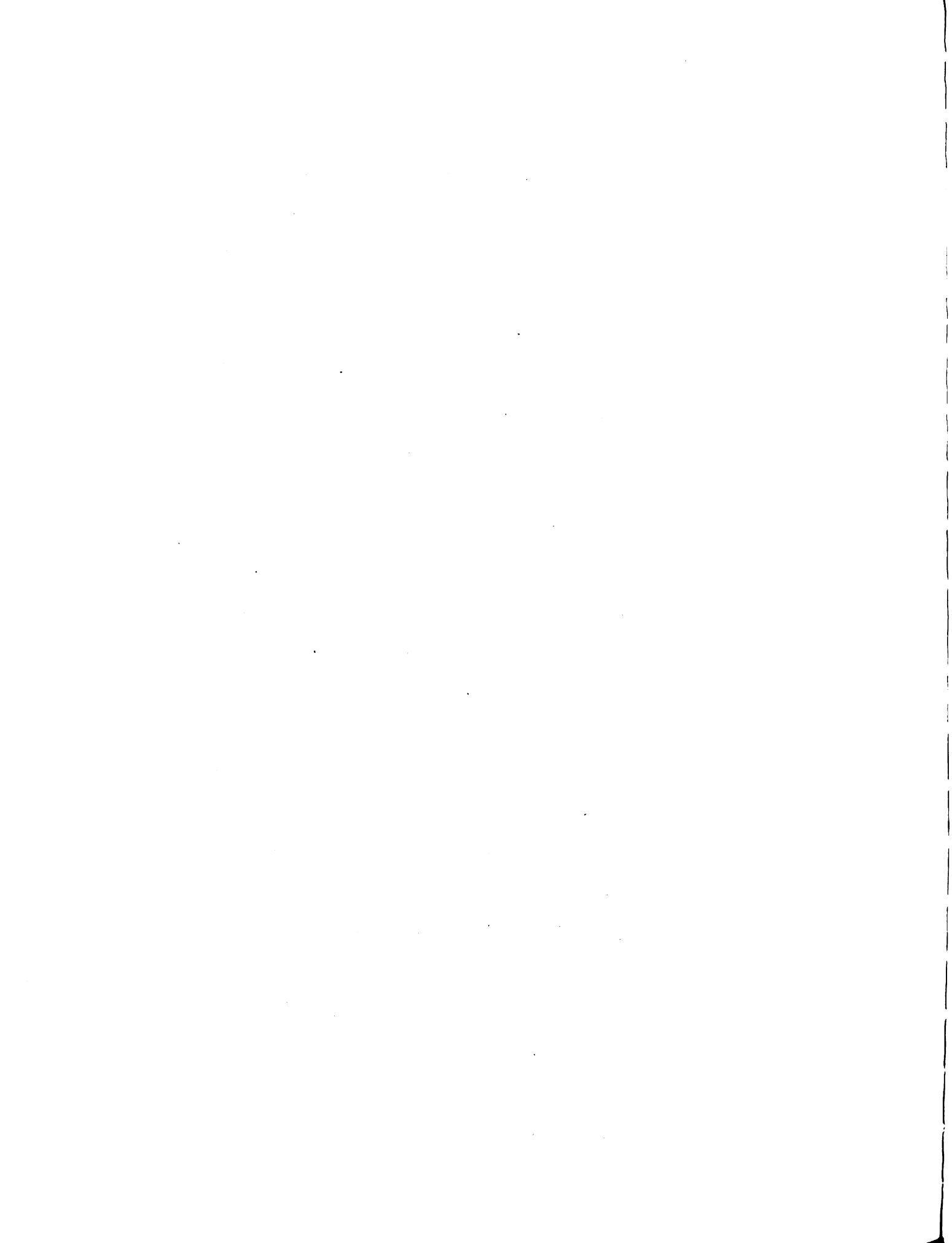
BABY F: Oh, no ya don't. That trick's got whiskers on it.

BILL: Well, don't let's shave it. It's still a pretty good one.

BURT: (FADING IN) Okay, Baby Face, we've got you covered.

BABY F: What?

BILL: Hello, Burt!



BURT: Practically the entire police force of Lake Forest has the building surrounded, and the officials of Lockport are on the way here. You might as well give up.

BABY F: (ANGRILY) You did this to me, Bub. You and that--that Nikki of yours.

BILL: By the way, where is Nikki?

NIKKI: (FADING IN) Right here, Bill darling. Taking notes madly. I'll be right with you. But first--Mr. Mortimer Baby Face Morton, have you any final statement to make for the press before you're taken into custody?

BABY F: Yeah, I sure have. All I got to say is, this is a heck of a weddin' celebration!

BILL: (WITH FEELING) Mr. Baby Face, that's a masterpiece of understatement!

MUSIC: A FEW IRONIC LITTLE NOTES.

BILL: Well, Nikki darling, thank heaven they've gone. Now, we can really celebrate in earnest.

NIKKI: (HEDGING) Not yet, Bill darling.

BILL: Now wait, chicken, you're not running out on me again.

NIKKI: (HASTILY) Oh, no, darling.

BILL: (BELIEVED) That's good!

NIKKI: Only I do have to write the feature for the morning paper.

BILL: (PROTESTING) Now look!

NIKKI: Bill darling, it'll only take a minute. All I have to do is run down to the office and dash off a couple or three pages. It won't take long.

BILL: But Nikki, darling....

NIKKI: Now, you get everything ready dear, and (FADING) I'll be right back.

SOUND: DOOR CLOSSES.

BILL: Nikki! (COMICALLY) I quit! Newspapers and newspaper women! I should have married a gal who was illiterate!

MUSIC: VERY TINY INTERLUDE.

SOUND: DOOR OPENS AND CLOSSES.

NIKKI: (FADING IN) Well, here I am, Bill darling.

BILL: (WITH DETERMINATION) Yes, Nikki! And this time you're staying.

SOUND: KEY IN LOCK

NIKKI: (SURPRISED) Why Bill, what are you doing?

BILL: Locking the door. I'm locking all the

doors and all the windows. I also had the telephone disconnected--permanently.

NIKKI: But, Bill darling, that's not practical.

BILL: Remember, Nikki darling, I told you once that if you insisted on being practical, you'd die an old maid?

NIKKI: Yes.

BILL: Well, I'll alter that statement to read "grass widow"!

NIKKI: But, Bill--

BILL: (WITH COMIC INTENSITY) Look, chum, I'm going to ask you to use your imagination. We are marooned on a desert island, see? There's no living human being for millions of miles, see? And above all, no news-papers!

NIKKI: Bill, darling, don't look so savage. I've got a vacation for the next twenty-four hours, but after all--

BILL: Kiss me.

NIKKI: But, Bill--

BILL: Kiss me! (PAUSE FOR KISS).

NIKKI: Bill, darling, what did you do with the key? I have to go to work the first

thing Monday morning, and--

BILL: Kiss me again. (PAUSE FOR KISS).

NIKKI: (SOFTLY) Oh, Bill, darling--

BILL: (SOFTLY) Now, that's more like it.

NIKKI: But, Bill, what about the key?

BILL: You don't need any key.

NIKKI: But I have to go to work the first thing
Monday morning, and--

BILL: No you don't.

NIKKI: Why not?

BILL: I spoke to Burt about a longer vacation.

NIKKI: Really, darling?

BILL: A very long vacation.

NIKKI: Oh, Bill, how wonderful! He agreed?

BILL: Oh, yes, I convinced him.

NIKKI: You did? (SUSPICIOUSLY) What did you
tell him?

BILL: I told him you had resigned.

NIKKI: (PROTESTING) Bill, you didn't?

BILL: I most certainly did. It seems that's
the only way we can be (SIGNIFICANTLY)
officially married!

NIKKI: (PERTURBED) But, Bill--(RELAXING AND

GIGGLING) You know, Bill, you're more
fun than a murder!

MUSIC: QUICK INTERLUDE TO FINISH.

Notes on Writing and Production of
HONEYMOON BY PROXY

Plot Creation

With the exception of STORY ON PAGE ONE, HONEYMOON BY PROXY required the fewest revisions and was written in the shortest period of time of any play in this series. The plot required only one relatively minor change prior to production, and that concerned the time element involved in getting the police to Bill's apartment to capture Baby Face.

In the original version Nikki climbed out the kitchen window and ran for the police, necessitating several minutes of "stalling" on the part of Bill. This made for an artificial situation, because no professional gangster would allow himself to be so easily duped. Therefore, it was necessary to "plant" a final line by Nikki just before her exit and then have her leave only long enough to make a hasty telephone call to the police from the next apartment.

Realism was added to the scene by Baby Face's continued curiosity as to Nikki's whereabouts while he thinks she is preparing "horse derveys"

in the kitchen. He keeps calling to her, although Bill manages to keep him occupied with beer and champagne for a few brief moments. Then just as Baby Face is getting really upset about Nikki's failure to reply to his repeated orders about the food, she enters calmly with the tray much to Bill's comic relief. This added bit of business provides a humorous climax to the scene and makes the situation more believable.

Acting

There are only four characters in HONEYMOON BY PROXY and none of them, except perhaps Baby Face, should present any problems. Bill is the outraged and frustrated lover who evidences comic exasperation at his plight.

Nikki is the efficient career girl with romantic inclinations. She is the love interest, so her cool efficiency in a business situation must not be allowed to dominate. She must be lovable. Burt West is the efficient editor of the newspaper.

Baby Face must be a complex combination of "tough guy" and aspiring romantic hero. He is exceedingly stupid, and it is obvious that he made his mark in the underworld because of his oversized

frame rather than his intelligence. The game of poker is much too complicated for him to grasp so he confines himself to gin rummy. He makes an attempt at being tough but has a soft spot for flattery and is led far astray of his disagreeable intentions when he sees an opportunity of getting a little extra publicity in connection with his escape from prison. He likes fancy sounding food, but champagne is a little too refined for his taste; he prefers beer. He has regrets about a love affair which was cut short because of his untimely arrest. He sees himself as a knight in shining armor, whereas his actual appearance is a ludicrous contradiction of that picture.

Directing

Problems in directing of this play closely parallel those outlined for BABY BE GOOD. Particular attention should be paid to the pacing and by-play in the scenes involving Baby Face's invasion of and detention in the apartment by Bill and Nikki.

Bill's disgruntled reaction to being deserted on his wedding night also should be

played to the limit of its comic possibilities, with special emphasis on the added bits of business concerning his grumbling, his talking in his sleep, and his comic snort upon being awakened by the telephone.

Sound and Music

No special problems are offered here.

Script Changes

Two minor changes were necessary in the finished script. The first involved the scene in which Bill occupies Baby Face with the "party." It was decided after the broadcast that it was illogical to have the gangster become intoxicated in such a short period of time, as was originally planned, so the lines were revised to allow him to play them straight. A further change involved the final tag line of the play, which had previously read: "So you decided to take up being a wolf in earnest." It seemed that "You're more fun than a murder!" was particularly appropriate to the speech of a newspaper reporter, so one or two minor changes in earlier lines of the play were made to establish Nikki's love of excitement and to prepare the audience to receive the "murder" line.

OH, PROFESSOR!

ANNCR: The setting of this story is not in the Canadian Rockies. But it does have something in common with the Canadian Mounties. It's about a girl who gets her man. The man is Philip Gordon, young scientist at Mid-western University. At the moment Professor Gordon is crouched on the edge of a small lake on the campus, intent on watching some obscure aquatic activity. He is totally unaware that only a few yards away there are three young women reclining on the grass in their bathing suits curiously observing his movements. One is the tall, dark, and attractive swimming instructor, Toni Stevens. The other two are Marge, Toni's roommate, and Helen, another instructor.

(FADING) Toni is speaking....

TONI: (MUSING) Philip Gordon is really not bad looking, Helen. In fact, if you're broad-minded, you might even call him moderately handsome.

HELEN: (DRILLY) But unfortunately, Toni, his actions don't match his appearance. He looks downright exciting, but he's such a mousy little

guy. He never says "boo" to anybody, especially women. Never goes anyplace. Just pickles himself in chemicals till all hours of the night.

TONI: It's very unusual.

MARGE: (YAWNING) For a couple of college instructors you two gals seem plenty perturbed about symptoms of intellect among the men folks.

HELEN: I don't mind intellect. It's being ignored that I object to. Let him win his Nobel prizes--which, incidentally, he did last year--but also, for Pete's sake, let him dust off his party manners and let down his hair occasionally.

TONI: Doesn't he ever?

HELEN: He hasn't taken in any social activities since he came here in the spring. People have tried. We've all tried. And given up. They say the girl doesn't exist who can lure him away from his test tubes.

TONI: (UNBELIEVING) Aha! That I'd like to see!

HELEN: (CHALLENGINGLY) I'll bet you a pair of new nylons, Toni, that--even in that slick bathing suit--you couldn't intrigue our Professor Gordon.

TONI: (WITH ENTHUSIASM) That, Helen, my girl, is

a bet! No man ever ignored me in a bathing suit. Besides, I could use those nylons.

MARGE: (LANGUIDLY) Couldn't we all.

HELEN: Okay, let's put it this way, Toni. I'll bet you my new pair of nylons that you can't get Philip Gordon to go to the faculty masquerade ball tonight.

TONI: But---

MARGE: She's got you there, Toni.

TONI: But Marge--Helen--not tonight! There's not enough time.

HELEN: (SWEETLY) The time element is unimportant in this case, dear. One day is as good as another to be refused a date. And I think, just to make matters more interesting, that--if by chance you inveigle Friend Phillip into that date, you must amuse him for the full evening.

TONI: (PROTESTING) But that's not fair, Helen! I was looking forward to some excitement tonight. And Philip Gordon sounds to me like an awfully dull evening. Besides, what I know about zoology wouldn't make an impression on a sponge!

MARGE: But what you know about anatomy would, dear.

TONI: (DEFENSIVELY) I thought you were against this bet, Marge.

MARGE: I was at first. But it's beginning to get interesting. If I had gotten that raise I expected from Krentel's department store, I'd bet, too, but since I'm broke I'll just observe from a distance. My personal opinion is that Friend Philip will not be affected by this approach anyway. So there's no harm done.

TONI: (PROTESTING) And I thought you two were my friends!

HELEN: But, Toni, it's all in fun. Now, look, he's still down there by the lake. He hasn't moved for the last half-hour. Why don't you make the approach right now. While Marge and I have a ringside seat.

TONI: (UNWILLINGLY) Well, all right, but--. How do I look?

MARGE: (CALMLY) Ravishing. Absolutely ravishing. He can't possibly miss you in that cherry midriff job.

TONI: (DOUBTFULLY) Well, I'll see you two later.

HELEN: (FADING) Good luck!

MARGE: (FADING--SIMULTANEOUSLY) So long, Cleopatra!

TONI: (SOTTO VOCE) I'll show those two vultures. I've just got to. If I flunk this, I'll never hear the last of it.

(DETERMINEDLY) There he is. Now for my grand entrance---

(HUMMING GAILY A FEW SECONDS--THEN CALLING CHEERILY) Good morning. Lovely day for a swim, isn't it? Watch out, I might splash you when I take my dive.

PHILIP: (OFF MIKE--SHOUTING) Get out of there! Don't jump!

SOUND: LOUD SPLASH AS SHE DIVES IN. LITTLE SPLASH AS SHE SWIMS A MOMENT.

PHILIP: (SPLUTTERING--FADING IN) Miss--Miss! You in the red bathing costume. Leave the lake this instant! You're ruining my experiment.

SOUND: SPLASHING TO THE EDGE.

TONI: (INNOCENTLY) Did you call me?

PHILIP: My word, yes. Leave that lake this instant. You've probably already destroyed my entire day's efforts.

SOUND: SPLASHING OUT.

TONI: Oh, I'm so sorry. What did I do?

PHILIP: You just confused my fish, that's all. And upset all my piscatorial observances.

TONI: (NOT GETTING IT) I beg your pardon.

PHILIP: I'm conducting an experiment on the fish in this lake. And I need absolute peace and quiet, or the results will not be reliable. I was

getting along remarkably, and then suddenly you do a Miss America act and upset everything. Now the fish are thoroughly confused.

TONI: Oh, I'm sorry. Do you do this sort of thing often?

PHILIP: Very frequently. I'm an ichthyologist.

TONI: (PLEASANTLY) Really? I'm an Indian.

PHILIP: (PATIENTLY) An ichthyologist is a scientist who studies fish.

TONI: (PRETENDED SURPRISE) Oh, then you're the new professor in the zoology department I've been hearing so much about?

PHILIP: (SLIGHTLY FLATTERED) Well, I admit I'm fairly well known in the scientific field.

TONI: (ASSURING HIM) Oh, you really are! I've been hearing amazing things about you.
(CASUALLY) Shall we sit down here on the grass?

PHILIP: (SLIGHTLY DISCONCERTED) Well--I have to finish my experiment.

TONI: But you said I had confused the fish, so you can't possibly restore their peace of mind any more today. Come on, sit down here by me.

PHILIP: (PROTESTING) But, I--

TONI: That's much better. Now, tell me--these fish

you study. They must be absolutely fascinating to--well, to make you prefer them to everything else.

PHILIP: Oh, they're very interesting. They take up practically every instant of my day and night.

TONI: Really? Isn't that amazing? But don't you ever--? I mean, do you actually prefer these fish to--well, say cutting a rug occasionally.

PHILIP: I gather you are using a slang expression to refer to dancing. My work is so important and so time-consuming, I hardly have the opportunity. Besides, with whom could I go?

TONI: Oh, there are lots of girls available.

PHILIP: Well, I--I really don't know many women. (SHYLY) And they don't care for me. I'm not very good at what you would call-- clipping a carpet.

TONI: (SWALLOWING A GIGGLE) Oh, but I'm sure you are! You should give yourself a chance. You know, if you'd relax and go out for an evening occasionally, you could work with-- with renewed intensity the next day.

PHILIP: Do you really think so?

TONI: I'm sure of it. Now, take for instance the masquerade ball tonight.

PHILIP: What masquerade ball?

TONI: Why, the one the faculty club is giving. It's a costume affair, and--

PHILIP: Oh, then I couldn't go. I don't have a costume.

TONI: But that's easy. The DuNovelle shop has a complete stock. (PAUSE--COYLY) I think you ought to go as a knight in shining armor.

PHILIP: (SLIGHTLY FLATTERED) Do you really think so? (THEN) Oh, no, I couldn't!

TONI: Well, why not, for heaven's sake? You certainly have the figure for it.

PHILIP: I do?

TONI: Well, of course. (SOFTLY) Everyone says you're very handsome.

PHILIP: (UNCOMFORTABLE--GULPS) Really?

TONI: Oh, yes. And I know just the costume. It was in the window of the costume shop. A suit of armor with a helmet and everything. You'd look really scrumptious--and very romantic!

PHILIP: (FAR AWAY) And very romantic. Perhaps an evening dancing would be a refreshing change.

TONI: Of course it would.

PHILIP: (COMING BACK TO EARTH--CLEARS THROAT) But then I'm afraid I could hardly leave my

ichthyological experiment tonight. It was kind of you to take an interest, but (INDICATING THERE IS NO POSSIBILITY) perhaps some other time. Good day, Miss--.

TONI: Stevens. Miss Toni Stevens.

PHILIP: (FADING) Yes, Miss Stevens. Good-day.

TONI: (IN ASTONISHMENT) Well, I never! If that isn't the darndest way of wiggling out of a date. (THEN CALLING) Hey, wait, you--Mr. Gordon-- you forgot your precious fish!

MUSIC: FEW COMIC LITTLE LAUGH NOTES.

SOUND: DOOR OPENS AND CLOSSES WITH A BANG.

TONI: (FADING IN) Is that you, Marge? (GRINDING HER TEETH) Ah, yes.

MARGE: (PLACIDLY) Well, Toni, let's hear your version of it.

TONI: You saw what happened, Marge. He walked out on me. Actually walked out! Why, it's unthinkable! No man ever walked out on me before.

MARGE: Well, chum, a tradition has been broken.

