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A Record of A Centrally Staged Production of A Phoenix Too Frequent By Christopher Fry

Robert J. Fusillo
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A RECORD OF A CENTRALLY STAGED PRODUCTION OF A PHOENIX TOO

FREQUENT BY CHRISTOPHER FRY

being

A thesis presented to the Graduate Faculty
of the Fort Hays Kansas State College in
partial fulfillment of the requirements for
the Degree of Master of Science

by

Robert J. Fusillo, A. B.

Fort Hays Kansas State College

Date

August 1, 1952

Approved

Ralph V. Coder
Major Professor

Ralph V. Coder
Chairman Graduate Council

FORT HAYS LITTLE THEATRE

PRESENTS

**A PHOENIX
TOO FREQUENT**

BY CHRISTOPHER FRY

STAGED

In The Round

BY BOB FLEMING

**Wednesday, Thursday, Friday,
JULY 9, 10, 11**

Coliseum Arena Floor

8:15 P.M.

LIMITED SEATING

ADMISSION 64¢



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Author

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CHAPTER I

THE PLAY

A Phoenix Too Frequent, by Christopher Fry, was first produced in London, at the "Arts Theatre Club," where Fry was resident dramatist. After a two week run there, it opened at the "Mercury Theatre," in London, on April 25, 1946.¹ Directed by E. Martin Brown, it ran for 64 performances.²

The first performance of the play by any group in this country was done by the Idler Players of Radcliffe College, Cambridge, Massachusetts, on April seventh to tenth, 1948. They were assisted by the Harvard University drama department.³

Steven H. Scheuer and Bernard Carson produced the play at the "Fulton Theatre" in New York, with John O'Shaughnessy directing.⁴ In the cast were Nina Foch, as Dynamene; Richard Derr, as Tegeus; and Vicki Cummings, as Doto. The scenery and costumes were executed by Jack Landau. It ran for only five days, after its April 26, 1950, opening. The critics were almost unanimous in their

¹ Anna Rothe, editor, Current Biography 1950. (New York: H. W. Wilson Company, 1952) p. 213.

² Christopher Fry, A Phoenix Too Frequent. (London: Oxford University Press, 1946) end sheet number 6, no pagination.

³ I. M. O'Neil and N. Henneberry, "London Hails Mr. Fry, Playwright--A Reply," New York Times Magazine, p. 4, April 16, 1950.

⁴ "A Phoenix Too Frequent," Theatre Arts, 34:15, July, 1950.

dislike of the production. Theatre Arts said that the play seemed to be cast with only an eye to the physical good looks of the cast; Derr was poor and faltering in his reading of the poetry, Miss Foch read her lines in a sing-song, and Miss Cummings burlesqued her lines.⁵ Newsweek thought that Derr and Miss Foch took their emotions more seriously than Fry intended.⁶ Joseph Wood Krutch wrote that the play was put on by men plainly without imagination and daring.⁷

The critics generally gave approval to the play itself, however. Krutch went on to say:

Its whole manner is obviously based on the wit writing of the Seventeenth century. . .Most moderns have been more successful in imitating the tortured ingenuities and the solemn pretensions of the style, but Mr. Fry is interested in the fun of it, and the result is full of tinkling charm and refined bawdy. Perhaps we should call this play the first modern metaphysical comedy. . .Mr. Fry never ceases to pull our legs, but if one knows what is happening that is a not unpleasant process."⁸

Theatre Arts thought the language "delightful, tender, sensuous as poetry should be, and witty."⁹ In 1951, M. K. Spears wrote "Phoenix is Mr. Fry's neatest, best-constructed, and most

⁵ Loc. cit.

⁶ "Theatre," Newsweek, 35:80, May 8, 1950.

⁷ "Drama," Nation, 170:457, May 13, 1950.

⁸ Loc. cit.

⁹ "A Phoenix Too Frequent," Theatre Arts, Loc. cit.

closely unified play, and perhaps the funniest."¹⁰

The play, which runs about one hour in length, is written in a very loose tetrameter:

He was certain to have become the most well-organized provost
The town has known, once they had made him provost.¹¹

To the sudden melodious escape of the young river
Where it breaks from nosing through the cresses and kingcups.¹²

This type of line demands rapid reading by the actor. Rapid reading of a line as full as these, however, requires a light, tongue-tip pronunciation which sets the mood for the play; light, flippant, and unpretentious. ". . . Fry takes neither life nor himself seriously--only his art."¹³

¹⁰ M. K. Spears, "Christopher Fry And The Redemption of Joy," Poetry, 78:32, April, 1951.

¹¹ Fry, op. cit., p. 9.

¹² Fry, op. cit. p. 27.

¹³ W. H. Beyer, "The State of the Theatre," School And Society, 3:180, March 24, 1951.

CHAPTER II

CHRISTOPHER FRY

Christopher Fry, the forty-three year old Englishman, has come into a theatre mortally ill of prosy speech and writing, injected into it a bolus of poetic imagination, and made it sit up again, look around, and gaily pinch its erstwhile despairing nurse on the bottom.¹

Christopher Fry was born in Bristol, England, on December 18, 1907, the only child of Charles Harris.² Harris was an architect, not too prosperous, with deep religious leanings. These leanings led him to become a missionary in the Bristol slums. The atmosphere of the slums led him to heavy drinking, and he died when his son was still quite young. Fry was raised by his mother, who managed to support herself and son by taking in boarders.

The boy played the piano when very young, the London Daily Mail stating that he composed a "Pharoah's March" at the age of five.³ At the age of six he appeared in a pageant and was mentioned in the local paper.⁴ He went to Bedford Modern School,

¹ George Jean Nathan, "The Young Man Named Fry," New American Mercury, 72:220, February, 1951.

² "Enter Poet, Laughing," Time, 56:58, November 20, 1950.

³ Anna Rothe, editor, Current Biography 1950. (New York: H. W. Wilson Company, 1952) p. 213.

⁴ "Enter Poet, Laughing," Loc. cit.



Christopher Fry

and began writing before he was in his teens. He wrote his first play, a farce, at the age of 11, and his first verse play at the age of 14.⁵ In English, however, he stood last in his class. When he left school at 18 he became a schoolmaster. After one year of teaching he joined the Bath Repertory Company as an actor. He went back to teaching for three years, and then back again to repertory theatre groups for eight years. He went to London and was successively a magazine editor, a cartoonist, a secretary to a novelist, a radio script-writer, and a secretary to a song-writer. While in this latter position he did the lyrics and music for a revue, She Shall Have Music, which played in London in 1935.⁶ In 1934 he directed the Wells Repertory Theatre at Tunbridge, and stayed with them until that group failed, a few years later.

From the time he was eighteen until the time he was twenty-eight, he did not write a line of drama, although he felt all that while that he would, and could.⁷ He saw a performance of Richard II with John Gielgud, and was inspired to write, and he found that the words came easily and fluently.⁸

⁵ Ibid., p. 60.

⁶ H. Hobson, "London Hails Mr. Fry, Playwright," New York Times Magazine, p. 24, March 12, 1950.

⁷ Anna Rothe, Loc. cit.

⁸ Ibid., p. 214.

Dr. Barnardo's Homes, an organization devoted to the care of orphaned children, asked him to write a dramatization of the life of its founder, John Barnardo. When the play was written he toured England with it for two years.

In 1936, he married Phyllis Hart, a journalist, and by 1938, "there was no money at all."⁹ That year he wrote The Boy With The Cart, a religious drama, which met with some critical attention. He wrote two more religious pageants before the war, The Tower, about Tewkesbury Abbey, and Thursday's Child, which was produced at Albert Hall, in London, and attended by Queen Mary.

During the war Fry, who had adopted his mother's Quaker faith, was a conscientious objector. He was assigned to the Pioneer Corps, and took part in the clearing away of bomb damage in various parts of England.