TONI: (MISERABLY) I feel terrible, Marge. It isn't just that I'm angry and humiliated. That's enough. But it hurt, Marge. I can't tell you why or how, but it did. As though a friend had suddenly become a bitter enemy. (HOPELESSLY) Oh, I'm not talking very good sense, but--.

Well, I'm not used to being walked out on.
(THEN SUDDENLY WORRIED) Do you suppose I'm slipping?

MARGE: Baby, you've already slipped! I'd say from the looks of things that you've fallen--but hard!

TONI: (BRIDLING) Don't be silly! I can't stand the sight of him. He's--well, he's--

MARGE: Good looking.

TONI: Well, yes, I suppose he is. But he's also--

MARGE: Highly intelligent.

TONI: (UNWILLINGLY) Well, yes. That is, he knows a lot about fish. But he's--

MARGE: Very attractive.

TONI: (GETTING ANGRY) Is he a special friend of yours?

MARGE: Heavens, no. I never met the guy.

TONI: Well, then, how do you know so much about him?

MARGE: From listening to you. And from watching you this afternoon. Baby, I wasn't born yesterday. In fact, I've been around quite a bit. And I'd say this was an excellent example of love at first fight!

TONI: Don't be funny, Marge. I hate him. He's positively horrid. Stuffy, like everybody says. No manners at all. There I was just

trying to be friendly, and what does he do?
 (MIMICKING HIM) "I couldn't possibly leave
 my ichthyological experiment tonight. So
 kind of you to take an interest, Miss Stevens.
 Good-day, Miss Stevens." (GRINDING HER TEETH)
 Go sit on a tack, Miss Stevens, you sure
 missed the boat!

MARGE: I was afraid it would turn out this way. And
 I'm really not sorry. After all, if he likes
 the way he lives, why must you take it upon
 yourself to change him? (INTUENDO) Unless,
 of course, the interest is strictly personal.

TONI: (ABRUPTLY) Well, it isn't! But, honestly,
 Marge, I've got to do something. It's pretty
 clear that he's not going to the masquerade
 without some added inducement. His fish will
 lure him back to the laboratory, and then
 where will I be?

MARGE: (DRILLY) Playing second fiddle to a fish.

TONI: You know Helen is just dying to make a fool of
 me. My reputation as a siren is at stake.

MARGE: So you want to upset the man's perfectly
 serene existence just to save your own
 reputation. That's not very nice, you know.

TONI: Well--

MARGE: It's pretty obvious that the Cleopatra approach

doesn't go over so big with him. He's nobody's fool. All you needed was a rose between your teeth to make him think Theda Bara had been resurrected for a personal appearance!

TONI: Well, what do you expect me to be--Minnie Mouse?

MARGE: Look, kid, you sure aren't hitting on all your cylinders. I'm only your roommate from Krentel's department store, but my social sense tells me there's an acquaintance worth cultivating.

TONI: Yeah, I know.

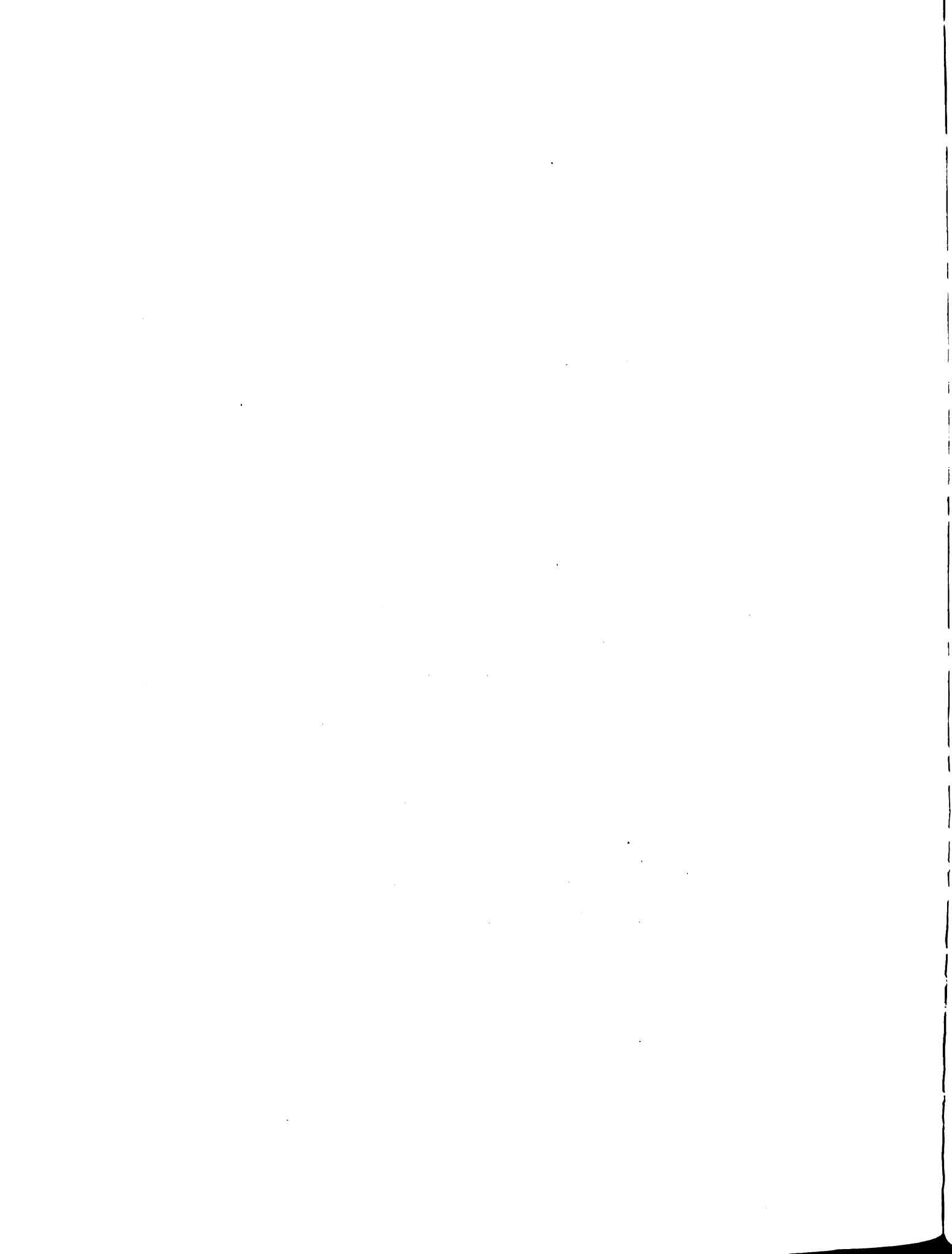
MARGE: Then you admit you like him?

TONI: Well, I--

MARGE: Because if you don't, I'd advise you to lay off. He sounds like a right guy to me. And his time is too valuable to be wasted. Not only that, he might really fall for you. It's been done before.

TONI: I'll behave. Only, please, Marge, tell me what to do. He's so darned intellectual. If I take the subtle approach and try to get him to like me gradually, he won't even be conscious I'm alive!

MARGE: Don't worry, Mata Hari, with a figure like yours, he'll be conscious all right! But



don't go full steam ahead until you get some encouragement. Otherwise you'll lose before you start.

TONI: What would you suggest?

MARGE: I'd suggest the masquerade ball.

TONI: But he's not going.

MARGE: Oh, I think he will. He's going to get a personal invitation from the college president's wife. He wouldn't dare turn that down.

TONI: Are you kidding? I hardly know the president's wife.

MARGE: You're rooming with her, dear. You forget, I spent two years in Madame Pewtrofsky's Acting Academy before I decided I'd rather eat. You leave everything to me!

MUSIC: DANCE MUSIC UP A MOMENT. THEN DOWN AND BEHIND.

SOUND: PARTY NOISES IN BACKGROUND.

GEORGE: Well, Toni Stevens, of all people. From the looks of your costume I'd say we're celebrating the Easter season early.

TONI: Ssh, George, not so loud! I have a special reason for not wanting to be recognized. Do I look sufficiently camouflaged in this bunny outfit?

GEORGE: With that figure, pet, must you camouflage it?

TONI: Please, George, I'm serious. Do you think any-

one else will recognize me?

GEORGE: (SURVEYING THE SITUATION) Well, the mask is sufficient, but--your hair gives you away. Can't you hide it under that fur hood like-- (FUSSING WITH IT) like this, maybe? There! Now look in that mirror over there before we go in.

TONI: Hmm. Yes, I think that is better.

GEORGE: Why the lone wolf act tonight? When you refused my invitation to come to the dance, I assumed you had another date. I really am hurt.

TONI: (LAUGHING) George, you're sweet. But I really have an excellent reason. And I think you can help me.

GEORGE: Really? How?

TONI: I'm looking for someone. Someone in your department, as a matter of fact.

GEORGE: In my department? Hmm, that's strange. My only eligible competition is--. No. No, it couldn't be. He wouldn't leave the fascinating company of his test tubes--not for just a dance!

TONI: Are you sure?

GEORGE: (UNBELIEVING) You can't mean Philip Gordon?

TONI: (EAGERLY) Yes, I made a bet. But you mustn't tell anyone.

GEORGE: I don't get it. What's it all about?

TONI: It's all in fun. Of course, he doesn't know it. But, as part of a bet, I'm getting him to come to the dance tonight. But in doing so, I, shall we say--incur his wrath? Well, anyway, getting him to the dance was only part of the bet. I also have to keep him amused for the full evening. And obviously, if he's mad at me, that would be impossible--unless, of course, he wasn't aware that I was amusing him.

GEORGE: Oh, I'm beginning to get the idea. You want me to introduce you--

TONI: (TRIUMPHANTLY) As someone else!

GEORGE: Then can I stay around and watch the fun?

TONI: Well, if you do, please be subtle about it. Philip Gordon isn't easily fooled. And I can't afford to lose this bet--(UNDER HER BREATH) for more reasons than one.

GEORGE: Don't worry, I'll be careful. Let's go in and see if he's here yet.

SOUND: TWO PAIRS FOOTSTEPS A MOMENT.

MUSIC: UP SLIGHTLY BEHIND AND CONTINUE.

GEORGE: Let's see. That looks like Phil over there by the punch bowl. He's the knight in the suit of armor.

TONI: (STARTLED) Suit of armor! Then he did!

GEORGE: He did--what?

TONI: (HASTILY) Nothing. I only meant that--he did come.

GEORGE: Oh. Well--(UP) Phil!

PHILIP: (FADING IN) Hello George? Glad to see you.

GEORGE: (ELABORATELY) Phil, this young lady has been admiring your--(HALF LAUGH) suit of armor. She asked me if I'd introduce her to you.

PHILIP: (UNBELIEVING) This lady--requested to meet me?

GEORGE: Yes, Phil, this is Miss--

TONI: (QUICKLY) Bunny. Bunny Davidson.

GEORGE: (EYEING HER) Uh--yes. Bunny Davidson. (CLEARS THROAT) Well, I'll leave (FADING) you two alone.

TONI AND PHIL: (AWKWARDLY) Hello.

PHILIP: (QUIETLY) How ingenious of you--Bunny.

TONI: (NERVOUSLY) What do you mean?

PHILIP: To pick a costume to match your name.

TONI: To match--? (LAUGHING-RELIEVED) Oh, yes, of course. To match my name.

PHILIP: My colleague, George, says that you admired my costume, too.

TONI: (WARILY) Yes, indeed. I think it's extremely attractive.

PHILIP: It was suggested to me by--a friend.

TONI: Really? Tell me, is your friend coming this evening?

PHILIP: I'm not sure. I think perhaps.

TONI: Maybe she's already here. With everyone masked it's rather difficult to tell.

PHILIP: That wouldn't matter. I'd recognize her anywhere.

TONI: (SWALLOWING A SMILE) Oh, you would?

PHILIP: Oh, yes, I'm positive of it. She's a very unusual person.

TONI: (FISHING) Do you--like her very much?

PHILIP: (CONFUSED) Well, I--. (THEN ABRUPTLY)
Would you care to join me in a dance, Miss Davidson?

TONI: (DEFLATED--SLIGHTLY IRONIC) Why, yes, Mr. Gordon, if your suit of armor can stand the strain!

PHILIP: I believe the current lingo runs, "Come on, worm, squirm!"

BOTH LAUGH GAILY.

MUSIC: UP A MOMENT. THEN CROSS FADE INTO ANOTHER DANCE TUNE. HOLD BEHIND.

TONI: (LAUGHING--OUT OF BREATH) Oh, this is wonderful, Phil! I haven't had so much fun since the flood. Oh, but I'm tired. Whew!

PHILIP: (ALSO OUT OF BREATH) I don't wonder. I'm not a particularly effective dancing partner.

TONI: (PROTESTING) Oh, but you are! I've just had a rather strenuous day. (CASUALLY) Let's take our punch glasses over by the fireplace, shall we?

PHILIP: If you like.

SOUND: FOOTSTEPS A MOMENT.

PHILIP: Your name really isn't Bunny, is it?

TONI: (ON GUARD) What makes you ask that?

PHILIP: Only that the name doesn't suit you somehow. I keep trying to attach another name to you. I feel certain we've met before.

TONI: (HASTILY) Oh, I'm sure we haven't.

PHILIP: (PERSISTENTLY) Yes, I think we have. Just recently, too.

Tell me, in what department do you teach?

TONI: (NERVOUSLY) It seems to be getting awfully warm in here all of a sudden, don't you think?

PHILIP: (GRINNING SHEEPISHLY) Why, I didn't know you cared! (THEN ABRUPTLY) But really I'm interested in finding out more about you. Are you--?

TONI: (SNIFFS) I smell something burning.

WOMAN: (GASPS LOUDLY) The girl in the bunny outfit.
Look!

MUSIC: STOPS UNOBTUSIVELY.

CAST: GENERAL EXCITEMENT AND DISTURBANCE.

PHILIP: (SUDDENLY) Good lord, it's your bunny tail.
It got caught in the fire!

TONI: (IN TERROR) Phil, what'll I do?

PHILIP: Hang on tight. This is going to be a fast
trip.

TONI: Look, Phil, put me down. This is no time for
a petting party. Even if the temperature is
rising!

SOUND FOOTSTEPS RUNNING UP.

GEORGE: (FADING IN) Toni, for heaven's sake, what's
happened?

SOUND: GENERAL SCRAMBLE. HEAVY FOOTSTEPS AS OF
SOMEONE CARRYING A HEAVY BURDEN.

PHILIP: Out of the way, George. This is the fire
brigade.

GEORGE: (FADING) Where are you going?

PHILIP: (SHOUTING) There's a fountain in the garden.
We're jumping in!

TONI: (TERRIFIED) Phil, hurry! I'm burning up.

PHILIP: (PUFFING) Just hang on a minute. And every-
thing'll be under control. Now, hold your
breath. (SHOUTING) Here we go!

SOUND: LOUD SPLASH AND SIZZLE AS THEY HIT THE WATER.

TONI: SCREAMS AND THEN GURGLES AS SHE GOES UNDER.

CAST: BABBLE OF VOICES AND EXCITEMENT.

GEORGE: (FADING IN--OUT OF BREATH) What happened!
Good lord, they jumped in the fountain! Are
you all right, Toni? Toni?

SOUND: SPLASHING.

TONI: (COMING UP FOR AIR) I'm all right, George.

GEORGE: Toni, for heaven's sake, these measures are
pretty drastic just to win your bet about
amusing Phil.

TONI: Ssh, quiet, George! By the way, what
happened to Phil?

GEORGE: Is that him--draped over the fountain statue?

SOUND: SPLASH.

TONI: Where? Oh, yes. (CALLING) Phil, are you
all right?

PHILIP: (SPLUTTERING) I guess so. But I think I
swallowed an ocean.

TONI: (GIGGLING) Not the ocean. Just the fish.
Two of them are jumping out of your helmet!

PHILIP: (ANGRILY) I imagine it does look funny to
you.

TONI: (SOBERING) What do you mean?

PHILIP: You got just what you wanted, didn't you--
Toni?

TONI: (STARTLED) Toni? Then you--

PHILIP: George called you Toni, didn't he? You're Toni Stevens.

TONI: Yes, but--

PHILIP: (COOLLY) That must have been an interesting bet you made-- about this evening. Remind me to inquire further about it sometime. Now I think I'd better be going.

SOUND: SPLASHING AS HE GETS OUT OF THE POOL.

TONI: Phil, please, I can explain.

PHILIP: (COOLLY) There's nothing to explain, Miss Stevens. Thank you for a very pleasant evening.
(FADING) Good night!

TONI: Phil!

GEORGE: Well, cheer up, Toni. You won your bet. That's all that's necessary. Come on, I'll take you home.

TONI: Oh, George, how could you! Now you've ruined everything.

GEORGE: But I thought you were just playing a practical joke.

TONI: (PUT OUT) Honestly, George, sometimes you men are terribly dense! Do you think I'm crazy enough to do a stand-in for a roast rabbit-- just to pull a practical joke? I was playing for much higher stakes!

MUSIC: GAY IRONIC LITTLE INTERLUDE WITH TOUCH OF
SOUR NOTES.

TONI: (WAILING DESPERATELY) What am I going to do,
Marge? For a whole week, Phil's avoided me
like the income tax collector. I've tried
calling him on the phone, and he won't answer.
I've tried writing him notes, and he sends
them back unopened. How can I explain to
him that it was all a mistake?

MARGE: What about playing hard to get?

TONI: I've tried that, too. He just acts relieved.
In fact, most of the time he pretends he
doesn't know I'm alive. Marge, I've never
been treated like this, and I've never fallen
so hard before. What'll I do?

MARGE: I don't know. About the only germ of a
solution I can offer is that at a time like
this it would be a good idea to be a lady in
distress.

TONI: Lady in distress? How do you mean?

MARGE: Well, if you could think of a way in which
you might be considered in danger and could
call on him for help.

TONI: (EAGERLY) If he thought I were dying, you
mean?

MARGE: Well, it needn't be that drastic, but--. It

would be very strategic if he could be made to believe that he were the cause of your--shall we say, misfortune.

TONI: Any ideas?

MARGE: Unfortunately no. My idea department is as dry as Fido's bone.

TONI: (DISAPPOINTEDLY) Oh.

MARGE: (IDEA) How about--?

TONI: (HOPEFULLY) Yes?

MARGE: No, that wouldn't work. Or--? No, that wouldn't do either. Tell you what. Why don't you do a little scouting around this afternoon and see what you can find out? If we knew where he was going or what he was doing within the next decade or so, that might release a whirlwind of an idea.

TONI: Are you kidding? That hermit probably wouldn't give out any information as to his whereabouts --even to his pet fish!

MARGE: No, darling, but you might turn the Mata Hari act on George!

MUSIC: A FEW LITTLE NOTES ENDING TENTATIVELY.

SOUND: (DOOR OPENS AND BANGS SHUT) FOOTSTEPS.

PHILIP: (FADING IN--GLUMLY) Hello, George!

GEORGE: Well, if it isn't the gay Lothario himself. Why the lengthy physiognomy?

PHILIP: George, what's a good cure for deflated ego?

GEORGE: Meaning, I suppose, that Romeo Gordon is falling for the sultry Miss Stevens? She certainly made you relax and become more social. But I thought that cool bath in the fountain the other evening lowered the temperature for keeps as far as you were concerned.

PHILIP: I thought so, too, but it didn't work out that way. If she'd let me alone, maybe I could forget her, but she keeps writing and calling and --. George, I want to see her. I--. But the trouble is she regards me only like a problem in chess--one more move and I'd be checkmated!

GEORGE: Wit's end, huh?

PHILIP: Yes, I'm afraid so.

SOUND: DOOR OPENS QUIETLY.

GEORGE: Tell you what. Why not take that jaunt up to Lookout Bluff this afternoon. If you hurry, you could make it before dark.

PHILIP: Yes, I must check the rumor about the fish in that stream up there. I think you've got something, George. (FADING) See you later.