Alec Clunes, the director of a small club theatre near Leicester Square, in London, gave Fry the position of resident dramatist in the "Art Theatre Club" at the end of the war. The Theatre has 334 seats, and 20,000 members. It was there that A Phoenix Too Frequent was first produced, in 1946. While resident dramatist at the theatre, Fry did not write one line until the end of the first year, when he wrote A Lady's Not For Burning, the play that was the initial step toward fame

⁹ "Enter Poet, Laughing," Loc. cit.

for the playwright. After running for two weeks at the "Art Theatre Club," the play was taken over by John Gielgud, and against the better judgement of all his friends, was brought to the "Globe Theatre" in London, where it ran for eight months, closing only because of previous commitments on the part of the actors.¹⁰

Since then, Fry has written Venus Observed, and A Sleep For Prisoners, the latter written to be played in churches. Both received high critical acclaim. He is, at present, working on a play about Henry II which is to be produced by Laurence Olivier.

Christopher Fry now lives in a workman's cottage in Shipton-Under-Wychwood, in Oxfordshire, which only recently had electricity and indoor plumbing installed. He does his writing from about ten p. m. till dawn, and consumes large quantities of cocoa during that time. He is five feet, eight inches tall, and weighs about 140 pounds.¹¹

In a recent broadcast, Fry said:

Poetry is the language in which man explores his own amazement. It is the language in which he says heaven and earth in one word. It is the language in which he speaks of himself and his predicament as though for the first time.¹²

¹⁰ Hobson, Op. cit., p. 25.

¹¹ Loc. cit.

¹² "Muse At The Box Office," Time, 55:50, April 3, 1950.

Fry, who prefers to write comedy, has said that too many writers have turned to tragedy in the mistaken idea that tragedy is closer to life.

To cross the precarious bridge from tragedy to comedy, the characters have to unmortify themselves: to affirm life and assimilate death and persevere in joy. Their hearts must be as determined as the phoenix; what burns must also light and renew: not by a vulnerable optimism but by a hardwon maturity of delight, by the intuition of comedy, an active patience declaring the solvency of good.¹³

¹³ Christopher Fry, "Comedy," Adelphi, 27:29, June, 1949.

CHAPTER III

ARENA THEATRE

The physical appearance of the arena theatre is the most immediately noticeable aspect of this type of dramatic presentation. The many names given to it: "Circle," "Penthouse," "Central," "In-The-Round," and sometimes, although with a hint of disparagement, "Circus," all give evidence of the manner of staging. The actors perform in the midst of an audience which is seated on all four sides of the playing area. This makes for some decided differences which are immediately perceived by the audience: there can be no scenery high enough to obstruct the view from any side; there are no footlights; there are no wings from which the actors can make sudden entrances or exits; and at any given time an actor has his back to some part of the audience. The front row of the audience is usually on the immediate edge of the playing area, close enough that if there is a slight platform on which the actors perform, the audience can, and usually does, rest its feet on the edge of the platform. It can be seen that arena theatre is, then, a complete break with the traditions of the proscenium, or "picture frame," stage.

Almost phoenix-like, arena theatre has arisen to a new acceptance and appreciation from where it has lain, smoldering in its own ashes, for centuries. Although to all practical discussion and purposes it is a product of the last quarter century, it has its

roots in the earliest of dramatic presentations. The earliest manifestation of dramatic production was in ancient Greece, 2500 years ago, when groups of men chanted songs to Dionysius from a circular space, around which stood or sat the watching celebrants.¹ As the festival grew in importance and organization, these chanted hymns began to tell a story, and the presentation of the performers was transferred to a specially built theatre. This theatre was almost, but not quite, entirely surrounded by the audience. It had been modeled on the places of worship, usually an altar surrounded by sloping hillsides on which sat the people: when the theatres were built the sloping effect was kept, and the acting area was a large circular space with about a fifth or a little less of the circle left unsurrounded in order to enable the actors and singers to make their exits and entrances. This exit space was often backed by a wall or mounds of carved stone to give a background to the action.² As the Greek theatre progressed, the audience retreated more and more to the front and eventually sat in a semi-circle around the stage. The Roman theatre was much like this late Greek theatre.

Throughout the middle ages there were forms of presentation that are often considered arena style, but do not completely fit

¹ Rebecca Franklin, "The Newest Theatre is the Oldest," New York Times Magazine, p. 22, June 11, 1950.

² Katharine Ommanney, The Stage And The School (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1939), p. 57.

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the category. "Mystery Plays" and the Italian Commedia Dell Arte were presented from wagons in the middle of streets or squares, but all evidence shows that the actual performing was done in one, or at the most three, directions.³ The Elizabethan, or Shakespearian stage was also one on which the actors performed in three directions, but the fourth side was reserved for a wall from which the performers could project their plays.

There have been, in more or less recent history, forms of entertainment that have been viewed from all four sides. These were not, however, strictly dramatic in content. Among these are prize-fighting, wrestling, night club singing, and, of course, circuses.

The immediate inspiration for the modern experimentation in arena theatre was a series of productions in Germany, after World War I, by Max Reinhardt, the famous director. Calling his productions "Circus Theatre," Reinhardt went back to the late Greek stage. He built a circular stage, and seated his audience in a three-quarter circle around it on sloping steps. The "Circus Theatre" productions were less purely dramatic presentations than lavish spectacles.⁴

It is interesting to note that in 1922, without any appreciable influence on ensuing turns of events. Norman-Bell Geddes drew

³ Franklin, Loc. cit.

⁴ "The Circus Theatre," Theatre Arts, 7:228, July, 1923.

up designs for two "theatres without a proscenium." The plans show a large platform, perfectly round, in the center of an auditorium of sloping seats. The platform was on an elevator which lowered into the basement where scenery could be changed. There was a gap between the audience and the platform through which, from the basement, the actors could enter by steps. There were seats for 672 persons; the whole affair was elaborate and ornate.⁵

One author suggests that central staging developed independently in several countries,⁶ with much credit given to the Russians. Glenn Hughes, of the University of Washington, is however generally accepted as having developed arena theatre as we know it today. With the introduction of the talking motion picture in the early thirties, legitimate theatre found itself losing much of its business. At the same time, the depression was making it increasingly difficult to raise money enough to stage conventional productions. The motion picture had the particular attraction of giving everyone a "front row seat," where the playing of emotions on the faces of the actors could easily be seen. Hughes realized that if he could present a play so staged that all the audience could have a front row seat, he might be able to attract some of

⁵ "Theatres of Today and Tomorrow," Theatre Arts, 7:214, July, 1923.

⁶ George Freedley, "Central Staging," Theatre Arts, 33:60, March, 1949.

the customers he had been losing.⁷ He knew that a front row in a proscenium theatre would be prohibitively long and impractical, but a front row that curved had possibilities of solving the problem. With the audience in a circle around the actors, scenery would be impossible, but, with money scarce, the lack of expensive scenery would be a blessing.

T. F. Murphy, owner of the then newly built Seattle hotel, the Edmond Meany, offered the use of the hotel penthouse to Hughes in order to experiment with production of some centrally staged plays. On October 4, 1932, four one-act plays were presented in the penthouse to an audience of sixty persons. The new staging was an immediate success; people came from all over the west coast to see the "Penthouse Theatre," as it was dubbed. The stagehand's union was, however, not at all happy. Without scenery to be shifted, there was no use for them. They picketed the hotel until Hughes had to give up the penthouse and retreat to the University of Washington campus, where he has been producing arena theatre ever since.⁸

At about this same time, Gilmor Brown, of the Pasadena Playhouse in California, began to experiment with arena production in his "Playbox" theatre, which he had built in 1924. The "Playbox" was a small theatre in which Brown had been experimenting with

⁷ George S. Perry, "Darndest Thing You've Seen," Saturday Evening Post, 164:112, March 1, 1952.

⁸ Loc. cit.

different approaches to intimate theatre. He generally played to audiences seated on a level with the actors, but all seated on one side of the room. The room in which the plays were given had a different arrangement of alcoves and openings on each wall, a different wall being used for each production. When Brown tried arena staging he found that his Pasadena audience was just as responsive as the people in Seattle had been.⁹

Arena staging became almost immediately the sole property of colleges and universities. The first theatre for this purpose on the East coast was set up at Fordham University in 1941. A large square room was used, with the seats arranged in an oval. The corners of the room were walled off and used as dressing rooms and entrances for the actors. Fordham has been experimenting with a form of scenery for arena theatre; a scrim, or gauze-like transparent curtain, is hung all around the playing area between the actors and the audience.¹⁰ The scrim can be painted to represent interior settings of various kinds, and still be seen through by the audience. However, with the light on one side only, the actors cannot see the audience, nor can the audience see its opposite members; an effect similarly noticed in a window screen at night.