GEORGE: (CALLING) So long, Phil. Don't take it too hard. (SEEING TONI) Why--Toni, how long have you been standing there?

TONI: (HASTILY) Oh, I was just going by. Thought

I'd drop in and say hello.

GEORGE: Well, have a chair.

TONI: Oh, I can't stay. You see, I'm going fishing again this afternoon!

MUSIC: TWO OR THREE LITTLE NOTES.

SOUND: FADE IN CAR COMING TO A STOP. CAR DOOR OPENS AND CLOSES. FOOTSTEPS ON GRAVEL.

PHILIP: (TO HIMSELF) Hmm. This must be the place. Lookout Bluff, George called it. Let's see, I put my equipment in the back of the car, I think.

SOUND: KEY IN LOCK. BACK OF CAR OPENED. EQUIPMENT RATTLED.

PHILIP: (TO HIMSELF) It's getting terribly dark. Let's see--microscope, slides--. What's this? Looks like a woman's shoe. (DOUBLE TAKE) It is a woman's shoe!

TONI: (GROANS PAINFULLY)

PHILIP: What on earth--?

TONI: (GROANING) Oh, Phil--

PHILIP: (ASTONISHED) Why--Miss Stevens!

TONI: (REVIVING SOMEWHAT) Where am I?

PHILIP: (COOLLY) Miss Stevens, is this another part of your bet?

TONI: Oh, Phil, no! I hid in there to come up here with you--to explain about last Saturday

night. And I nearly suffocated in that old trunk. I--(SNEEZES VIOLENTLY) It's as dusty as the family skeleton closet in there.

(SNEEZES AGAIN). Ooohh! Can I borrow your handkerchief?

PHILIP: Here you are.

SOUND: BLOWS HER NOSE.

TONI: (SNIFFLING) I wanted to tell you. Last Saturday was all a mistake.

PHILIP: You mean you lost your bet after all?

TONI: I didn't make any bet! That is--I made a bet in the afternoon about playing a practical joke on you. But the darned thing backfired. And you pulled a Van Johnson act on me! (COMIC SNEEZE).

PHILIP: Miss Stevens, I think you'd better go back to town. Before you catch cold.

TONI: (GRINDING HER TEETH) If I catch cold, it won't be on account of the weather. Honestly, Phil, don't you ever knock off the icicles?

PHILIP: (ABRUPTLY) Miss Stevens, I think we concluded our little tete-a-tete last Saturday. There's really no reason for it to continue. You'd better take my car and drive back to town. I'll walk in as soon as I finish here.

TONI: Oh, no, Phil, that's ten miles! Besides, I came

up here to apologize.

PHILIP: No apology is necessary.

TONI: Phil, please, you make me feel like a worm. I just wanted to tell you that I didn't plan Saturday--the way it happened.

PHILIP: You mean the results were to have been even more spectacular?

TONI: Phil, please! I admit that afternoon at the lake--when you were fishing--

PHILIP: Observing fish.

TONI: All right, observing fish. I--I made a bet with the girls. They said no girl could lure you away from your research projects. And-- well, I bet them I could.

PHILIP: Well, you won your bet. What more can I do for you?

TONI: Oh, Phil, I lost interest in the bet. I suddenly realized that--the reason I wanted you to go the dance Saturday night was not because I wanted the nylons Helen promised me, but-- because I really liked you and wanted you to go--so I could see you again, and--
(COMIC TEARS) Oh, Phil, I'm so miserable!

PHILIP: (AWKWARDLY) Please don't cry! I--. I honestly don't know what to believe, Miss

Stevens.

TONI: Toni.

PHILIP: (WITH DIFFICULTY) Toni. You sound sincere, but how can I be sure this isn't some more of the same plot?

TONI: But I told you. I don't care about the bet any more. I only care about you. It struck me like a ton of bricks when you left me so abruptly at the lake. And I asked George to introduce me as Bunny at the dance because-- well, after the way I'd acted in the afternoon, I was afraid you might still be angry. It's true it was all part of the bet, but my real aim was just to get you to like me. I wanted you to like me, so--

PHILIP: (RELENTING) So you thought it didn't work, is that it?

TONI: (SHEEPISHLY) No, the bonfire kind of ruined my plans. (GIGGLES).

PHILIP: (GIGGLES TOO IN SPIKE OF HIMSELF) You know, you certainly looked silly that night--first scorched and then drenched.

TONI: (GIGGLING) And if you could have seen yourself with those fish making shrimp cocktail out of your hair.... Phil, are you really angry?

PHILIP: (UNDECIDED) I--I don't know what to say. I never had to cope with a situation like this before. (FIATIM) You know, women make life awfully complicated!

TONI: I'm beginning to think the same thing about men. They're what you might call "essential non-essentials." ...Phil, do you like me-- just a little bit.

PHILIP: (JOKING) Well, at the moment I can't stand the sight of you--

TONI: Phil!

PHILIP: But I think if you keep working on it--

TONI: Oh, Phil, I'm glad! But there's still a problem.

PHILIP: What do you mean?

TONI: There's no place in your life for anything you can't pour into a test tube and analyze.

PHILIP: (LAUGHING) My dear, there might be room for something I could pour into a bathing suit and analyze!

MUSIC: COMIC SWEEPING INTERLUDE TO FINISH.

Notes on Writing and Production of
OH, PROFESSOR!

Plot Creation

The plot of OH, PROFESSOR! is probably the least sure-fire of the three comedies, and it is also probably the weakest play in the series. It is difficult to analyze the specific reasons for this, except to say that the basic situation had fewer comic possibilities than did the plots of BABY BE GOOD and HONEYMOON BY PROXY.

The writer had difficulty with character portrayal in this play. The professor had to be a stuffy individual at the beginning and gradually "unbend" to become quite human because of the influence of Toni. This had to be done chiefly by means of dialogue.

The heroine, on the other hand, had to be believably sultry and desirable at the same time that she restrained her romantic inclinations to the level of polite society. Even though unusually aggressive, she had to be likable and sympathetic. For some reason the two characters refused to cooperate with the author, and the play required almost complete rewriting.

With revisions both before and after

production the script has in a measure attained the desired quality, although it still remains a somewhat weaker play than any which preceded or followed it.

Acting

Philip Gordon is the stuffy professor, who, as one of the other character says, "pickles himself in chemicals till all hours of the night." He has stilted pedantic speech and a distinctly professorial manner in the opening scenes, and then gradually relaxes to become quite human as he finds himself falling in love with Toni Stevens.

Toni must have a warm caressing voice, yet she must not sound so sexy as to lose the sympathy of the audience. She is beautiful and highly attractive to men, and she is well aware of that fact. She capitalizes on it when she makes her bet with the girls about getting a date with Gordon. Her first meeting with him, however, proves that he has much the same effect on her that she has on him. The problem then remains for her to correct his initial warped impression of her as a female "wolf." The scenes must not be played too suggestively.

George is another professor at the college

and an admirer of Toni's; his part is played straight. Marge, Toni's roommate, has a touch of Brooklyn dialect. She is good-hearted and is definitely not of college caliber, although she does understand men. Helen is sophisticated and slightly jealous of Toni's charms.

Directing

In *OH, PROFESSOR!*, as in the other comedies, the problem of pacing is of prime importance. The speed and finesse with which the fire and fountain scene is executed are largely responsible for its success or failure.

One point this director learned about directing humorous dialogue can be illustrated with a situation in this play. Extra bits of business typical of a character or unique in a certain situation may add much humor to a show. For instance in the scene in which the professor finds Toni in the trunk of his car and she sneezes because of the dust, an unimaginative director or actor would allow that sneeze to be a very commonplace "choo." A director who knew the techniques of comedy, however, would take advantage of the situation to build that simple sneeze into a comedy situation

by several suspenseful "ah-ah-ah's" preparing for an enormous sneeze and then having a let-down for a very tiny "choo." The incongruity of the anti-climax would give the situation its humor.

Sound and Music

Music presents no problems, but the sound in the fountain scene requires much added rehearsal and preparation. It is the job of the sound technician to simulate a heavy splash denoting the jumping of two persons into the pool and to do it with a loud enough splash to sound realistic and yet not "blast" the microphone. It was found in this production that two sound men were necessary. Each of them used two small blocks of wood held at different angles and these were plunged into a tub of water simultaneously. Toni's dive into the lake earlier in the play was simulated by one person diving pointed fingertips into the tub of water.

Script Changes

Again the problems involved chiefly the fire and fountain scene. In the original version too much time elapsed between the time the bunny

tail caught fire and Toni's and Phil's plunge into the fountain. Several revisions were made both during rehearsal and following the broadcast to telescope this scene into a realistic length of time.

CHAPTER III

THE REALM OF FANTASY

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THE REALM OF FANTASY

Writing effective fantasy is an art in any medium, but it is particularly so in radio, which affords added possibilities for error. Writers often make the mistake of appearing syrupy and "too, too precious" when creating material under the false heading of fantasy. They feel that because it is fantasy, it should sound fantastic.

Max Wylie, in discussing this type of drama in his book, *RADIO WRITING*,¹ says: "A fantasy, to be effective, must be believed. In this respect it is no different from any other drama. But the fantasy must be believed in the very face of positive proof that the thing can't possibly happen."

In other words real fantasy is based upon material which defies all the laws of science and logic. Some of the most outstanding examples of fantasy in modern radio drama include Norman Corwin's adaptation of Lucille Fletcher Hermann's

1

New York, Farrar and Rinehart, 1939, p. 322.

MY CLIENT CURLEY,¹ Corwin's own ODYSSEY OF RUNYON JONES,² and adaptations of Robert Ayre's MR. SYCAMORE³ and Eric Knight's THE FLYING YORKSHIREMAN.⁴ These stories concern, respectively, a caterpillar who can dance, a boy who goes to heaven in search of his dog, a man who turns into a tree, and a man who learns how to fly. Obviously, under present conditions, none of these things is possible. Yet each of the plays makes its chosen situation thoroughly believable, thoroughly real to the audience.

This believability in the face of impossibility is achieved, as Wylie puts it, by "realism of the strictest sort--in other words, close attention to detail, and sharp color-photo characterization."⁵ Each of the unique individuals

¹ Norman Corwin, Thirteen By Corwin, New York, Henry Holt, 1942, pp. 263-287.

² Ibid., pp. 1-22.

³ Max Wylie, op. cit., pp. 341-355.

⁴ Ibid., pp. 325-339.

⁵ Ibid., p. 322.

portrayed by the radiowrights is a realistic human being, and as such he does commonplace everyday things. The caterpillar of MY CLIENT CURLEY has a personality as real as any human character. He can distinguish between symphonic music and the tune, "Yes, Sir, That's My Baby"; he strongly prefers the latter and listens with complete boredom and indifference to the former.

In ODYSSEY OF RUNYON JONES, the little boy explores the stratosphere for his dog who was killed while trying to bite the tires of a speeding automobile. He approaches such characters as Father Time, Mother Nature, a Harpy and a Giant for information as to the whereabouts of his pet. Each of these mythical characters becomes a real individual under the deft handling of the author, each with human eccentricities and peculiarities. The distorted directions told to the boy resemble the garbled instructions given a stranger by any pedestrian on how to get from the corner of Main and West to the city hall. Yet actually the boy is travelling through space by means of strange celestial charms and fantastic musical transitions, arriving finally at a place called Curgatory. No

one for a moment doubts the reality of Runyon, the boy, and his dog, Pootzy, the latter of whom they never actually meet.

We mentioned at the beginning of this chapter that radio offers additional pitfalls to the writer of fantasy. To illustrate this we need only point out such possible errors as the hocus-pocus of superfluous sound effects and the dependence upon confusing musical cues to convey that which has no business in fantasy at all, and if it did have, it should be achieved through dialogue and plot alone. We hasten to point out, however, that the radio man's access to sound and music can be of invaluable assistance in the creation of fantasy, providing he has the discretion to use it sparingly and only in the most strategic places.

The writer of fantasy, therefore, must be able to imagine and create in the world of make-believe at the same time that he writes with his feet on the ground. He must remember that once his unusual and impossible plot is conceived, he must write it to the same general rules and specifications which apply to all radio drama.

SCRIPT AND PRODUCTION NOTES
FOR
A FANTASY

THE MISFIT GHOST

The Story of Elmer, a Dissatisfied
Ghost Who Just Didn't Want to
Stay Dead!

ANNCR: This is the story of Elmer, who became a ghost before his time. Elmer was really only about twenty-five when he officially became a ghost, and it was with considerable reluctance that Elmer left the Realm of the Living and plodded toward Ghostdom. At the gates of Ghostdom, he was greeted solemnly by one of the inhabitants--an eerie looking official--who ushered him into a nearby cloud compartment (FADING) and invited him to recline...

JONES: Have a billow, Ghost Elmer.

ELMER: I beg your pardon, sir?

JONES: A billow---right there behind you. A billow is a junior cloud. We use them up here as couches and footrests.

ELMER: (LAUGHING SLIGHTLY) Oh, I see. Thank you.

JONES: (IMPRESSIVELY) Now, Ghost Elmer, I must introduce myself. I am Spook Jones, and I have been assigned to acquaint you with the rules and regulations of Ghostdom.

ELMER: Yes, sir.

JONES: First of all, you must understand why you were brought here.

ELMER: Yes, I wondered about that, too. I was settled so comfortably in my own little house back in Utica, Pennsylvania, U.S.A., Earth, and (SHYLY)...Well, I was just thinking about finding myself a girl and maybe settling down and getting married. Of course, it's nice up here in Ghostdom, but-- it's sort of lonesome and strange.

JONES: (SYMPATHETICALLY) I know, Ghost Elmer, we all feel that way at first, but you'll get used to it. Now, to get back to why you're here...You see, we had an abdication in Ghostdom.

ELMER: An abdication?

JONES: Yes, Ghostdom is sort of a mid-point between the Land of Humans and Heaven. Ghosts have an opportunity to work off demerits they acquired on Earth by doing an extra-good job of haunting for a period of from one to one hundred light years. As soon as they have worked off their demerits, they may go on to Heaven.

ELMER: So someone went off to Heaven, is that it?

JONES: That's it. The High Ghost needed someone to fill the vacancy, and, since you were due to leave your earthly companions anyway, you were immediately en-Ghostified!

ELMER: (SADLY) Well, I wish they'd un-Ghostify me. Because I'm not so sure I like this transparent life.

JONES: Oh, you'll get used to having people see through you.

ELMER: (DOUBTFULLY) Maybe. But--I feel horrible!

JONES: Well, Ghost Elmer, you won't have to be horrible for very long, because you don't have many demerits. However, you must remember that, in addition to working off your already acquired demerits, you must also be very careful not to acquire any additional demerits. Because, if you do, it may take you a very long time to earn your release.

ELMER: How do you mean?

JONES: Well, it's much more difficult to work off the eerie demerits you acquire after you get in Ghostdom than it is to obliterate those you had when you came in. And there are many rules which must not be crushed. For instance, the social life in Ghostdom is

very limited. We never have Ghoul Bouts or Ghost Jamborees. And you must remember never to indulge in gambling, smoking, drinking, or partying.

ELMER: No parties?

JONES: (POSITIVELY) In Ghostdom we never have parties.

ELMER: Aw, gee!

JONES: Secondly, you must be very careful about feminine companionship. We-uh-we regret to state that several rather disreputable young Ghostesses have recently found their way into our ectoplasmic domain. I trust you understand, Ghost Elmer, that you must not--under any circumstances--associate with these Ghostesses!

ELMER: No, sir! But--aren't there some Ghostesses who--well, who--

JONES: Whose personalities are not so igniting?

ELMER: Yes, sir.

JONES: Well, what particular type of Ghostess would you prefer?

ELMER: (THINKING IT OVER) We-ell, I think the homey type. But a Ghostess who's very attractive. One who can make the chills run up and down my spine!

JONES: (LAUGHING) Well, we'll see what we can do. Of course, you understand, that will take time. Meanwhile, remember that you are to devote every waking hour to the task of haunting, the details of which will be revealed to you at a special meeting tomorrow, Smoke Tuesday. Now, you are to go directly to your cloud home and stay there until you are called. Here is the drop of vapor with your address. I'm sure you'll have no trouble finding it. It's only one airwave over toward the main moonbeam. Now I must go. (FADING SLIGHTLY) Happy haunting, Ghost Elmer!

SOUND: THIN WHISTLING SOUND STARTING LOW AND GOING UP AND OUT OF SIGHT INDICATING THE SPOOK'S DEPARTURE.

ELMER: (SADLY) Golly, this is an awful spot to be in! I've not only been made into a Ghost. I've also been put in Cloud storage!

MUSIC: SEVERAL FACETIOUS LITTLE NOTES.

CAST: CROWD NOISES AS OF A MEETING GATHERING.

SOUND: GAVEL SOUNDED.

CAST: CROWD SUBSIDES.

JONES: The meeting of the Ghost Battalion will

please come to order. (CLEARS THROAT IMPORTANTLY) This being Smoke Tuesday, I, Spook Jones, have summoned all you newly made Ghosts together to assign you to Haunting Battalions. First of all I must acquaint you with the ethics of haunting. It is the duty of every Ghost to be on the alert for ideal haunting conditions. It is a major offense for any Ghost to fail to report a newly abandoned house or barn on any lonely road or in any isolated woods. Such conditions must be reported immediately either to First Spiritual Smith or to me. Is that clear?

CAST: AD LIB. ASSENTS.

JONES: Furthermore, each Ghost must post his haunting schedule on the bulletin board in the lobby of Ghoul hall, so that when any such emergency report comes in, First Spiritual Smith and I will know exactly who is on temporary leave and is therefore available for Haunt Duty. Do you understand?

CAST: AD LIB. ASSENTS.

JONES: Now, each of you has his schedule of haunting hours and his list of houses and barns to haunt. You are to go straight to the post at the

appointed time, haunt the place diligently for the specified number of hours, and return to Ghoul hall promptly to be relieved of duty. The speed with which you obliterate your demerits depends upon your diligence in haunting. Now, are there any questions? If not, Ghosts, report to First Spiritual Smith for your evening's supply of sheets, banging shutters, clanking chains, and scueaking doors. That is all.

SOUND: GAVEL SOUNDED.

CAST: AD LIB. BREAKING UP OF A MEETING.

JONES: Uh--Ghost Elmer, I wish to speak with you a moment.

ELMER: What is it, Spook Jones?

JONES: To what post have you been assigned?

ELMER: The deserted old house out on the turnpike.

JONES: Ah, yes. Now, Elmer, that is going to be a good test of your haunting abilities. It's so quiet out there it even gets on a Ghost's nerves. This is a good chance for you to prove yourself, Ghost Elmer, so see that you do a good job of running around in your sheet, moaning, banging your shutters, and creaking your door. Make your haunting good and horrible!

ELMER: (FADING) Yes, Spook Jones, it'll be horrible, all right!

BUTCH: (TOUGH GUY--FADING IN--SOTTO VOCE) That's the guy over there, Gaseus. The one in the blue drapery, see? His name's Elmer.

GASEUS: (STOOGIE--NOT VERY BRIGHT) Guh--yeah, Butch, I see him. But whatta we gonna do?

BUTCH: Well, Gaseus, we're gonna singe that pretty blue drapery for Mr. Elmer.

GASEUS: Guh--I don't get it.

BUTCH: Well, it's this way, Gaseus. Spook Jones has taken a fancy to Elmer, and so long as that sitcheyation stands, Jones will spend all his time on Elmer, and you and me and Horrific don't stand a Ghost of a chance of getting promoted. Now, so far Elmer ain't said boo to nobody. And our job is to see to it that he gets in a peck of trouble, so's we can report him to the High Ghost. Then we can really go places. We'll get rid of both the Spook and the little guy, Elmer, and then you and me and Horrific can run the joint our way, see.

GASEUS: Yeah, I'm beginning to get the drift of yer vapor. But how you gonna absquatulate him?

BUTCH: Well, I got it all figured out. (FADING) The little guy's been assigned to haunt that deserted old house out on the turnpike, and...

MUSIC: FEW GRIM LITTLE NOTES. CROSS FADE INTO HOWLING WIND AND HOLD BEHIND.

ELMER: (MOANING GRUESOMELY).

SOUND: SHUTTER BANGING. DOOR CREAKING. CHAINS CLANKING.

ELMER: (MOANS AGAIN A SECOND. THEN STOPS. ONE LONG PATHETIC SIGH). Spook Jones was sure right. This old house is enough to give even a Ghost the creeps! Especially with all these added spook noises--clatters, creaks, and clanks. I even scare myself! (SIGH) Well, I'm glad there's only one more round of this before the cock crows. (MOANS AGAIN GRUESOMELY).

SOUND: SHUTTER BANGING. DOOR CREAKING. CHAINS CLANKING. COCK CROWS FAINTLY OFF MIKE. THEN THE CHAINS AND SHUTTER ARE DROPPED CONCLUSIVELY WITH A THUD.

ELMER: There! That's enough! Now, wait'll I turn off the wind...

SOUND: SNAP AS OF A LIGHT SWITCH. WIND STOPS

ABRUPTLY.

ELMER: And I'm gonna go home! Gosh, my feet hurt!

BUTCH: (FADING IN) Hey, psst! Elmer!

ELMER: (STARTLED) Huh? (RELIEVED) Oh, another Ghost. Golly, you scared me. For a minute I thought you were human! (SUSPICIOUSLY) Who are you?

BUTCH: (INGRATIATINGLY) Oh, I'm from Ghostdom, too, Elmer. My name is Butch. An' I been directing a nightmare--a perfectly terrific nightmare. Just like a hit movie. How'd you do?

ELMER: Not so good. There wasn't a soul stirring.

BUTCH: (CRAFTILY) Uh-huh. Kinda deflatin', ain't it?

ELMER: (BRAVELY) Oh, it isn't bad, really.

BUTCH: (SYMPATHETICALLY) Look, kid, I know what your going through. An' anybody who draws this old dump of a house to haunt has my sympathization, see? Spook Jones always palms this one off on whichever spook he don't like. I feel sorry for you.

ELMER: Well, thank you, but I'm sure you're mistaken about Spook Jones. He seemed to take a fancy to me. He even said...

BUTCH: Told you he'd get you a girl, didn't he?

ELMER: (SHYLY) Well--yes, he hinted he might introduce me to some of his friends.

BUTCH: Yeah, that's his line all right. You gotta get wise to the old boy, Elmer. He feeds that hormone to all of us, just so's he can get the work outa us.

ELMER: (DANGEROUSLY NEAR TEARS) You mean, he won't let me meet the beautiful Ghostess after all?

BUTCH: Naw, kid, your stuck. (CRAFTILY) Unless, of course, you wanta come in wid me and the boys.

ELMER: (SNIFFING) You and the boys?

BUTCH: Sure. Me and Gaseus and Horrific. We got a plan to oust the Spook.

ELMER: Well, I don't know...

BUTCH: Tell you what. We got a couple or three hours before we hafta get back to Ghostdom. How's about lettin' me bring in the boys to meetcha, huh? Then you can decide for yourself who you'd prefer to clank your chains wid, huh?

ELMER: (DOUBTFULLY) Well...

BUTCH: That's the spirit! (CALLING) Come on in, boys. Elmer wants us to join him in a poker game...

GASEUS: AND HORRIFIC: AD LIBBING IN.

ELMER: (PROTESTING) Oh, but that's against the rules,

Butch, Spook Jones said...

BUTCH: Never mind what the Spook said, Elmer. He's just old fashioned. I'll tell you a secret. The High Ghost, who really runs Ghostdom, prefers new recruits wid imagination and initiative--folks who can really stand up an' say "boo." (INGRATIATINGLY) Ghosts like you, Elmer.

ELMER: Do you really think so?

BUTCH: Sure! Sit down, boys. Elmer, this is Gaseus...

GASEUS: Guh--hiya, Elmer.

BUTCH: And this is Horrific...

HORRIFIC:(LOW DEEP VOICE--HOLLOW AND FRIGHTENING)

Evenin', Elmer.

ELMER: (DOUBTFUL AND A BIT SCARED) Hello...boys.

BUTCH: Spread out your nightshirt, Elmer, and have some air. Deal Elmer a hand, Gaseus.

SOUND: CARDS DEALT.

ELMER: (PROTESTING) Oh, I hardly think so...

BUTCH: Sure, go on.

SOUND: CHIPS RATTLED.

BUTCH: Let's see your hand, Elmer. (WHISTLES) Geez, not bad!

GASEUS: Guh--I'll start it out at two.

HORRIFIC:(OMINOUSLY) Raise you three soap bubbles.

ELMER: (SOTTO TO BUTCH) What do I do now, Butch?

BUTCH: Elmer doubles that. Let's see your hand,
Horrific.

HORRIFIC:(OMINOUSLY) Four kings.

BUTCH: (TRIUMPHANTLY) Too bad, Elmer's got four aces.

GASEUS: (GROANING) Lucky spook! Look at the bowl of
soap bubbles Elmer gets. Geez!

ELMER: (AMAZED) You mean--I get all of--that!

BUTCH: Sure, Elmer, you're pretty good. Do you shoot
craps, too?

ELMER: Well, just barely...

BUTCH: Good! Geez, kid, yer versatyle! Gimme that
pair of rain drop dice, Gaseus. Let's let the
kid show us what he can do.

GASEUS: Guh--sure, Butch.

ELMER: Oh, no, please! I'm really very tired.

BUTCH: (EXAGGERATED SYMPATHY) Tired! Well, why
didn't you say so, Elmer? I got just the ting
fer you--Spirits of Etheria!

SOUND: TINKLE OF GLASS.

ELMER: Spirits of Etheria?

BUTCH: (CONFIDENTIALLY) Yeah. It's a little some-
thin' to make you wake up an' moan right.
Come on, have a balloon-full.

ELMER: Oh, no, I--

BUTCH: Swallow!

ELMER: (GURGLES AS IT GOES DOWN--THEN SPLUTTERS)
Golly!

BUTCH: Prettv good, now, ain't it?

ELMER: (SMACKING HIS LIPS) Well, yes, it is kinda good.

BUTCH: (ABRUPTLY) Have another.

ELMER: But I really shouldn't...

BUTCH: Aw, it won't hurt you. Etheria just makes you forget your hauntin' troubles. (LEERING)
Ain't that right, Gaseus?

GASEUS: Guh--that it does, Butch, that it does!

BUTCH: Now gimme that pair a rain drops, Gaseus.
Spooky needs a new pair of rubbers!

MUSIC: FEW OMINOUS LITTLE NOTES.

SOUND: CLOCK CHIMES SEVEN

BUTCH: (SOTTO VOCE) Put him down right here, boys.
This is what I calls a good night's work. The Spook'll take one look at Elmer, and Elmer's drapery is dis-hintegrated for sure. Huh, Gaseus?

GASEUS: Guh--yeah, he's sure ecto-plastered!

BUTCH: Yeah. (LAUGHS LOUDLY--THEN CATCHES HIMSELF)
Say, we better condense our vapor but quick, or we'll all get demoted to non-entities.

ELMER: (GROANS) Oohhh.

BUTCH: He's comin' around. (FADING) Let's disappear before he gets wise.

ELMER: (WEAKLY) Oohh, my head! Where am I?.....

This looks like the Goat of Gastedom.

(HICCOUGH) I mean, Gate of Ghostdom.

(GROANS) Oohh! Butch said this Etheria would make me feel better. Maybe I ought to try another dose. (SWALLOWS--SMACKS LIPS) Ah, that's better. (HICCOUGH--STARTS SINGING DEFINITELY OFF KEY TO THE TUNE OF "ONE BOTTLE FOR ONE"). Oohhh!

One skeleton for one,

Two skeletons for two,

Three skeletons for three, (HICCOUGH)

And the graveyard for me!

JONES: (COMMANDING TONES--FADING IN) Ghost Elmer, What is the meaning of this?

ELMER: (HICCOUGH) I beg your pardon?

JONES: The idea of coming home at this hour of the morning. Ghost Elmer, you have been indulging in spirits!

ELMER: Aw, go (HICCOUGH) condense yourself!

JONES: Ghost Elmer, I'm deeply hurt. I would suggest that you envelop yourself in the arms of Morpheus immediately and bid good-bye to Etheria.

You'll need to have your wits about you, because you will be expected to appear tomorrow in response to an imperial summons at the Royal Cloud of the Temple of Spirituum. I'll do what I can for you, but the High Ghost must deal with this case himself!

MUSIC: THREE OR FOUR COMICALLY OMINOUS LITTLE NOTES ENDING TENTATIVELY.

HIGH GHOST: (POMPOUS INDIVIDUAL--ALMOST ACCUSINGLY)
Ghost Elmer, I believe.

ELMER: (GULPING) Yes, sir. I mean, yes, your Ghost.

HIGH G: (CLEARS THROAT IMPORTANTLY) Come, come, Elmer!

ELMER: Yes sir?

HIGH G: Yours is an interesting case, Elmer. Not unusual exactly, but interesting. The Royal Cloud of the Temple of Spirituum, and I, the High Ghost, have studied your case thoroughly. There seem to be a number of questions we have been unable to answer. (QUIZZICALLY)
Perhaps you can help us.

ELMER: I'll do anything I can, sir.

HIGH G: Um, good! Very good, indeed! Like your spirit! Now, Elmer, we know your record before you came to Ghostdom was above reproach. And up until now, your record here has been quite ghostly. This incident, however, is

thoroughly ghastly. Can you explain yourself?

ELMER: Well, I--

HIGH G: (FUSSILY) Elmer, Elmer, we want to help you. But we can't let you go Ghost free unless you can furnish a creditable excuse for your behavior. Can you think of one?

ELMER: (DOLEFULLY) None at all, sir.

HIGH G: Hm. Very unusual. Very unusual. Was another Ghost responsible?

ELMER: I--. I prefer to take the responsibility myself.

HIGH G: Tell me, where did you manage to get the Spirits of Etheria?

ELMER: I'm afraid I can't tell you that without incriminating another Ghost. And I won't moan on anybody's shoulder, sir.

HIGH G: Hmm, yes. We recognize, Ghost Elmer, that your desire to protect your friend--

ELMER: (BURSTS OUT) But he's not my friend. He's--

HIGH G: You were about to say---.

ELMER: Nothing.

HIGH G: Hmm. Very peculiar. Very peculiar case, I must say.

ELMER: Yes, sir.

HIGH G: (POMPOUSLY) I'm afraid you leave me no choice, Elmer, However, in view of your excellent record, we will extend only the minimum sentence. A total of 50 demerits and two months' suspension of haunting privileges. I'm sorry, Elmer, but that's the best I can do.

ELMER: (SIGHS SADLY) Yes, sir, I--understand.

HIGH G: Hm, yes...Oh, one more thing, Ghost Elmer. Your battalion leader, Spook Jones, who was partially responsible for your lightened sentence, also asked me to tell you--the meeting he had arranged for you this evening--with a Ghostess, I believe he said--has been cancelled.

ELMER: (BLINKING BACK THE TEARS) Yes, sir. (SNIFFS)
No Ghostess!

MUSIC: SEVERAL DOLEFUL LITTLE NOTES.

BUTCH: (SOTTO VOCE--HUGELY PLEASED) Aha! There comes Elmer, now. He sure looks beat, all right, don't he, Gaseus?

GASEUS: Yeah, his ectoplasm is sure droopin'.

BUTCH: Well, I ain't through wid that Elmer yet. He got off too easy. If it had been any other Ghost in the spirit world, he'd got permanently dis-hauntified.

GASEUS: Guh--watcha gonna do?

BUTCH: Well, I got it all fixed up with Maizie from the Gay Ghoul Gholombo to take the kid's mind off his worries, just long enough to get him in ghoul's oil for keeps. Now, Gaseus, you stay here an' watch.

GASEUS: (FADING) Guh--okay, but holler boo if you need any help.

BUTCH: Psst! Hey, Elmer!

ELMER: Huh? Oh, it's you, Butch. I don't think I want to talk to you. You got me in one nightmare of a mess!

BUTCH: (WITH EXAGGERATED SYMPATHY) Yeah, I heard about it. And, Elmer, you got my deepest conveniences.

ELMER: Condolences.

BUTCH: Yeah, condolences. But I blew right over to the Royal Cloud to set everything right wid the big shot. Him and me is bosom buddies, see?

ELMER: (NOT MUCH INTERESTED) Really?

BUTCH: Aw, snap out of it, Elmer. It ain't so bad, really. I was too late to prevent the sentence, but I did gitcha a special dispensary.

ELMER: (NOT VERY HOPEFUL) You mean, dispensation?

BUTCH: Uh--yeah. Da Spook decided you could meet your girl friend after all.

ELMER: (INTERESTED IN SPITE OF HIMSELF) Gee, do you really mean that?

BUTCH: (PUFFING HIS CHEST) Sure. I got influence. I talked the old Ghoul into it.

ELMER: (EAGERLY) What's she like? Did you see her, Butch?

BUTCH: Yeah. And kid, is she a honey! A beautiful Ghostess with transparent hair and a thin gauzy dress.

ELMER: A zoot Spook, huh?

BUTCH: You betcher blinkers, she is! She'll be along any minute. She may not recognize you at first. But the Spook said to be sure--not under any conditions to let her give you the air!

ELMER: Oh, I won't. Gee, thanks, Butch.

BUTCH: Ssh, here she comes now.

ELMER: (ADMIRINGLY) Say, she's not bad! Condense your vapor, pronto, Butch. Here's where I starch my smoke rings.

BUTCH: (FADING) Sure. Anything to oblige.

MAIZIE: (FADING IN) Oh, hello, tall, light, and transparent.

ELMER: (GULPS) Uh--you mean me?

MAIZIE: Who else, kid? The Spook said you'd like to come over and mingle drapery with me tonight. Is that right?

ELMER: Well, that's very nice of you--(DOUBLE TAKE)
Huh?

MAIZIE: Come on over this evening. Just go up to the
top of Cloud Twelve. Turn left to the first
puff. Whistle three times and ask for Maizie!

ELMER: (SHY AND SILLY) Oh, Maizie, your--(HALF LAUGH)
Your just hauntin' me!

SOUND: CLOCK CHIMES NINE.

ELMER: (FADING IN--WEAKLY--WHISTLES FIRST ONCE--THEN
AGAIN--FINALLY A THIRD TIME--VOICE CRACKING
UNCERTAINLY) Is Maiz--(CLEARS THROAT). Is
Maizie at home?

MAIZIE: You mean you don't recognize me, Elmer? Now
I really am hurt.

ELMER: (NERVOUSLY) Huh? Oh, yes, of course. I--
(GULPS) It's awfully dark up here.

MAIZIE: Come on in and spread yourself around.

ELMER: Thank you.

MAIZIE: No, Elmer! Sit over here--by me.

ELMER: (AWKWARDLY) Oh, really, I'm quite comfortable
right here.

MAIZIE: (SIGNIFICANTLY) If you do as I say, I can
really make Ghosthood interesting!

ELMER: (PROTESTING) Oh, but, Miss--

MAIZIE: Maizie.

ELMER: Miss Maizie. I hardly think this is accept-
able Ghostly etiquette.

MAIZIE: Aw, who cares about etiquette at a time like this? Let's have some fun.

ELMER: (GULPS) Miss Maizie, I'm not sure this is the certified variety of Ghostly fun.

MAIZIE: Wait'll you get used to it, kid! Anyway, Butch said--

ELMER: (AGHAST) Oh, no! You mean Butch sent you after me? It wasn't Spook Jones at all?

MAIZIE: (HEDGING) Well, I--

SOUND: THIN WHISTLING SOUND STARTING HIGH AND GOING LOW DOWN AND OUT OF SIGHT.

ELMER: (STARTLED) What was that?

MAIZIE: (SOOTHING) Nothing, Elmer. Relax. Your drapery's as stiff as an egg white!

SOUND: WIGGILY WHISTLING SOUND A SECOND.

ELMER: (FADING) Oh!

JONES: (FADING IN) Where did he go? I saw him come in here. Where did he go?

MAIZIE: Why, Jonesie, old boy.

JONES: I saw him come up here--one of the new Ghosts. Now who was he, and where did he go?

MAIZIE: Well, he's spread out right here beside me, Jonesie.

JONES: Now, don't give me any of that, Maizie. Where did you hide him?

MAIZIE: But I tell you, he's--. Great Ghostatthebiades!

The darned spook was so scared he evaporated!

MUSIC: FEW COMIC LITTLE NOTES.

ELMER: (DOLEFULLY--TO HIMSELF) Ouch! These fence spikes down here on earth aren't very comfortable to sit on. Brrr! It's dark down here, too. Golly, I don't stand a Ghost of a chance of reestablishing my drapery at this rate. I think I'd better stay down here on earth until my uncanny sentence is up. Then maybe I can un-evaporate.

HENRIET: (HUMMING A GAY LITTLE TUNE--FADING IN ON FILTER)

ELMER: (TO HIMSELF) Oh, boy! What a beautiful girl! (TERRIFIC DISCOVERY) Gee, she's not transparent! She's real! (AWFUL THOUGHT) But that means she can't see me. Gosh, I wish--, Maybe if I try very hard, I could glow just an atom's worth. It's so dark out here, even the tiniest glow would show up nicely, and she makes me feel like I could electrify a whole Christmas tree!

HENRIET: (FILTER--STILL HUMMING--BREAKS OFF SUDDENLY)

Oh, how beautiful!

ELMER: I wonder if I really haunted her? Henrietta, did you say something?

HENRIET: (FILTER) Henrietta? How did you know my name?

ELMER: Golly, I don't know. Ghosts must have--I mean, I must have a sort of psychic power. I knew the moment I saw you that your name just had to be Henrietta.

HENRIET: (FILTER) Who are you?

ELMER: My name is Elmer. Can you really see me?

HENRIET: (FILTER) Oh, yes, very well now. At first you were a little vague, but now you're getting much brighter.

ELMER: Oh, Henrietta, I'm so afraid my glowing power will go away. You see, I'm not supposed to be able to light up any more. Officially, I'm supposed to be thoroughly invisible!

HENRIET: (FILTER) Invisible?

ELMER: (EMBARRASSED). You see, I--went to a party I wasn't supposed to, and my superior officer had me demoted.

HENRIET: (FILTER--REALLY SORRY) Oh, that's too bad! But where are you from? You don't look like anyone from around here, Elmer.

ELMER: Well, I'm not. You see, originally I was from Utica, but since I became inhuman I'm from-from--

HENRIET: (FILTER) Yes...?

ELMER: Promise me you won't be frightened if I tell you where I'm from?

HENRIET: (FILTER) Why, of course not. What a silly question.

ELMER: Well, you see, I just couldn't bear to think you didn't like me. I'm from--from Ghostdom.

HENRIET: (FILTER--THOUGHTFUL) Ghostdom? I don't believe I know where that is.

ELMER: No, you probably don't. But we members of Ghostdom aren't very well liked among you down here in the Realm of the Living. You see, it's our duty to haunt you.

HENRIET: (FILTER) Haunt us?

ELMER: Yes, you know, like haunted houses and old barns.

HENRIET: (FILTER) You mean, you haunt houses? Oh, what fun!

ELMER: (SADLY) Well, I used to. Until the other day, I got mixed up in a--well, a kind of spirited deal--and the High Ghost reduced me from a private haunt to a non-entity. And now for the next two months I'm in a total blackout.

HENRIET: (FILTER) But I can see you.

ELMER: And I'm so glad, Henrietta. I like you very much.

HENRIET: (FILTER) And I like you, too, Elmer.

ELMER: I've been so lonely up in Ghostdom. You see, I didn't want to become a Ghost, but they made me do it against my will.

HENRIET: (FILTER) Oh, but I'll bet it's lots of fun being a Ghost, isn't it, Elmer?

ELMER: (WITH PARDONABLE PRIDE) Well, of course it's quite a responsible position, being a private haunt and having charge of a whole house like I was.