Other schools were building too. In 1940, Glenn Hughes completed the first theatre in this country devoted entirely to

⁹ Freedley, Loc. cit.

¹⁰ Albert McCleery, "The Next Step," Theatre Arts, 33:62, March, 1949.

arena productions, with 172 seats. This theatre has been running six nights a week on the University of Washington campus ever since. In 1942, Tufts College, in Medford, Massachusetts, opened a theatre. The Circle Players, in Hollywood, The Glendale Center Theatre, in Glendale, California, the Gilpin Players, in Cleveland, and Penn State College, were among the first to devote their work almost entirely to arena theatre.¹¹ Many other groups experimented with the form as early as the mid-thirties, including Fort Hays State College. In February 1951, Miami University opened its "Ring Theatre," a circular building 100 feet in diameter.¹² Although the theatre had facilities for proscenium and horseshoe production, the plan was for the theatre to be used almost entirely for arena staging.¹³ It seated 400 people, with no one more than five rows from the center.

The first successful commercial venture into arena theatre was done in Dallas, by Margo Jones. Miss Jones had done some work with the "Alley Theatre," in Houston, Texas, which occasionally presented shows in the round. She went to Dallas with the idea of forming a paying community theatre.

¹¹ "Arena Around The Country," Theatre Arts, 33:64, March, 1949.

¹² Fred Koch, Jr., "Flexible Ring Theatre," Theatre Arts, 35:47, May, 1951.

¹³ Aimee Scheff, "Miami Calls For New Playwrights In The Round," Theatre Arts, 36:96, February, 1952.

Mr. and Mrs. Eugene McDermott, of Dallas, gave her one hundred thousand dollars, the Dallas Morning News, and the Dallas Times-Herald raised forty-five thousand dollars from the people of the city.¹⁴ The fire department condemned the theatre she planned to use, and there was not another conventional theatre in the city. The Gulf Oil Company offered the use of its concert hall on the Dallas Fair grounds. Miss Jones decided to gamble with arena theatre; 198 comfortable seats were put in, Jo Mielzener, the famous Broadway designer, designed an overhead hood for the lights, and in 1947 she opened "Theatre '47." With a working budget of \$2300 a week and a capacity gross of only \$3000, she "has not finished a season in the red."¹⁵

In 1949 there were arena theatres in 14 states.¹⁶ Don Gibson, a Florida producer, has two arena theatres in operation at present, one in Jacksonville, Florida, and the other in Atlanta, Georgia. He plans to open a chain across the country.¹⁷

The first commercial attempt at arena theatre on Broadway was done in 1950 by David Heilweil and Derrick Lynn-Thomas. They rented the ballroom of the Hotel Edison on West 47th Street, and converted it into a theatre. The promenade around the

¹⁴ Perry, op. cit., p. 114.

¹⁵ Freedley, Loc. cit.

¹⁶ Vinton Freedley, "Broadway To Dallas," Theatre Arts, 33:63, March, 1949.

¹⁷ "In the Round," Newsweek, 35:71, May 1, 1950.

ballroom made a natural balcony, the dance floor itself became the playing area, and where there had been tables and chairs, seats were put in. The audience numbered about seven hundred.

Heilweil and Lynn-Thomas had two objectives in mind when they opened "The Arena:" they wished to introduce to New York a commercially successful arena theatre, and they were looking for a medium that would cut down the expenses that have been slowly decreasing the possibilities of a paying venture on Broadway. In 1939, Life With Father was produced at a cost of twenty-five thousand dollars. In 1949, its sequel, Life With Mother, cost one hundred thousand dollars.¹⁸ This initial cost, plus much higher running expenses, made only extremely popular hits able to recoup the investment put into them. The conversion of the ballroom and the first production, George Kelly's The Show-Off, cost Herrick and Lynn-Thomas only fifteen thousand dollars. Each ensuing show averaged about five thousand dollars.¹⁹

Although one of the four shows done at "The Arena" was a solid hit, The Medium, by Gian Carlo-Menotti, the theatre closed after about eight months. There are still a few off-Broadway groups presenting arena productions, but the conservative New York theatre goers seem to accept the medium as little more than a novelty.