HENRIET: (FILTER) A whole house?

ELMER: Oh, yes. And if I hadn't made that awful mistake, I've no doubt that I'd have soon been promoted to a Spook or a First Spiritual.

HENRIET: (FILTER--WONDERINGLY) Oh, Elmer, you're wonderful!

ELMER: Yes, I was quite a big shot--in my own way, of course. But now I'm nothing but a non-entity.

HENRIET: (FILTER) Oh, but Elmer, you're very nice!

ELMER: You know what, Henrietta?

HENRIET: (FILTER) No, what?

ELMER: I think I'm happier than I've been at any time since I was en-Ghostified!

HENRIET: (FILTER) I'm glad, Elmer.

ELMER: Henrietta, do you mind if I come and see you often?

HENRIET: (FILTER) Oh, I'd like you to, Elmer.

ELMER: Thank you, Henrietta. And I'll be ever so careful. I'll come only at night so you won't have to strain your eyes to find me! May I see you tomorrow night?

HENRIET: (FILTER) Uh huh.

ELMER: And the next?

HENRIET: (FILTER) Umhmm.

ELMER: (FADING) And what about...?

MUSIC: SEVERAL QUIET LITTLE NOTES.

HENRIET: (FILTER) Oh, Elmer, what a beautiful gift! What is it?

ELMER: It's a dew drop bouquet tied with ribbons of moonbeams--just for you, Henrietta.

HENRIET: (FILTER) Oh, thank you--(SEIZED WITH A SPASM OF COUGHING) Won't you sit down here beside me? (COUGHS AGAIN).

ELMER: (ALARMED) Henrietta, are you ill?

HENRIET: (FILTER) I--(COUGHS) No, of course not, Elmer. It's just a slight cold. Nothing really. (WITH RESOLUTION SHE SMOTHERS A COUGH).

ELMER: Henrietta?

HENRIET: (FILTER) Hmm?

ELMER: Would you mind very much if--

HENRIET: (FILTER) If that, Elmer?

ELMER: If I--if I kissed you?

HENRIET: (FILTER) No, Elmer, I don't mind.

ELMER: (PAUSE FOR KISS) Henrietta!

HENRIET: (FILTER) Elmer, it feels so funny when you kiss me.

ELMER: What do you mean?

HENRIET: (FILTER) I don't know exactly, but--it's as if you touched me without really being there at all. (COUGHS) Elmer, I'm afraid. Put your arms around me, Elmer. Hold me very close!

ELMER: Of course, darling. (SUDDEN DISCOVERY)
Golly, this is awful!

HENRIET: (FILTER) What?

ELMER: Every time I try to hug you, my arms evaporate!

MUSIC: SEVERAL NEUTRAL NOTES ENDING TENTATIVELY.

ELMER: Oh, Henrietta, why didn't you call me? I had no idea you were so ill.

HENRIET: (FILTER--TRYING TO CHOKE DOWN A COUGH) Oh, Elmer, it was awful. I didn't know how to call you, and (COUGHS AGAIN) the doctor said-- (COUGHS).

ELMER: (ALARMED) The doctor? Did he say you were worse?

HENRIET: (FILTER) Yes. He said I wouldn't be here very much longer. So--will you take me with you, Elmer?

ELMER: Of course, Henrietta, if you really want it; perhaps I could absorb you into Ghostdom. But we must wait, because I have no authority to run off with a human life--even if it's yours, my dear. But I'll stay here with you. You may not always be able to see me, but I'll be here.

HENRIET: (FILTER) Thank you.

ELMER: But I think I should warn you. Ghostdom is not Heaven. And I'm not very popular. We'd have few friends. There'd be just the two of us.

HENRIET: (FILTER) But only for awhile. (SHYLY) Later, there might be more.

ELMER: Henrietta!

HENRIET: (FILTER) And we really don't need anyone else, Elmer. Besides, perhaps if you brought a new recruit to Ghostdom, it might restore you to the good graces of the High Ghost, and you might get promoted.

ELMER: Perhaps you're right. They might even let me graduate at the same time you do.

HENRIET: (FILTER) Oh, I'm sure of it, Elmer. Oh, Elmer--(SEIZED WITH A SUDDEN FIT OF COUGHING).

ELMER: (ALARMED) My dear, what is it?

HENRIET: (FILTER) Elmer, I--(COUGHS AND CHOKES). I--
(SUDDENLY SUBSIDING WEAKLY) Oh, Elmer!

ELMER: Henrietta, are you all right?

MUSIC: SUGGESTIVE OF HAPPINESS. PREDOMINANCE OF
STRINGS. ONE SOFT BURST AND THEN CONTINUE
BEHIND.

HENRIET: (ON REG.MIKE--FADING IN) Elmer, I--I can--
really see you now. You know, you're very
handsome!

ELMER: Henrietta, I had the strangest, most wonderful
feeling just now as you came up to me and--
touched my hand.

HENRIET: I know, Elmer, I felt the same thing. You
were wrong. It's not ugly and disagreeable
up here. It's really very beautiful.

ELMER: You know, you're right. It's strange I never
noticed it before. Henrietta, this is--yes,
it really is--heaven!

MUSIC: STRINGED BACKGROUND SWEEPS UP AND HOLDS TO
FINISH.

Notes on Writing and Production of

THE MISFIT GHOST

Plot Creation

The plot of THE MISFIT GHOST was probably the most difficult of any of the six plays to devise, and the script required two rewritings before it began to smooth itself out. The individual adventures in Elmer's ghost life are much the same in the finished version that they were in the original, but the script has the appearance of an entirely new play because the dominating idea is very different.

The original version of THE MISFIT GHOST was composed of a series of isolated incidents concerning Elmer's life in Ghostdom. It had little motivation and was much too rambling in structure. In subsequent writings it gradually took on the appearance of a single unit, and motivation for Elmer's unfortunate adventures was attributed to Elmer's search for an "ideal" girl friend and to the jealousy of Butch, the unscrupulous ghost who originally had been only an incidental character.

The streamlining process of the play involved the deletion of two or three scenes concerning adventures with other girl friends and unhappy

experiences at a party at the home of some "live" people. These scenes only served to slow the action and added little in the way of humor. A further change in the final version was effected when it was decided that three scenes instead of two would better enable the writer to convey the circumstances of Henrietta's illness.

The remainder of the revisions concerned chiefly the reworking of humor lines and figures of speech to give the play the flavor of fantasy and an added ghostly touch.

Acting

All of the roles in this play are "character" parts. Elmer must be a lovable, well meaning individual who just can't seem to stay out of trouble. He trusts too many people. Elmer should have a definite aura of country or small town. Although he doesn't have a dialect, he must convey the impression of ruralism. He is not happy in Ghostdom, but he intends to do his best to please. He regards each new experience with the eagerness and naivete of a small boy, but he should not, under any circumstances, be allowed to have an adolescent "crack" in his voice. He is twenty-five years old.

Henrietta is a wholesome, wide-eyed girl, who probably appears quite homely to everyone but Elmer. There is nothing of the flirt or the vamp about her. She honestly believes that Elmer is the most wonderful person who ever lived. Maizie, on the other hand, is the personification of worldliness. Probably no man has ever resisted her charms. She should provide as strong a contrast to Henrietta as possible. Her voice should be silky, warm, and carressing.

Butch and Gaseus have tough Brooklyn dialects. Butch is the ringleader of the crooked ghosts. He should be positive, conceited, and crafty. His vocabulary, like Gaseus', is faulty at times, but he is nobody's fool. Gaseus, on the other hand, is a stupid stooge who hasn't the brains to think for himself but must be told what to do. Horrific, the third crook, has an extremely low-pitched monosyllabic voice with hollow ghostly tones.

Spook Jones must be a kindly top sergeant type of individual, though, to some this may seem a contradiction in terms. He must be a leader. He can crack the whip and others will follow, but he also can be a friendly counselor. He has

Elmer's interests at heart; he doesn't want to see the boy get into trouble.

The High Ghost is a blustery business man who has very little time and rarely concerns himself with his ghosts. He rules Ghostdom with his own interests in view, considering others only when his own comforts will not be endangered. Elmer piques his curiosity, and that is the reason for his interest in this particular young ghost.

Directing

The entire play must be directed and acted with a tongue-in-cheek attitude. The cast and the director must "have fun with it," if they expect the audience to enjoy it. The show must not be regarded as a parody or a burlesque, however, but rather as a serious representation of a humorous situation. It must have a fairytale quality at the same time that it is treated as a down-to-earth experience. Admittedly, this is a difficult combination to achieve.

It must be remembered in both acting and directing that the unusual figures of speech must be given their full value. They must be "plugged" or they will be "lost" on the audience. The play

should have a fairly rapid tempo, but the figures of speech must be given emphasis or the play will lose all meaning.

Sound and Music

Sound effects require special attention. A slide-whistle is about the only solution for the appearance and disappearance of Spook Jones unless some member of the cast has an especially reliable vocal whistle. The scene of the house-haunting activities needs expert coordination and requires the services of at least three sound technicians in addition to the engineer handling records. All of the sounds in that scene, except the wind, should be "live." Even the cock crow can be manipulated more realistically when done vocally. It is best to do each of the sounds--banging, creaking, and clanking--in turn, allowing each to overlap the other slightly, but not having them done simultaneously. After all, Elmer has only two hands, and he couldn't be doing everything at once.

Music must have an imaginative as well as a humorous quality. The writer-director found that

Richard Strauss' TILL EULENSPIEGELS LUSTIGE
STREICHE¹ offered more possibilities than any
other recorded music available to her at the time
of the first production.

Script Changes

One or two minor changes were made in lines
because of radio censorship.

¹

Recorded by Artur Rodzinski and the Cleveland
orchestra for Columbia Recording Corporation
(Album).

CHAPTER IV

MODERN MELODRAMA FOR RADIO

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MODERN MELODRAMA FOR RADIO

There are two divisions of the type of play known as melodrama: the old and the new. Though they have much in common, each has very definite characteristics which make it somewhat different from the other.

Older melodramas emphasized situation and, as Alexander Dean puts it, were "more or less the externals of tragedy."¹ They capitalized on physical action and had little to offer in the way of "weighty characterization and social reality."²

New melodrama, on the other hand, is built of sturdier material. It often features strong and unusual characters, and it frequently utilizes the emotion of fear as an element in building the suspense. John Gassner points out in his PRODUCING THE PLAY³ that "stress, tempo, and appropriate atmosphere are the main tasks of the production." He adds that "in the

¹

Fundamentals of Play Directing, New York, Farrar and Rinehart, 1941, p. 305.

²

John Gassner, Producing the Play, New York, The Dryden Press, 1941, p. 51

³

Ibid., 51.

variant called the murder mystery, the director (and writer) must also attend to the planting of clues that lead to discovery and of other clues that prevent the audience from making the discovery until the climactic moment."¹

Some of the more recent stage plays of the newer melodrama category include: ANGEL STREET, LADIES IN RETIREMENT, KIND LADY, and LOVE FROM A STRANGER. Radio programs like SUSPENSE repeatedly use this type of drama. Modern melodrama is tending more and more toward emphasis on character as well as situation. (Note the stage plays just mentioned). The emphasis is toward use of strong, unusual, and many-faceted characters which have depth, variety, and intensity. In some cases an entire play may be built around one eccentric and outstanding character.

In writing melodrama it is well to bear in mind the fact that "color" words are highly effective in creating mood and suspense. Vividly painted pictures of actions and situations require

¹

Ibid., 51-52.

an extensive vocabulary of small but expressive words which create instant and lasting impressions. Words which suggest a situation or an idea and upon which the listener can embroider his own details are particularly useful.

Frequently the writer of melodrama for radio will utilize to excellent advantage the tool of narrator to tell the story. This narrator should, if possible, be one of the characters in the story so that his lines can "side with" or "against" the various other characters and thus add color and interest to the play. Brief but graphic pictures can be injected into the narrator's lines to create the emotion of fear and the mood of suspense. Occasionally, though not too frequently, entire scenes may be written in narration with an explanatory background of music and sound effects. This latter device should be used sparingly, however, and only if it achieves the desired result much more effectively than could any other device. Too much narration tends to slow the action unnecessarily. Usually patches of narration are few and extremely brief, and often a suspense-filled play may be written without a

narrator at all.

The basic plot should be extremely simple. It must have one single goal, and every scene, every line should lead toward that goal. The writer must not allow himself to become involved in extraneous details and unneeded complications. The plot must be planned in the minutest detail so that the lines give away just enough information during the course of the play to keep the listener interested and yet not enough to reveal the solution until the writer is ready to do so. Subtly worded sentences with double meanings are often useful in this capacity--any device upon which the listener can look back when it is over and say, "Of course, why didn't I think of that?"

The climax must be planned with care. As Erik Barnouw points out, "The crisis of rising tension which we call climax must sometimes, in radio, follow a different technique from stage or screen. A climax scene is, most frequently, one in which the two sides of a conflict face each other to win or lose."¹

1

Erik Barnouw, Handbook of Radio Writing, Boston, Little, Brown, and Company, 1942, p. 95.

The audience must be fully aware of the conflict throughout the play and must not lose track of it during the "big scene." Mr. Barnouw further points out that on the stage the crucial scene may be enacted with one person doing all the talking and the other one listening and reacting. Such is not the case in radio, where both must have something to say in order for the audience to keep them well in mind.¹ "As a general thing," he says, "rising tension between two characters, rising conflict, need shorter speeches in radio....Both forces take the spotlight simultaneously."²

Probably even more than in any other type of drama it is necessary in melodrama to be very sure that every tiny loose thread of plot is tied together at the end. All clues, all actions must be accounted for, and this must be done briefly at the end of the play, preferably in the final few words of dialogue. Frequently the ending can be presented effectively by narration, because this is more economical in length and allows the

¹ Ibid., 95-96

² Ibid., 96

writer to finish the dialogue at a higher point of tension.¹

The writer of melodrama must exercise the finest sense of discrimination and good taste in creating and polishing his material. He should guard against exaggerated situations which destroy the believability of the play. Melodrama must appear realistic and logical in its characters, in its plot development, and in its solution.

¹

Ibid., 96.

SCRIPTS AND PRODUCTION NOTES

FOR

TWO MODERN MELODRAMAS

THE OLD CRONE

MUSIC: MOOD MUSIC. ESTABLISH AND HOLD BEHIND
FIRST FEW SENTENCES.

TOM: (NARRATING) People say that truth is
stranger than fiction, and I know of at
least one case which substantiates that
theory. I am a doctor in a medium-sized
town, and this story concerns one of my
patients, Julie Martin. Julie was a
young girl whose life was dominated by
Riette, a mysterious old crone - a sort
of witch - who lived on the edge of a
midwestern college town where Julie went
to school. Riette was a legend in the
town, and her name struck terror into the
hearts of many of the inhabitants. There
were others, however, who regarded her
with an avid interest and curiosity. And
Julie Martin was one of these. One evening
Julie and two of her sorority sisters, Jean
and Marianne, were discussing Riette
(FADING) with more than usual interest

JULIE: But, girls, the possibilities are terrific.
If we could even get inside the door of

Riette's cottage, that would be more than anyone else has dared to do.

MARIANNE: But, Julie, everyone says she's a witch. They say she puts curses on people. There's no telling what might happen.

JULIE: (SCOFFING) You don't really believe that nonsense?

MARI: (DOUBTFULLY) Well, I admit it sounds fishy. (JUSTIFYING HERSELF) But she scares me! Jean and I saw her once at market. She came right up to us. She has the queerest eyes. They're green, and they look right through you. It seemed almost as if she knew what we were thinking. Didn't you feel that way, Jean?

JEAN: Yeah, it was awful! Just as if she had some evil, super-natural power that could make you do anything she wanted you to. When she looked at you, you weren't conscious of anyone but her.

JULIE: (LAUGHING GAILY) What imaginations you two have. I suppose you think she can read your minds.

JEAN: Well, they say she tells fortunes.

JULIE: She does? Well, then, that's our excuse for going. What do you say, Jean? Wouldn't you like to know who you're going to the dance with Friday night?

JEAN: (DRILLY) I can wait and find out in the normal way, thank you.

JULIE: Aw, come on, kids. Be good sports. Marianne, you write for the paper. I'll bet they'd make you an editor if you could get an exclusive feature on Riette. What do you say?

MARI: (DOUBTFUL) Well, I admit it has possibilities. But --

JULIE: (CUTTING HER OFF) Then come on, what are we waiting for? You shouldn't let anything stand in the way of your career. Let's go.

JEAN AND MARI: (AD LIB) Okay. To please you, etc.

MUSIC: QUICK LITTLE INTERLUDE.

SOUND: ESTABLISH WIND BLOWING BACKGROUND. THUNDER OCCASIONALLY.

JULIE: Looks like there's a storm brewing. Well, here we are. This must be Riette's place. It's supposed to be the last house on the street.

JEAN: Weird looking little shack, isn't it?

Looks like it might fall apart any minute.

JULIE: Let's knock on the door.

SOUND: THREE RATHER HOLLOW KNOCKS.

MARI: There's nobody at home, Julie. I'm sure there's nobody at home. Let's go, huh?

JULIE: No, I hear someone coming.

SOUND: LOUD CLAP OF THUNDER. DOOR CREAKS OPEN SLOWLY.

RIETTE: Yes?

JULIE: (GULPS) Are - are you Mrs. - Miss - er - Riette?

RIETTE: (NONCOMMITTALLY) I am Riette. What do you want?

JULIE: (UNCERTAINLY) We - we came to get our fortunes told. (PAUSE - WEAKLY) We heard you do such things.

RIETTE: Come in.

SOUND: DOOR CREAKS SHUT. WIND DOWN AND BACKGROUND.

JEAN: It's awfully dark in here. I can't see where I'm going.

RIETTE: Perhaps this light will help.

SOUND: LIGHT SNAPS ON.

JEAN: That's better. (GASPS) Good heavens!

JULIE: (LAUGHS NERVOUSLY) Why, what a weird little light. It looks like an illuminated skull.

RIETTE: It is a symbol of death! Many people have learned of death in this room.

JULIE: (SLIGHTLY SHAKEN) Really?

MARI: (ABRUPTLY) I don't want my fortune told. Let's leave. Please, Julie.

JEAN: Yes, Julie, I think Marianne is right. I don't want my fortune told either.

JULIE: (SOTTO VOCE) Don't be silly. We can't leave now. It would be rude.

RIETTE: (MYSTERIOUSLY) Come this way, Miss.

JULIE: (GULPS) Who, me?

RIETTE: I have something to show you in this room over here. Come.

MARI: (FRIGHTENED) Julie, no!

JULIE: Hush, Marianne, it's all right. You two wait here.

SOUND: FOOTSTEPS A MOMENT. DOOR CLOSES. THUNDER FAINTLY. CAT MEOWS LOUDLY.

JULIE: (STARTLED) Oh! (THEN) What a cute kitty. May I pet it? (IN PAIN) Ooww!

RIETTE: What is it?

JULIE: The cat. It scratched me. My hand is bleeding.

RIETTE: Come. Sit down now. You want your fortune

told?

JULIE: Well, yes, I'd like to know -

RIETTE: I brought you in here because I sensed danger around you.

JULIE: Danger? Oh, I hardly think so. My surroundings are perfectly safe and normal.

RIETTE: I see a telegram bringing bad news about your family. And there is an illness. A serious illness hanging over you.

JULIE: Illness? What kind of illness?

RIETTE: A mental illness.

JULIE: Surely you can't mean insanity?

RIETTE: (QUICKLY) No, not insanity. But mental collapse - nerves. You will be very ill soon. But you will recover.

JULIE: Mental collapse? How awful!

RIETTE: That is all. But I would suggest that you not mention this to your friends. They have a tendency to discredit what I say, because they are afraid. But you are not afraid, are you?

JULIE: N-No, I'm not afraid. But what you say worries me. I have a great deal of work to do before the end of the year. I graduate

from college in June, and I can't afford to be ill.

RIETTE: Riette knows only what she sees.

JULIE: Well, thank you, anyway.

SOUND: COINS CLICKING.

JULIE: And here's something for your trouble.

RIETTE: Ah, yes. And remember this - you must return here. Riette may be able to help you.

JULIE: Help me?

RIETTE: (SLOWLY - DELIBERATELY) Yes. You will need help badly. Later. You must come back here. You must return to Riette. Do you understand?

JULIE: (SLOWLY) You make me feel so - sleepy when you look at me like that. I--

RIETTE: (CHUCKLES SOFTLY) Yes. (CONFIDENTLY) You will come back.

SOUND: THREE LOUD CLAPS OF THUNDER. THEN ALL SOUND OUT.

TOM: (NARRATING) Julie Martin didn't return to Riette's cottage again for several months. But in the vast whirl of work preceding graduation, she thought of the old woman often. Those glittering green eyes seemed

still to penetrate her brain, and it was only with difficulty that she could put Riette out of her mind. The mental strain began to affect her work (FADING) and Jean became worried about her friend

JEAN: What's the matter, Julie? You look so worn and tired.

JULIE: (HARASSED) I don't know, Jean, I can't seem to keep my mind on my work. There's always so much to do, and I don't seem able to handle even the simplest things.

JEAN: I think you'd better go to the college hospital. Perhaps they can give you a tonic.

JULIE: It's not a tonic I need. It's just - that my mind needs a rest, I guess. My nerves are on edge, and I keep forgetting things. After graduation, I think I'll go to the lake and just relax and rest up.

JEAN: Yes, but graduation is still two months away. You've got to take it easy, Julie!

JULIE: I'll try.

TON: (NARRATING - FADING IN) But Julie's mental state became steadily worse instead of better.

Riette's prediction of a mental crack-up haunted her and only served to aggravate the situation. She had forgotten Riette's statement about the telegram (FADING) until one day she overheard Jean talking to Marianne

JEAN: (SLIGHTLY OFF MIKE) It's a ticklish spot to be in. I opened the telegram by mistake. It's about her father. He was killed in a plane crash over the weekend.

JULIE: (OFF MIKE - PAINED - UNDER HER BREATH) Oh, no! No, it can't be! Not dad! No! (GASPS AS

SOUND: BODY FALLS

MARI: (OFF MIKE) Jean, what was that noise?

JEAN: (OFF MIKE) I didn't hear anything.

MARI: (FADING ON) It came from out here in the hall.

JEAN: (ON MIKE) Julie! Good heavens, she's fainted. Get some water, Marianne.

MARI: (FADING) Right away.

JEAN: Julie, what on earth happened to you? You look as though you'd seen a ghost.

JULIE: (INCOHERENTLY) Those green eyes! She was right - about the telegram. She -- (GASP) Oh, no!

JEAN: (PUZZLED) Telegram. What can she mean?
That telegram was for Marge.

MUSIC: SOCK CUE.

TOM: (NARRATING) Julie was ill for some time after that. Doctors said - mental strain from overwork - shock. But in spite of her illness she was granted her degree from college that June, and she went north to the family cottage for the summer. It was there she met Van Hampton, a young business man on vacation, and Van did much toward restoring Julie to her normal frame of mind. So much so, in fact, that before the summer was over, they were married and returned to make their home in a town not far from the college - in the same town, by the way, in which I lived. For a while the young Hamptons got on very well. (FADING) And then the rumor broke ...

MARI: I hear that Van and Julie have had a quarrel.

JEAN: Oh, I don't believe it, Marianne. They're such a well-matched couple. Everyone says so.

MARI: I guess Van has to be away a lot on business or something. And you know how Julie hates to be left alone.

JEAN: I know. (FADING) Still, I can't believe it.

BRIEF PAUSE FOR SCENE TRANSITION

JULIE: (FADING IN) Van, darling, couldn't you possibly make it tonight? The Johnsons have asked us over for bridge.

VAN: I'm sorry, Julie, but I have to be out of town. You go on without me.

JULIE: Oh no, Van. Not again. Please.

VAN: I'm sorry, dear, but it's necessary. Tell you what. Why don't you visit some of your friends at the college for the weekend?

JULIE: (DISAPPOINTEDLY) I suppose. If you're going to be away, I might as well enjoy myself.

VAN: Why don't you send the girls a wire?

JULIE: No, I think I'll surprise them.

MUSIC: FEW LITTLE NOTES ENDING TENTATIVELY.

JULIE: You say Jean and Marianne have gone home for the weekend?

WOMAN: Yes, Julie. They left the college about an hour ago. But why don't you stay here at the sorority house anyway. It's pretty late to be going back to town.

JULIE: Thanks. But there's a train out about eleven. I'll be all right.

WOMAN: Just as you say, Julie.

SOUND: DOOR CLOSES. FOOTSTEPS SLOWLY. WIND IN AND UP LOUDLY A MOMENT. THEN DOWN BACKGROUND. FOOTSTEPS CONTINUE.

JULIE: The housemother was right. It is terribly dark - and windy. It looks like there's a storm coming up.

SOUND: SLIGHT RUSTLE AS OF LEAVES AND TWIGS.

JULIE: (STARTLED) What was that? (PAUSE) Guess it's just nerves ... Funny, though, I was sure I heard something.

SOUND: SHARP CLATTER AS OF A TRASH LID KNOCKED DOWN.

JULIE: (FRIGHTENED) I was right. There is someone. Someone's following me. I must run

SOUND: FOOTSTEPS RUNNING A MOMENT. RAPID KNOCKS ON DOOR.

JULIE: Oh, why doesn't someone come! ... Funny, this place looks awfully familiar to me. I --

SOUND: DOOR CREAKS OPEN SLOWLY.

RIETTE: You wanted to see me? Come in, please.

JULIE: (STARTLED) Riette! Oh, no. No. I made a mistake. I didn't realize where I was.

RIETTE: Don't be frightened. You've come back to get your fortune told again, haven't you? Riette will tell it for you. Come!

JULIE: No, please. I've made a mistake. I thought I was being followed. It's nothing really. I can leave.

RIETTE: Come, I have something important to tell you.

SOUND: DOOR CREAKS SHUT. WIND DOWN.

JULIE: (PROTESTING) But, I --

RIETTE: You remember I told you once before that you would return to me.

JULIE: Yes, I remember very well.

RIETTE: Tell me. What I told you before -- did it happen as I said?

JULIE: It happened - as you said.

RIETTE: Ah, yes. Well, there is more. You, my child, were born under an unfortunate star.

JULIE: Unfortunate star?

RIETTE: Oh, it's not serious -- not right away. But it will be well to be prepared for any emergency. Tell me -- your husband is quite wealthy, is he not?

JULIE: Well, we have enough.

RIETTE: Ah, yes. But -- he is worried about money matters, no?

JULIE: (SURPRISED) Why, not that I know of. Why do you ask?

RIETTE: I see a strange fear hovering over you both.

Your husband is having business difficulties.
He needs money badly.

JULIE: I had no idea.

RIETTE: You yourself have a considerable inheritance,
haven't you?

JULIE: Yes, but -- Van is very proud. He won't
accept anything. In fact, he refuses to
allow me even to use the money myself.

RIETTE: Hmm. Yes, he would do that -- to throw you
off the track.

JULIE: What are you getting at?

RIETTE: Only this. Your husband is badly in need of
money. He has lost heavily lately and needs
cash to cover his losses. If you were to
die ---

JULIE: (STARTLED) Die?

RIETTE: Tell me. To whom have you willed your estate?

JULIE: Why, to Van, of course.

RIETTE: Does he know that?

JULIE: Yes, we made our wills at the same time. He
thought it would be wise.

RIETTE: Isn't it strange he should be worried about
a will for one as young as you?

JULIE: But I was ill at the time. You yourself
predicted that.

RIETTE: Perhaps, but it seems odd. If I were you,
I would be very careful.

JULIE: Careful of what?

RIETTE: It is so easy these days to make death look
like an accident!

JULIE: Surely you can't mean --

RIETTE: Riette only knows what she sees. I would ad-
vise you to be careful.

SOUND: THREE LOUD CLAPS OF THUNDER. THEN ALL SOUND
OUT.

JULIE: (STARTLED - FADING IN) Van, darling, I didn't
expect you home so soon.

VAN: (SURPRISED) Why, my dear, I thought you had
gone away for the weekend, too.

JULIE: The girls weren't there. So I came home.

VAN: Oh.

JULIE: (TENTATIVELY) Is anything wrong, dear?

VAN: (SLIGHTLY IRRITATED) What makes you say that?

JULIE: Only that you seem preoccupied. I thought
you might be worried -- about money or some-
thing.

VAN: (SHARPLY) Whatever gave you that idea?

JULIE: Nothing really.

VAN: Then why -- ? Oh, let's not discuss it!

JULIE: Van, if there's anything worrying you, maybe

I could help.

VAN: No, you couldn't.

JULIE: But if it's money, I have some of my own.

VAN: (SUDDENLY VERY ANGRY) I said no! Do you think I'd take money from my wife? Over her dead body!

JULIE: (FRIGHTENED) Van, what do you mean?

VAN: Stop hounding me!

JULIE: But I didn't do anything. Van, don't look at me that way.

VAN: (STEADILY) There's nothing to worry about, do you understand? Nothing. Don't ever mention the money situation to me again. You'll have plenty of money as long as you live!

JULIE: (REALLY FRIGHTENED) As long as -- Yes, Van, of course. (FADING) Just forget I mentioned it.

VAN: Julie, what's the matter with you? Stop backing away from me. Don't look so frightened, I'm not going to hurt you. I --- (WARNING) Julie, watch out for the stairs!

JULIE: (SCREAM OF TERROR)

MUSIC: DENOTING THE FALLING OF A BODY DOWN A LONG FLIGHT OF STAIRS WITH A THUD AT THE END. IF THIS IS NOT POSSIBLE, THEN SOUND INDICATING

THIS AND FOLLOWED BY A SOCK MUSIC CUE.

TOM: (NARRATING) It was in the hospital that I first met Julie and Van. It was after the accident, and I was Julie's physician. Over a period of weeks, through hints dropped here and there, I pieced together much of Julie's story -- except the part about Riette. If I had known about her, I could have prevented what happened later. As it was, the accident brought on a relapse of Julie's nervous condition, and she was in such a mental state that we (FADING) could do little to help her.

JULIE: (IN A KIND OF SUBDUED PANIC) I won't see him, doctor. I tell you I can't see him. He tried to murder me. He --

TOM: Now, Mrs. Hampton, you know that's not true. You fell down the stairs. It was an accident that could have happened to anybody. You've got to get hold of yourself.

JULIE: I tell you he pushed me down the stairs. I was warned. I should have known better than to have gone home that night.

TOM: Mrs. Hampton, your husband is outside. I think you should see him.

JULIE: No, doctor. I don't want to see him again
-- ever. You'd better tell him for me.

TOM: (RESIGNEDLY) If that's the way you want it.

SOUND: FOOTSTEPS. DOOR OPENS.

VAN: (FADING IN -- LOW TONES) Can I see her now,
Doctor?

TOM: (LOW) I'm sorry, Hampton. Your wife doesn't
feel up to having visitors yet.

VAN: (LOW) I see.

TOM: (LOW) Perhaps tomorrow.

VAN: (LOW) No, doctor. It's quite obvious she
doesn't want to see me at all. Thanks, any-
way.

TOM: Look, Hampton, you need a rest, or you're
going to crack up like your wife did.

VAN: (DOGGEDLY) I haven't time to crack. There's
too much work to do. Well, thanks, doctor.
(FADING) So long.

TOM: So long.

SOUND: DOOR OPENS. FOOTSTEPS.

JULIE: (FADING IN) But I dislike orange juice. I
dislike it intensely.

TOM: What's the matter here?

JULIE: I was telling the nurse. I dislike orange
juice. It gives me a rash.

TOM: Young lady, I'll give you more than a rash, if you don't behave yourself and drink your orange juice.

JULIE: I beg your pardon!

TOM: You heard me. I said swallow it.

JULIE: Now listen here --

TOM: Swallow!

JULIE: (MEEKLY) Yes, sir ... (COYLY) Tom?

TOM: Mmm?

JULIE: You don't mind if I call you Tom, do you?

TOM: Why -- no. No, I don't mind.

JULIE: I think it's very nice of you to be so understanding, Tom. I mean -- well, I can't tell you my real reason for behaving this way.

It's too fantastic. You'd never believe it.

TOM: (LAUGHING) I might, you never can tell.

JULIE: No, you'd say I was crazy if I told you why I think Van tried to murder me. (FADING) But some day I'll explain it to you.

TOM: (NARRATING) Julie was an unusual patient. I don't think she really intended to fall in love. Certainly I know that I didn't. I kept trying to bring Van and Julie together again. But Julie flatly refused and seemed so upset that I finally stopped mentioning it. After

she was out of the hospital we had dinner together occasionally and went dancing. I didn't mean for it to get serious, but -- well, I was called out of town unexpectedly last evening, and (FADING) Julie went to the station to see me off ...

SOUND: STATION NOISES BACKGROUND. TRAIN IDLING.

JULIE: I wish you wouldn't go, Tom. I'll be so lonely without you.

TOM: But, Julie, I'll be back tomorrow night.

JULIE: Tom, I'm afraid. I never told you, but there's a strange woman, Riette, who -- who keeps haunting me. I thought I'd forgotten her, but lately I keep thinking of her and seeing those green eyes of hers again... If you go, I just know something will happen. Something always does whenever I see her or think of her.

TOM: But that's silly, Julie. I don't know who your Riette is, but just put her out of your mind. When I get back you can tell me about her. But now I've got to go.

JULIE: Tom, kiss me!

TOM: Now, Julie --

JULIE: Please, Tom! (PAUSE FOR KISS) Oh, Tom!

TOM: (FADING) I must go, Julie. Good-bye.

JULIE: (PAINED) Tom! (VERY LOW) Oh, Tom, I want you so very much! (HALF-SOB -- THEN ALMOST GRINDING HER TEETH) Riette! Why must she keep haunting me. I don't want to go back to her. I -- I wonder. She was right twice before. Perhaps she has something to tell me.

SOUND: FOOTSTEPS QUICKLY.

JULIE: One ticket to the college, please.

MUSIC: BRIEF INTERLUDE. CROSS FADE INTO BACKGROUND. THUNDER.

SOUND: THREE HOLLOW KNOCKS. DOOR OPENS CREAKING.

JULIE: (STARTLED) Oh!

RIETTE: Ah, yes, you want your fortune told again, eh? Come in.

SOUND: DOOR CREAKS SHUT. WIND DOWN.

JULIE: I -- I've come to get some advice.

RIETTE: I knew you would come back.

JULIE: How did you know?

RIETTE: (MYSTERIOUSLY) Riette is psychic. Come this way.

SOUND: CAT MEOWS ANGRILY.

JULIE: Ugh! That cat again.

RIETTE: I have something very serious to tell you.

But first, what was it you wanted to know?

JULIE: Well, I hardly know how to put it. You see, I think -- I'm afraid I've fallen in love.

RIETTE: And he doesn't care for you, is that it?

JULIE: I'm not sure. I think so, but -- it's hard to know. You see, he's worried about my husband. Tom doesn't realize that Van no longer loves me. Van --

RIETTE: Tried to kill you.

JULIE: Yes, as you told me he would.

RIETTE: And he will try again.

JULIE: No, that's impossible. You see, I left him.

RIETTE: But he knows where to find you. It would be so easy -- some night when you are alone ...

JULIE: No!

RIETTE: I said I had something serious to tell you. I saw it when you first came here several months ago. But I waited until now because -- well, I thought it best. You were born under a strange star. Your life was destined to be full of turmoil, and you are to die of violence!

JULIE: (IN HORROR) No! Oh, no, Riette, you must be wrong!

RIETTE: It is inevitable. The stars say so!

JULIE: Why do you look at me so strangely? Those eyes of yours seem to --

RIETTE: My child, you are destined to die within the week -- (POINTEDLY) at the hands of your worst enemy!

JULIE: No, you mustn't say that!

RIETTE: There is only one way it might be prevented.

JULIE: How? Tell me how?

RIETTE: Well, it is not easy.

JULIE: (DESPERATELY) I'll do anything -- anything you say. If it's money you want, I have plenty. Name any amount.

RIETTE: (CRAFTILY) Well, I'm more interested in your welfare, my child, than in the money, -- but I could use -- five hundred dollars.

SOUND: PEN SCRATCHING.

JULIE: Of course. Here's a check -- made out to --

RIETTE: Cash. Thank you.

JULIE: Now, tell me --

RIETTE: My dear, you are not only in danger of your life, but also of losing the man you love. As long as your husband lives!

JULIE: But I don't see --

RIETTE: (ENTHUSIASING) As long as your husband lives!

JULIE: But -- surely you can't mean --(IN HORROR)
Oh, no, I couldn't!

RIETTE: You asked for my advice. I would say it
was your life against his. He tried to kill
you once and failed. He won't be so care-
less a second time!

JULIE: (THINKING THIS OVER) Yes, he tried to kill
me. He pushed me down the stairs. He --

RIETTE: A bit of poison in his tea would do the
trick! No one need know.

JULIE: (SEEING POSSIBILITIES) It would look like
suicide.

RIETTE: Of course. Perfectly safe. Then you would
be free to -- remarry!

MUSIC: SOCK CUE.

SOUND: DOOR BELL.PAUSE. DOOR OPENS.

VAN: (STARTLED) Julie!

JULIE: Hello, Van. Could I see you a moment?

VAN: What about? I'm sort of busy. I --

JULIE: Don't you want to talk to me?

VAN: What? Oh, of course, Julie. That was rude
of me. Won't you come in?

JULIE: Thank you.

SOUND: DOOR CLOSES.

VAN: The place is in an awful mess, I'm afraid. You'll have to excuse me if my mind wanders a trifle. I've just finished writing a rather gruesome note -- to --to a friend. I wasn't expecting anyone. I was all set to go --

JULIE: On another trip, you mean?

VAN: (CONFUSED) No. No, not exactly. You see -- Won't you sit down?

JULIE: Thank you.

VAN: (FADING) Care for a drink? Whiskey and soda, isn't it?

JULIE: Yes, thanks. (PLEASANTLY) You're really a terrible housekeeper, Van. Glasses and papers strewn all over the place, and -- (GASP)

VAN: (FADING IN) Here's your drink. Why, what's the matter, Julie? You look as though you'd seen a ghost.

JULIE: (WEARILY) What are you doing with -- that?

VAN: (LAUGHING NERVOUSLY) Oh, my revolver. I was -- I was just cleaning it. It's not loaded. Come over here on the couch, and have your drink.

JULIE: (STRANGE TONE) Just put it on the coffee table a moment. (BEING CASUAL) By the way,

Van, what I really came for was our old photo album. If you don't mind, I'd like to borrow it for a few days. The girls were asking to see some of our "snaps".

VAN: Why, of course. (FADING) I'll get it for you.

JULIE: (TO HERSELF) The box of pills -- quickly. Here they are. One -- two -- three.

VAN: (FADING IN) Here you are. I'm afraid the album's a bit dusty. As you said, I'm not a very good housekeeper.

JULIE: (POINTING) Your drink is on the table.

VAN: Oh, thanks. (PAUSE -- SMACKS LIPS) I'm glad to have a chance to talk to you, Julie. No hard feelings about -- well, you know?

JULIE: (SLOWLY) No, no hard feelings.

VAN: (BREATHING HEAVILY) Funny, how warm it's gotten in here suddenly. Perhaps I'd better open a window. I -- (TREMENDOUS EFFORT -- LAUGHS SLIGHTLY) Strange, this drink hit me an awful wallop. Makes me feel tipsy already. I feel weak all over -- (GIGGLES UNCONTROLLABLY -- VERY SLOWLY) Isn't that queer? I seem to be -- (TRAILING OFF) so drowsy and (LONG HEAVY BREATH -- THEN

SILENCE).