¹⁸ McCleery, op. cit., p. 63.

¹⁹ Robert N. Strauss, "The Arena On Broadway," Theatre Arts, 34:50, October, 1950.

More and more critics, however, are beginning to realize the value and potentialities of circle theatre. In his theatre column in the New York Times, in 1949, Brooks Atkinson said: "Since modern drama is gradually outgrowing old-fashioned realism and is developing into a kind of free hand or poetic theatre, the conventional picture frame stage is already obsolete."²⁰ John Mason Brown did not see a show in the round until 1948, when he saw Margo Jones' group in Dallas. He devoted a whole article to it, generally applauding the medium.²¹

There are many reasons why arena theatre attracts both audiences and performers. The intimacy achieved with the audience so close to the actors is probably the most important facet of the medium. Margo Jones, who should know, says, "Intimacy seems to intensify many forms of theatrical experience. Audiences love to see and hear everything."²² Vinton Freedley, in Theatre Arts, discussing Summer And Smoke, by Tennessee Williams, which was written especially for arena production, said that he had the sensation of being an eavesdropping member of the community.²³ George Freedley, in this same vein of thought, says, "A great

²⁰ Perry, op. cit., p. 117.

²¹ John Mason Brown, "In the Round," Saturday Review of Literature, 31:24-25, April 3, 1948.

²² Margo Jones, "Doing What Comes Naturally," Theatre Arts, 33:55, June, 1949.

²³ Vinton Freedley, op. cit., p. 64.

many plays which were written for the so called realistic-proscenium style theatre are more effective, or just as satisfactory, when produced in an arena."²⁴ Summer And Smoke has been done successfully in the round by many groups, and yet when it was presented in New York, on a conventional stage, it did not go over at all. In certain plays, with the actors on one side of the footlights, and the audience across the orchestra pit on the other, "The physical cleavage between the two worlds is almost final."²⁵ Norman Felton, who has done some work with arena theatre in Maine, says that by placing the actor behind a picture frame, you, "turn him into a two-dimensional artist."²⁶

For many small groups, the expense alone of a proscenium style production has been a deciding factor in their devoting full time to arena theatre. Tufts College, in Medford, Massachusetts, listed a comparison of losses and gains from converting to central staging. They lost, in the change, a small, well lighted stage and gained one of the best arenas in existence. They lost competition for facilities with the women's physical educational department and gained an entire building to themselves. They lost versatility in the manner of presentation and gained the

²⁴ George Freedley, Loc. cit.

²⁵ Brown, op. cit., p. 25.

²⁶ Norman Felton, "Arena Theatre At Saginaw," Theatre Arts, 28:429, July, 1944.

illusion of reality. They lost the quality added to a production with scenery and gained time from building it. They also gained a larger playing area and time for more shows. They lost forty seats and gained a centralized place in which to store and work on the production. And finally they lost a building that looks like a theatre and gained an effective teaching instrument with more public participation.²⁷

There are, of course, some criticisms of the medium. Robert Hatch complains of the lack of composition as felt by the audience.²⁸ W. H. Beyer feels that the actor has no focal point for his delivery.²⁹ The actors themselves find many changes necessary. The aging of an actor with heavy make-up can not be done in an arena production. One actor explained,

There is no scenery to turn to in embarrassing moments, no wings to escape into, no friendly prompting voice, no glaring, shielding footlights . . . no nothing but a circular sea of peering, leering faces often closer to you than the nearest actors.³⁰

Martin Manulis, who directed The Show Off at "The Arena" in New York, found that the actors are so ingrained with

²⁷ "Arena Theater--Tufts College," Recreation, 45:283, October, 1951.

²⁸ Robert Hatch, "Theatre," New Republic, 122:22, June 19, 1950.

²⁹ W. H. Beyer, "The State of the Theatre," School And Society, 72:183, September 16, 1950.