SOUND: GLASS SET DOWN ON TABLE SHARPLY.

JULIE: (SHARPLY) Van! (FRIGHTENED) Oh, Van, what have I done! Van! (IN PANIC) I've got to get out of here. Before someone comes!

(BREATHING HEAVILY)

MUSIC: A DISCORDANT CRASH.

JULIE: (IN HYSERICIS) Oh, Riette, what am I to do? What can I do? I murdered him in cold blood. (PANIC-STRIKEN) Suppose someone finds him. They will -- they must eventually. And somehow they'll know who did it.

RIETTE: Very probably.

JULIE: And to think I paid you money to -- to get me into this fix. Oh, I was a fool! Why are you staring at me like that?

RIETTE: (EVENLY) You remember I told you that you would die within the week at the hands of your worst enemy. That prophecy hasn't changed.

JULIE: But you said if I killed Van --

RIETTE: It could help you temporarily but not indefinitely. Now you must die too.

JULIE: (IN FRIGHT) No!

RIETTE: Yes! (CALMLY) You must die too.

JULIE: You can't mean to murder me!

RIETTE: No, I shall not touch you. You will die
by your own hand.

JULIE: Not suicide!

RIETTE: (SLOWLY AND DELIBERATELY) You are a fool.
If you will think back, you will discover
that I never told you to murder Van. You
read between the lines. You gave yourself
the idea. And you alone are responsible
for your actions. When Van's body is found,
you will be accused of his murder.

JULIE: No!

RIETTE: And you are weak. You cannot face the dis-
grace alone. Do you think that this doctor
friend of yours would want you now that you
are accused of murder. No, my dear, he has
no desire to have his drink poisoned too.
Besides, I didn't tell you this. But your
doctor friend is not really in love with you
at all. He's simply humoring you to help
you get well.

JULIE: Why do you tell me this now?

RIETTE: To show you that you are all alone. All

alone. You are afraid of being alone,
aren't you?

JULIE: Very much afraid.

RIETTE: There is a bridge at the foot of this
street. A bridge and a river -- a swift-
flowing river that leads back into the
town in which you live. You cannot swim,
can you?

JULIE: No, I cannot swim.

RIETTE: It would be so quick -- so easy. Drowning
is not at all unpleasant. And after all,
you have nothing to live for, have you?
Nothing at all.

JULIE: (SLOWLY) Well, I don't know. I -- you
make me feel so sleepy when you look at me
like that. You -- those green eyes. I
can't see you very well -- except those
green eyes. I --

RIETTE: (WITH EMPHASIS) Remember -- the river!

JULIE: The river!

SOUND: DOOR CREAKS OPEN. WIND IN QUICKLY. THREE
LOUD THUNDER CLAPS. THEN SOUND OUT.

TOM: (NARRATING -- FADING IN) I learned of
Julie's death the following morning in a

newspaper story which said her body had been found in the river. There was only one other detail -- another story which appeared in that same paper. It read -- "Van Hampton, 35, prominent business man of this city, took his own life today by drinking poison at his Park Terrace apartment. A note addressed to Hampton's estranged wife attributed his action to business failure!

MUSIC: SOCK CUE.

Notes on Writing and Production of
THE OLD CRONE

Plot Creation

THE OLD CRONE was the first of the plays written and directed for this series, and as such, it presented a majority of the problems involved in radio writing to the author for initial solving.

The first difficulty was that of telling essential expository material in short passages of narration. The second and probably the most important, from the standpoint of this thesis project, was the acquiring of a sense of audience psychology --attaining a more sensitive judgment as to how much information to release at one time. A third important point was learning to launch the central idea of the play in the opening scene, instead of introducing extraneous material which might lead the audience astray of the main trend of action.

The first draft of THE OLD CRONE was entirely too obvious in its approach. It started out on too high a pitch and attempted to maintain that high pitch throughout the play, with the result that both listener and actor would have been thoroughly exhausted before a third of the play had been

presented.

Many of the necessary changes involved Riette's attitude toward Julie. In the first version Riette was almost insultingly obvious in her sinister plans; so much so, in fact that few listeners would have been taken in by her wiles. The entire series of Riette's scenes had to be modified, so as to "sneak up on" both Julie and the audience in a much more subtle manner. In the second version Riette does not lay all her cards on the table in the first scene, but she saves some of her valuable ammunition for later encounters with the girl. The play is condensed and telescoped into a more coherent and tangible whole with many extraneous scenes, appearing in the original, being cut completely.

One important change concerns Julie's second visit to Riette. In the original, she was accosted by a nondescript individual who frightened her into running accidentally toward Riette's cottage. In the final version, it was decided that Julie's return to the cottage should be the result of her mental turmoil--a subconscious, inner urge,

driving her back without her being aware of it. This is more consistent with the entire tone of the play, which emphasizes Julie's mental state as the chief cause of her plight.

Another change was made in the conclusion. Originally a slip of paper bearing Riette's name and address was found in Julie's purse following her suicide, the implication being that the old crone had been caught and brought to justice. It was decided that this piece of paper was entirely too tangible, in view of the fact that Julie's approach to the situation was to be regarded as purely mental. The more provocative ending was obtained by leaving Riette's fate a mystery to the audience.

Acting

The dominating character in the play is, of course, Riette. She must have a powerful personality--electric and sinister. Everyone is afraid of her. She recognizes in Julie an intelligent girl who provides a challenge to her powers of domination and who also will afford monetary compensation for her trouble. Riette is old, but she is by no means feeble. She is thin and wiry;

she probably has a wicked looking face with a scar on the cheek. Her eyes are a penetrating green which no one who has seen her would ever forget. At two or three points in the play she exercises hypnotic powers on her victim. Her voice should be silky and harsh by turns, depending on her mood. There must be a great deal of variety in the delivery of her lines.

Julie is a young girl, highly intelligent, but neurotic and easily addicted to worry. She is not superstitious by nature, but the domination of Riette makes her doubt her own stability. Her characterization should be one of gradual but positive disintegration as the story progresses and Riette gains power over her. Jean and Marianne are typical college girls--Jean being the more level-headed and resourceful, while Marianne is nervous and more easily frightened. The woman is the house-mother of a sorority.

Tom, who is the narrator and Julie's doctor, is the romantic interest. He must observe her case quite objectively, however. He likes Julie, he finds her attractive, but he is not in love with her. Van, Julie's husband, is the overwrought

business man. He is very much in love with his wife, although her exaggerated concern and fear get on his nerves and make him seem sharp and irritable at times. He must never appear as a villain, however. In the scene immediately preceding the murder he should be highly nervous and upset, indicating the mental state of a man about to commit suicide.

Directing

The entire play must progress methodically and inevitably toward its conclusion. It is a study in terror and domination, and the two must fuse into a powerful whole designed to keep the audience on the edge of its collective seat from the initial cue till the final curtain. It should have variation and pace, but it should not race uncompromisingly through to the finish. The scenes between Julie and Riette must be timed like clockwork, and the old crone should be coached to get the greatest possible nuances out of her lines.

Sound and Music

The wind and thunder serve to set the mood of the Riette scenes. Both are best when recorded, although the bridges of thunder crashes may be

more effective when played "live." The creaking door needs experimentation; a creaking machine is best if it is available. The cat should be "live."

Music offers no special problems.

Script Changes

One or two minor cuts were made for timing purposes.

STORY ON PAGE ONE

MUSIC: ESTABLISH LOW SINISTER MOOD. MUSIC BUILDING
BEHIND.

ARNOLD: (NARRATING) What would you do if you knew
with cold, calculating certainty that some-
one was trying to murder you? That there
was no escape, no turning back--only one
course of action and that meant certain
death? Not a pleasant prospect, is it?...
Well, that's the problem I faced. This is
what happened!

MUSIC: CRESCENDO TO CLIMAX AND CUT.

ARNOLD: My name is Kenneth Arnold. And my story begins
with a more or less routine assignment for the
Morgantown Enquirer-News, the newspaper I work
on.

SOUND: NEWSPAPER OFFICE NOISES IN AND BEHIND.

ARNOLD: (FADING OUT) Editor Fred Billingsley called
me into his office late the other afternoon
and....

SOUND: DOOR CLOSES. BACKGROUND DOWN SLIGHTLY AND
CONTINUE.

ARNOLD: You sent for me, Fred?

FRED: (SOBERLY) Yes, Ken, sit down a minute.

ARNOLD: Well, what's up? You sound serious.

FRED: I've got a story here Ken. It's big news, but--the people involved aren't going to be anxious to give us any information.

ARNOLD: (INQUIRING) Oh?

FRED: It's a suicide case.

ARNOLD: (SUDDENLY INTERESTED) Suicide? Anyone we know?

FRED: Only by reputation. Leonora Morgan.

ARNOLD: (STUNNED) Not the wealthy banker's wife? Good lord!

FRED: Apparently everything in the world to live for. But she commits suicide.

ARNOLD: How did it happen?

FRED: Hanged herself--in the Morgan barn.

ARNOLD: Not a very romantic way for a former society beauty to end her life, is it?

FRED: Hardly. Ken, I want you to keep your eye peeled for strange clues. It was rumored that the Morgans didn't get along very well. And it doesn't pay to take anything for granted in these cases.

ARNOLD: You think it's murder?

FRED: Probably not, but--. Well--

ARNOLD: I get it. I'll call you if anything breaks.

FRED: (RELIEVED) Good! I knew I could depend on you, Ken. But take it easy. Morgan can be an ugly customer when roused. I'll wait here in the office until midnight. If I don't hear from you by then, I'll assume everything's okay and we'll hold space for a short suicide story in the morning edition.

ARNOLD: Right!

FRED: You'd better hurry. The Morgan estate is quite a distance from town, and it looks like there's a storm coming up.

ARNOLD: Hmm. Nice atmosphere, isn't it?

FRED: Atmosphere?

ARNOLD: Yeah, --for a murder!

MUSIC: OMINOUS. RATHER STORLY TRANSITION. CROSS
FADE TO

SOUND: HOWLING WIND. THUNDER--LOUD CRASH, THEN A
FEW LOW RUMBLES. CONTINUE OCCASIONALLY
BEHIND. THREE IMPATIENT KNOCKS ON THE DOOR
KNOCKER.

ARNOLD: (SHIVERING--GLUMLY TO HIMSELF) Okay, Morgan,
you can come to the door any hour now. Either
that or throw me a towel.

SOUND: DOOR OPENS SLOWLY.

MORGAN: (CONTINUOUSLY) What do you want?

ARNOLD: (BRISKLY) You're Mr. Morgan?

MORGAN: Yes.

ARNOLD: Well, I'm Ken Arnold of the Morgantown Enquirer-News. Here's my press card. We'd like to get a story for the morning paper about your wife.

MORGAN: (ABRUPTLY) I have nothing whatsoever to say. The police have made all the investigation that is necessary. If you wish any information, I suggest you contact them. Good day, sir.

ARNOLD: (QUICKLY) Just a moment, Mr. Morgan.

(SOOTHINGLY) The Enquirer prefers to cover these cases itself. There is often a human interest angle. We'd like to get your side of things. It makes for a more personal approach and helps us present the case in a more sympathetic light than we could with just bare police records.

MORGAN: (DOUBTFULLY) Well...

ARNOLD: (URGING) We know it's difficult for the family, Morgan, but in the long run I'm sure you'll feel it's much better.

MORGAN: Very well. Come this way, please.

SOUND: DOOR CLOSSES. BACKGROUND DOWN SOMEWHAT.

ARNOLD: Thank you.

MORGAN: Sit down, Arnold. Now, what is it you want to know?

ARNOLD: I'd like your version of what happened.

MORGAN: (LONG BREATH) Well, it was a plain case of suicide, Arnold. My wife, Leonora, was worried about ill-health. She'd mentioned several times how useless it was to go on. She--

ARNOLD: You mean, she'd hinted that she might do away with herself?

MORGAN: Yes, several times. The doctor had told her she hadn't long to live. She'd gone to a specialist in Chicago. No one here knew anything about it.

ARNOLD: I see. You--you didn't go with her?

MORGAN: No, she--preferred to go alone. She told me about it afterward.

ARNOLD: Who was in the house besides you and your wife when it happened?

MORGAN: (RELUCTANTLY) No one. We keep no servants in the summer because we travel about so much, and my wife enjoyed taking care of the house herself. There was--no one.

ARNOLD: I see. Tell me, how did she---? (GROPEL
FOR WORD) --Er--

MORGAN: (ABRUPTLY) A rope--from a rafter in the
barn.

ARNOLD: Could I--see the place where it happened?

MORGAN: (UNWILLINGLY) Why, yes, I suppose so. Come
this way.

SOUND: WIND UP A MOMENT. TWO OR THREE LOUD CRASHES
OF THUNDER. THEN DOWN AND BEHIND.

MORGAN: (FADE IN) ...and I think that about covers
everything, Arnold.

ARNOLD: Yes, I believe so. You say she was lying
right here when you found her, Mr. Morgan?

MORGAN: Yes, just inside the barn door.

ARNOLD: Thank you, I think--(STOPS ABRUPTLY). Oh!

MORGAN: (SHARPLY) You see something unusual, Mr.
Arnold?

ARNOLD: (RECOVERING QUICKLY) Unusual? I think
not, Mr. Morgan. Everything seems to be--
just as I expected.

MORGAN: (SLIGHTLY RELIEVED) As I knew it would be.
Now, if you like, I'll be glad to show you
to your car.

ARNOLD: Yes, I must be getting back to town while

the roads are still passable. I--

TERESE: (FADING IN--EXCITEDLY) Father! Father,
it's gone! The necklace is gone--just as
I told you it was.

MORGAN: (SHARPLY) Terese, I told you to stay in your
room!

TERESE: But, father, the necklace! It's not in the
box any more at all....

MORGAN: (THREATENINGLY) Quiet, Terese!

TERESE: But--

MORGAN: Go back into the house at once!

TERESE: (SIGHING) Oh, very well. (SEEING MORGAN--
IN WONDER) Oh, are you--are you a police-
man?

ARNOLD: Policeman? (LAUGHING SLIGHTLY) Well, no,
hardly. I'm--

TERESE: Oh, I'm glad! Father said we must be careful
about policemen..

MORGAN: (IN RAGE) Terese! ...Arnold, you'll have to
excuse my daughter. She's not herself today.

ARNOLD: I find her very charming. Why didn't you
tell me you had a daughter?

MORGAN: (QUICKLY) Well, not many people know about
her. She--she doesn't go out very much.

TERESE: (PETULANTLY) No--No, you see to that!
Don't you, father!

MORGAN: Terese!

TERESE: (IMMEDIATELY SUBDUED) Yes, father.

MORGAN: (NERVOUSLY--TO ARNOLD) I--I must take
Terese back to the house. She's not well.
She imagines things. It's--Well, it's
this business about her mother. The shock.
you understand...

ARNOLD: Yes. I--think I'm beginning to. (THEN
QUICKLY) I'll wait for you here, Morgan.

MORGAN: (FADING) Good. I'll be right back. (SHARPLY)
Come, Terese!

TERESE: (OFF MIKE--TIMIDLY) Yes, father.

SOUND: WAVE OF THUNDER BEHIND. WIND OUT.

ARNOLD: (NARRATING) The moment Morgan and his
daughter were out of sight I immediately
turned my attention to the object which had
caught my attention a few moments before.
Terese had mentioned a necklace. I won-
dered if that could be--ah, yes. I had
thought I saw something gleaming behind a
box in the barn not far from where Leonora
Morgan's body had been found. As I picked
up the necklace, I noticed--fresh blood on

my fingers. What a wonderful story this was going to make! A mansion without any servants, an unknown daughter locked in her room, and a necklace--with fresh blood on it!

SOUND: RUMBLE OF THUNDER. WIND IN AND BEHIND.

ARNOLD: (NARRATING) Under the circumstances, I decided that my most strategic move was a hasty exit. I whirled quickly and started toward the door....

MORGAN: (FADING IN) I'll trouble you to give me that bawble you just dropped in your pocket.

ARNOLD: (STARTLED) What?

MORGAN: Come, come, Mr. Arnold. I saw you put the trinket in your pocket. I must ask you to return it to me immediately.

ARNOLD: (LAUGHING CASUALLY) My dear Morgan, I had no idea you were so attached to--this little trinket.

MORGAN: (POINTEDLY) Quite a sense of humor you have, Arnold. I hope you live long to enjoy it!

SOUND: RUMBLE OF THUNDER. WIND OUT.

ARNOLD: (NARRATING) I looked at the necklace carefully as I handed it back to Bartholomew Morgan. It was an ornate rope of precious

stones, longer than an ordinary necklace and strong enough, I judged, to lift a heavy weight. . . We returned to the house, and I got ready to leave. But Morgan had suddenly lost his enthusiasm to get rid of me. He offered me tea and refreshments. He kept postponing my departure until it was well after dark. His enormous display of fire-arms occupied our attention for a time as he insisted I inspect every item. He made quite a point of telling me that he was an expert marksman. Once he attempted to make a phone call and returned almost gleefully to announce that the line was dead--on account of the storm, he supposed. Finally, as I insisted that I must leave, (FADING) he remarked pointedly..

MORGAN: (INGRATIATINGLY) It's foolish of you to try to go back to town tonight, Arnold. The roads are practically impassable. I doubt if you could get from here to the main highway.

ARNOLD: (HASTILY) Oh, I'm used to impassable roads. Newspaper men have to be able to get through places no other human being would attempt.

Besides, I have to meet the deadline for the morning edition.

MORGAN: (LAUGHS SIGNIFICANTLY) But I'm sure it would be much better to wait until the storm stops and the roads are cleared. Perhaps toward morning---.

ARNOLD: (PROTESTING) But I--

MORGAN: (FIRMLY) Yes, I think you'd better stay here, Mr. Arnold!

ARNOLD: (NARRATING) So Morgan wasn't as stupid as I had hoped. He had known my suspicions all along. He knew I no longer believed that his wife--Leonora Morgan--had taken her own life, as he wanted everyone to think. I realized as he stared at me with those penetrating eyes of his and with that half laugh on his face, he was calculating a way to see to it that I did not have an opportunity to make use of my information. If I were to get out of the Morgan mansion alive to tell my story vocally or in print, I was going to have to play some very clever cards. I decided that the best way to throw him off the track was to agree with his plan to put me up

for the night. He called his strange and frightened daughter, Terese, to make the room ready for me. Then he ushered me up the long and winding stairway.

SOUND: TWO OR THREE LOUD THUNDER CLAPS.

MORGAN: I trust you will find everything comfortable, Mr. Arnold. If you require anything further, don't hesitate to call me. (POINTEDLY) I sleep in the very next room.

ARNOLD: (DRILY) How cozy!

MORGAN: Yes, isn't it.

ARNOLD: And your daughter?

MORGAN: On the floor below. (IDEA) Oh, yes, I forgot to mention that I had Terese put your car in the garage. She--locked it--for safe keeping.

ARNOLD: (MURMURING) You think of everything, don't you, Mr. Morgan?

MORGAN: We always like to feel that our guests are--well taken care of. Good night, Mr. Arnold.

ARNOLD: (NARRATING) I stood there by the door listening intently as Morgan's footsteps receded down the hallway. Actually, I was surprised that Bartholomew Morgan had not

locked me in. That would have added the finishing touch to the nightmare! After a moment, there came a cautious knock on my door...

SOUND: VERY LIGHT KNOCK. DOOR OPENS ALMOST IMMEDIATELY.

ARNOLD: (TENSELY) Who is it? (RELIEVED--SURPRISED)
Oh, it's you, Terese. But what are you doing here?

TERESE: (FRIGHTENEDLY) Ssh! I can only stay a minute. If father catches me, he might-- (SHUDDERS)
I dread to think what he might do.

ARNOLD: (GUARDEDLY) Why, I'm sure you're imagining things, Terese.

TERESE: (SWIFTLY) Oh, you don't know him, Mr. Arnold. He beats me. He keeps me locked up all the time. He tells me I'm-- (HALF SOB) He says I'm insane!

ARNOLD: (SYMPATHETICALLY) You poor child! (QUIZICALLY)
How old are you?

TERESE: Eighteen. (ALMOST PASSIONATELY) Oh, Mr. Arnold, you don't think I'm insane, do you?

ARNOLD: (SOOTHINGLY) Why, Terese, what a thing to say!

TERESE: (BREATHING) I knew I could trust you. I just knew! (THEN WARNINGLY) You know, of course,

that he intends to murder you.

ARNOLD: (LAUGHS NERVOUSLY) Oh, I hardly think so!

TERESE: Oh, but he does. Just like he murdered--
(CATCHES HERSELF) I mean--.

ARNOLD: You were saying--

TERESE: (HASTILY) Nothing. I--mustn't tell. He told me he'd kill me, too, if I ever told anybody. But I saw him, I tell you! I saw him!

ARNOLD: (WARNINGLY) Ssh, Terese. He may hear you.

TERESE: (SAVAGELY) I hate him. Oh, how I hate him!

ARNOLD: But, Terese, he's your own father.

TERESE: (WILDLY) I don't care if he is. I hate him! He killed her. He--. (DOWN) But I'll get even with him. (SUDDENLY) Mr. Arnold, if you get away from here, you'll write that story for the newspaper, won't you?

ARNOLD: I can't write anything until I have proof, Terese.

TERESE: You must! You must write it, I tell you! Make him pay for his crime. Remember--he murdered her! He tells me I'm crazy, but I know! I saw him!

ARNOLD: Terese, you must be quiet. You'd better go

now. Perhaps we can talk about this in the morning.

TERESE: (LAUGHING GLEEFULLY) Oh, but you won't be here in the morning! (COYLY) Will you, Mr. Arnold? (SWIFTLY AND VERY LOW) He told me to lock the garage door. But I didn't. (MYSTERIOUSLY) And cars go very fast, don't they? (LAUGHS GAILY) Cars go very fast!

SOUND: DOOR CLOSSES SOFTLY. LOW RUMBLE OF THUNDER.

ARNOLD: (NARRATING) I thought at that moment that I had seen and heard everything, but what happened just a moment later added little to my peace of mind. As I heard Terese move away from my door, Morgan's voice cut across the deathly quiet of the house. He was speaking to Terese in the hallway...

MORGAN: (OFF MIKE--FADING IN)--LOW REGISTER BUT SHARPLY) Terese! I told you to stay in your room.

TERESE: (LAUGHS GLEEFULLY) But I didn't obey you, did I, father? (PETULANTIY) You can't make me stay there if I don't want to.

MORGAN: (THREATENINGLY) Terese, go back down stairs at once. If I catch you out again, I--I won't be responsible for the outcome.

TERESE: (WITH EAGER INTEREST) Would you murder me,
too?

MORGAN: (ALMOST BESIDE HIMSELF) If you say that
again, I'll--

TERESE: (FRIGHTENED) Don't hit me!

MORGAN: (WEARILY) No, Terese, I'm not going to hit
you.

TERESE: (GIGGLING GLEEFULLY) You don't know what I
did.

MORGAN: (SHARPLY--FRIGHTENED) Did? Terese, what have
you been up to?

TERESE: Ha-ha! Don't you wish you knew?

MORGAN: (FRIGHTENED) You didn't--. No, you wouldn't
dare!

SOUND: MAD DASH. DOOR OPENED QUICKLY.

MORGAN: (WILDLY) Arnold, where are you?

ARNOLD: (CALMLY--FADING IN) Quite a fright she gave
you, wasn't it, Morgan?

MORGAN: (STUPIDLY) You--you were listening!

ARNOLD: Under the circumstances I could hardly help
it. You were shouting at the top of your
lungs.

MORGAN: (HASTILY) I'm sorry if we disturbed you.
Terese sometimes gets a little out of hand.
(OMINOUSLY) It won't happen again!

SOUND: TWO OR THREE LOUD CLAPS OF THUNDER.

MUSIC: OMINOUS THEME UNDER NARRATION.

ARNOLD: (NARRATING) It was quite clear to me that it was not only my own life which might be in danger but also Terese's. I switched off my light and waited quietly in my room for a few moments. The house was as silent as a tomb. Then suddenly I heard cautious footsteps in the hallway. There was a pause. And a key turned softly in the lock on my door. Bartholomew Morgan was taking no chances on my escape. He had locked me in!

MUSIC: CRESCENDO TO CLIMAX AND CUT ABRUPTLY.

ARNOLD: I knew now there was no time to be lost. I waited until I heard the footsteps recede down the hallway. Then I whipped out my pocket knife and applied it to the lock on my door....

SOUND: JIMMYING THE LOCK.

ARNOLD: It was only a matter of seconds until I had the lock sprung. Softly I opened the door....

SOUND: DOOR OPENING SOFTLY.

ARNOLD:And stepped out into the hallway.

MORGAN: (SPEAKING WITHOUT WARNING--NO FADE-IN--
OMINOUSLY) You were looking for something,

Mr. Arnold?

ARNOLD: (GASPS IN FRIGHT) What! (CONFUSED) Oh, I--I--(THINKING RAPIDLY--GULPS) Yes, I'd like a drink of water--(WEAKLY)--if you don't mind.

MORGAN: (WITHOUT EXPRESSION) There's a pitcher of ice water in your room.

ARNOLD: (LAUGHING FORCEDLY) Oh, really? How unobservant of me. I didn't notice. (THEN FOOLISHLY) Well, good-night!

SOUND: DOOR CLOSES.

MUSIC: OMINOUS THEME BEHIND. VERY LOW SO AS NOT TO OBSCURE THE SOUND.

ARNOLD: (NARRATING) I leaned against the door exhausted and spent--my heart pounding in my chest. I stood there a moment...

SOUND: FOOTSTEPS APPROACHING.

ARNOLD: ...until I thought I again heard footsteps in the hallway. In terror I grabbed a chair and braced it against the door.

SOUND: CHAIR MOVED AGAINST THE DOOR.

ARNOLD: Beside that I moved a heavy table.

SOUND: TABLE SCRAPES ACROSS THE FLOOR.

ARNOLD: Panting, I listened a moment. There was no sound. I turned slowly and looked about

the room. There was one small window on the opposite wall. Swiftly I moved toward it, cautiously raised the sash....

SOUND: WINDOW RAISED.

ARNOLD: ...and looked over the sill. It was a sheer drop of at least fifteen feet to the ground! ...The wall was covered with a thick web of ivy, however, and without a moment's hesitation I flung myself over the sill....

SOUND: CLIMBS OVER THE SILL.

ARNOLD: ...and made a somewhat informal but hasty descent.

SOUND: SCRAMBLES TO THE GROUND. THEN RUNNING FOOTSTEPS.

ARNOLD: Once on the ground, I made a dash for the garage. Terese had said she left the door unlocked. I grabbed the handle on the door and pulled. Nothing happened. I pulled again. Then in a sudden flash of lightning, I saw--. The bolt was jammed tight closed and there was--a heavy padlock! Apparently Terese's visit to the garage had been followed with an investigation by Morgan himself. The garage was locked--my car was inside!

MUSIC: CRESCENDO TO CLIMAX AND CUT.

SOUND: FOOTSTEPS ON GRAVEL. FIRST A STRANGER'S.
THEN HIS AS HE FLEES IN TERROR. BEHIND
DIALOGUE.

ARNOLD: (NARRATING) Suddenly I heard footsteps on
the gravel behind me. I turned and plunged
blindly across the field toward the road.
The rain had stopped but the ground was slimy
and soft. I sank in ankle deep at every step.
Twice I fell headlong into the mud, but each
time I picked myself up and plunged on. Even-
tually I reached the road where I paused a
moment for breath.

SOUND: FOOTSTEPS ON CEMENT.

ARNOLD: (NARRATING) But again I heard the footsteps
behind me, and I raced ahead. When I was so
exhausted that I thought I could go no fur-
ther, I slowed my pace to a fast walk.

SOUND: AUTOMOBILE FADING IN BEHIND. HIGH SPEED.

ARNOLD: Then I heard behind me in the distance, but
moving rapidly toward me--an automobile.
(REGULAR DIALOGUE--CALLING) Hi there! Hey,
how about a lift?

SOUND: CAR SCREECHES TO A STOP. DOOR FLUNG OPEN.

MORGAN: (LOW VOICE--HARDLY RECOGNIZABLE AS HIS OWN)

Get in!

ARNOLD: (GRATEFULLY) Gee, thanks! You don't know how much I appreciate this. My car broke down quite a way back. I--(STOPS AS HE RECOGNIZES MORGAN).

MORGAN: You were saying--?

ARNOLD: I've made a mistake. I don't think I care to ride after all, Mr. Morgan.

MORGAN: I think you'd better get in.

ARNOLD: Oh, no you don't.

SOUND: SUDDEN SCRAMBLE OF FOOTSTEPS.

MORGAN: (SHARPLY AND FORCIBLY) Arnold! Don't be an idiot!

SOUND: STRUGGLE STOPS.

MORGAN: Get in the car immediately. Surely you didn't expect to escape this way.

ARNOLD: (TRYING TO LAUGH IT OFF) Escape? What on earth do you mean? It simply stopped raining, so I decided to go back to town.

MORGAN: On foot?

ARNOLD: (WEAKLY) I had a deadline to make.

MORGAN: You'd better get in. I'll take you where you're going.

ARNOLD: No, really. The--the exercise will do me good!

MORGAN: (SHARPLY) I said--get in!

SOUND: FOOTSTEPS FADING IN RUNNING.

ARNOLD: Footsteps again! But I thought--

MORGAN: (SMILING SLOWLY) You thought they were mine, didn't you, Arnold?

ARNOLD: (AWKWARDLY) Well, I--

TERESE: (FADING IN--WARNING) Mr. Arnold! Mr. Arnold, don't get in that car!

MORGAN: (SHARPLY) Terese!

TERESE: Mr. Arnold, don't let father trap you--.

ARNOLD: Don't worry, Terese!

SOUND: SUDDEN SCRAMBLE.

MORGAN: (EVENLY) Arnold! Perhaps you'll understand the language of a revolver. You're not leaving yet. I have other plans for you. Get in the car.

ARNOLD: But--

MORGAN: (THREATENINGLY) I said get into the car.

ARNOLD: (RESIGNEDLY) Obviously you leave me no choice.

SOUND: GETTING INTO CAR.

MORGAN: (RELIEVEDLY) Ah, that's better.

TERESE: (FRIGHTENEDLY) Mr. Arnold, don't let him hurt you. You won't let him hurt you, will you?

ARNOLD: I'm afraid, Terese, I'm no longer in a position to determine that.

MORGAN: (SHARPLY) Get in the car, Terese.

TERESE: But--(MEEKLY) Yes, father.

SOUND: DOOR CLOSING. CAR STARTING. CAR MOVING OFF.
CONTINUE MOTOR BEHIND.

ARNOLD: (NARRATING) I sat in the front seat beside Morgan. Terese was in back. I tried to relax and pull myself together, because I realized I might need my strength for what lay ahead of me. Morgan attempted to be quite cheerful and kept up a steady stream of banter as we drove along. I was not surprised, however, when, after only a moment, we found ourselves again on the driveway to the Morgan estate. A few seconds more and we were in the garage.

SOUND: CAR STOPPING. DOOR OPENED AND CLOSED.

ARNOLD: (NARRATING) As Morgan stepped out of the car, his back was turned to me. It was only for a moment, but it served my purpose. I took a flying leap at him from behind and pulled him with me to the ground. Just as I landed the blow that knocked him out, I heard him say..

MORGAN: (STRUGGLING) Arnold, you fool! I wanted to help--

SOUND: HEAVY SOCK ON THE JAW.

MORGAN: --you! (LONG GROAN AS HE PASSES OUT).

TERESE: (CLAPPING HER HANDS) Oh, Mr. Arnold, you were wonderful! (EAGERLY) Is he dead?

ARNOLD: Of course not, Terese, just knocked out. Get his gun for me, will you? He dropped it when I tackled him.

TERESE: I have it. Oh, and another thing--.

ARNOLD: Why are you searching his pockets?

TERESE: (TRIUMPHANTLY) Ah, here it is. (GLOWING) The necklace. My mother's necklace. (MYSTERIOUSLY) It's mine now. (GIGGLES GLEEFULLY).

ARNOLD: You're a funny child. Why on earth do you want that thing? It's valuable I know, but it was your father's murder weapon.

TERESE: (GIGGLES WISELY) Really? How unusual.

SOUND: CAR DOOR OPENS.

ARNOLD: (SHARPLY) Hurry up and get in the car. Your father may come to at any moment.

TERESE: (STRANGELY) Oh, but I'm not going to get in.

ARNOLD: Very well. Then I'll go alone.

TERESE: No, I don't think you will.

ARNOLD: What--? Terese, put down that gun! It might go off by mistake.

TERESE: It might go off. But it won't be by mistake.

ARNOLD: What are you driving at?

TERESE: (CRAZILY) Last time I tried strangulation. This time I think it might be fun with a revolver!

ARNOLD: You mean you--! Good lord! So it was you who did it. And all the time I thought it was your father!

TERESE: I fooled you didn't I? (SAVAGELY) Yes I killed her.

ARNOLD: But why? Why?

TERESE: (RELISHING EVERY WORD OF IT) Because she was so beautiful. Everybody loved her. (PETULANTLY) But nobody loved me. (INDICATING HER FATHER) Even he didn't love me. He hated me, because he thought I was crazy. So I planned it all. I murdered her with her own beautiful necklace. I twisted it tight until she couldn't breathe. Then I fixed everything so it would look like he was responsible. (JEALOUSLY) Oh, but he was much too clever. He arranged things so the police would think it was suicide. Oh, he was wicked!

ARNOLD: Perhaps. But he planned to get you off scot free--because he felt that in your twisted

mind you weren't responsible for your actions.

TERESE: (SAVAGELY) Oh, you can't fool me. He hates me! So now he's going to die for two murders. He might have been able to make one of them look like suicide, but never both. (GIGGLES CRAZILY) Oh, I'm a clever one, I am. They'll hang him, and they'll let me go free!

ARNOLD: You little idiot! Give me that gun.

TERESE: (GIGGLING SILILLY AS SHE EVADES HIM) Oh, no you don't! I'm going to use it myself.

MORGAN: (FADE IN) Terese, put that gun down this instant!

TERESE: (FERRIFIED) What?

SOUND: GUN CLATTERS TO THE FLOOR.

MORGAN: Get the gun, quickly, Arnold.

ARNOLD: Right!

MORGAN: (CALILY BUT FIRMLY) I think you'd better go to your room, Terese. I'll deal with you later.

TERESE: (FRIGHTENED) Yes, I'm going. I'm going right now. You won't beat me, will you?

MORGAN: (WEARILY) Of course not. Go to your room.

TERESE: (FADING) Yes, father.

ARNOLD: Morgan, you're a life-saver. Another two seconds, and I'd have become past history!

MORGAN: You all right, Arnold?

ARNOLD: All except my knees. They suddenly refuse to hold me up. Sorry I knocked you out. For awhile I was a trifle confused as to who was after me.

MORGAN: (SADLY) I guess I played my role too realistically. I had no intention of giving you the impression that I was the murderer. I knew you realized it was not suicide, though, and I wanted to delay Terese's discovery as long as possible. She's not responsible, you know.

ARNOLD: (UNDERSTANDINGLY) I know. How long has she been this way?

MORGAN: As long as I can remember. It's inherited insanity--from her mother's side. She has a persecution complex--thinks I beat her. It's quite pitiful. I realized too late that she had her eye on you, too. When she decided to follow you, I was terrified.

ARNOLD: (TRYING TO INTERRUPT) Morgan, I--.

MORGAN: (SADLY) I guess Terese will have to pay

for her crime now, after all. I can't protect her any longer.

ARNOLD: Morgan, look! At that upstairs window! She's going to jump!

MORGAN: (WARNING) Terese, go back! For God's sake, go back!

TERESE: (WAY OFF--LAUGHING GLEEFULLY) Oh, no father! This time you can't catch me!
(PIERCING SCREAM AS SHE FALLS TO THE GROUND)

MUSIC: SOCK CUE CRESCENDOING TO CLIMAX AND CUTTING.

ARNOLD: (NARRATING) So that was Terese's answer. The account printed in the Enquirer the next morning told only of the murder and suicide. All the horror and sensationalism of that hideous night were omitted. But if you want to verify the facts--the by-line was by Kenneth Arnold. THE STORY ON PAGE ONE!

MUSIC: UP TO SWEEPING FINISH.

Notes on Writing and Production of
STORY ON PAGE ONE

Plot Creation

The final play, STORY ON PAGE ONE, is another study in terror but one written in a purely personal approach from the standpoint of the fugitive himself.

This play seeks to paint a picture of terror with vivid personal narration, in several instances conveying entire scenes by the sole expedient of narration with background of sound and music.

STORY ON PAGE ONE was outlined so thoroughly before writing that very few changes were necessary in the original script, and these were minor.

Acting

The cast is composed of four characters, three of whom "carry" the largest part of the show. Each is a powerful personality.

The actor playing Arnold must have a highly dramatic sense and the ability to paint vivid and graphic word pictures, particularly in his long passages of narration. Word coloring is a vital point in developing this characterization. The narration must be delivered in a

very personal way, close to the microphone with an intimate, confidential tone. Arnold's dialogue should be delivered a pace back from the microphone in an ordinary conversational tone of voice. This sense of microphone perspective is something which few amateurs grasp easily, and only by long drill and practice can they acquire the right shading in voice and meaning.

Morgan must, from his initial scene, convey the impression of a villain. Everything which happens, every word must point toward him as his wife's murderer. He is a suave, self-confident individual who would be at ease in any situation. When he corners and dominates Arnold, he will do it subtly and smoothly at the same time that he does it forcefully and positively. He must not appear nasty and petty. He achieves the proper effect more often by insinuation, innuendo, and varied intensity, than by shouting. His voice is low and very powerful. The few times he shouts at his daughter, his voice must crack like a whip, but in his very next lines, he will force himself to become calm and reserved. Morgan as well as Arnold must have a sensitive knowledge

of microphone perspective in order not to "blow the station off the air" with his sudden variations in volume.

The actress playing Terese should not be afraid to "let herself go." She is insane from the beginning of the play, although her lines make her seem merely childish at first. She must have a great deal of variety in pitch and intensity. Experimentation will show the competent actress which lines should go crazily high and which should take on a low, intense pitch. Her giggle is high and almost idiotic. Up until the very scene in which she tries to murder Arnold, she must appear as a sympathetic, helpless little waif. Then she becomes completely and ruthlessly mad in the scene in which she tells of her plot to murder her mother.

Ken Billingsley is the typical business-like editor of a newspaper.

Directing

It should be obvious to the director that much more is implied than is actually written into the lines of this play. Much insinuation and innuendo are necessary to get the full meaning

from the lines. It must be remembered that except in the narration, each of the three major characters is thinking one thing and saying something completely different. This fact must be evident in the characterizations. Not a single line should appear pointless. There is a definite reason for each of them, and it is the duty of director and actor to study the situation until it becomes evident what that reason is.

Sound and Music

Again in this play, as in *THE OLD CROWL*, the thunder and wind is of great importance. Many scene transitions are made with sound patterns alone, and these must be clearcut and distinct. The background of sound with the narration must be carefully integrated so that the narration is not interrupted, but so that the sound comes in clearly and unobtrusively in the background.

Recorded music for this play presents a problem, but after considerable searching, it was found that sequences from Stravinsky's *FIREBIRD SUITE*¹

¹

Recorded by Leopold Stokowski and the NBC Symphony orchestra for Victor Division, RCA Manufacturing Company, Inc. (Album).

and Debussy's *LA FONTAINE*¹ would provide most of the passages.

Script Changes

Changes were minor and concerned chiefly the rewording of a few lines to facilitate reading, particularly in the narration.

1

Recorded by Serge Koussevitsky and the Boston Symphony orchestra for Victor. (Album).

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