³⁰ Franklin, op. cit., p. 23.

one-directional acting that "if I sat down for ten minutes they were all facing me--so I had to keep moving around the room."³¹ One author, at least, feels that the aesthetic distance across the footlights is important. This feeling of distance can, however, be preserved in central staging with pools of light picking out the essential action.³²

Henry Popkin feels that central staging lacks in theory. Its beginnings were based on financial difficulties, not a particular theory, and the medium is still theory-less.³³ He also claims that because the acting technique is similar to that of motion picture close-up acting, even the acting is without technique of its own. He disagrees with many of the practitioners of arena theatre on the atmosphere of realism that the latter seem to have found indigenous in the form. He says, rather, that naturalness on the part of the actor is difficult because of the proximity of the audience, the audience being able to see each other across the stage, and the furniture being unnaturally spread out. Because of this inherent unnaturalness of the form, Popkin suggests that only obviously theatrical plays

³¹ Loc. cit.

³² John Dolman Jr., The Art of Play Production (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1928), p. 399.

³³ Henry Popkin, "The Drama Vs. The One-Ring Circus," Theatre Arts, 35:39, February, 1951.

such as Cyrano De Bergerac, Arms And The Man, The Medium, and Six Characters In Search Of An Author, should be done in the round.

In line with this, there have been many very successful arena productions of Shakespeare all over the country. His plays seem to be natural for the scenery-less arena theatre because, as Margo Jones says, "Shakespeare sets the stage with his words."³⁴

The future of Arena theatre seems to be well established. In its present form, proscenium theatre is too expensive for experimental theatre. Many more towns and cities that have not been able to afford live theatre will be able to use central staging. Albert McCleery, who established the arena theatre at Fordham University, writes that "Any basement in a housing development, a school gym, dormitory smoking room can now have living theatre."³⁵

³⁴ Jones. op. cit., p. 56

³⁵ Albert McCleery, "An Invitation To Action," Theatre Arts, 34:48, October, 1950.

CHAPTER IV

THE PRODUCTION

In casting about for a play to produce, the writer of this thesis early decided on doing a modern poetic drama. The poets are again beginning to invade the field of the theatre, prompted by a seeming fresh acceptance of poets in general, and by signs of seeming incipient decay in realistic theatre. Finding a play that was truly and primarily poetic was, however, a bit of a problem. As soon as a man chooses the medium of poetry for a play, he seems to feel the necessity for making it "important;" Eliot seemingly tries to convert everyone, Jeffers seemingly dangles dark doom before everyone, and Maxwell Anderson, seemingly would have everyone join the union. It was refreshing, then, to find in Fry a poet who appears to write poetry merely to be writing poetry. When this writer read A Phoenix Too Frequent, he was dazzled by the words, enthralled with the lack of attempt on Fry's part to sell anything, and he knew he had found the play he was to produce.

With the reading of the play, he saw that it lent itself perfectly to production in arena style theatre. Everything in the play rings of intimacy: the small cast, the close atmosphere of the tomb, and the emphasis on words rather than action.

Fry rather left-handedly sets the approach to the physical

appearance of the play as being not too historically accurate. In two places he goes almost out of his way to disassociate the play from a purely Roman atmosphere. On the title page of the published edition of the play he has the following quotation:

'To whom conferr'd a peacock's undecent,
A squirrel's harsh, a phoenix too frequent.'
Robbert Burton quoting Martial.¹

and again a few page later, in a note on the play: "The story was got from Jeremy Taylor who had it from Petronius."² In both cases the source is not the Roman, but a middleman. The play itself is full of modern idioms, nothing in themselves to destroy any aesthetic Roman quality of thought, but nevertheless enough to prevent the necessity of producing an exact replica of Roman physical appearance.

The costuming was fairly exact in its representation of the dress in the time of Petronius. This time was a rather arbitrary choice in itself, inasmuch as the story, even in Petronius, is stated as being an old one. The soldier was dressed in a rust red dress, rather high above the knees. Over this his armor buckled in the back. The gold figured cloth which was mounted on crinoline, was covered with "Chore Girl" type pot cleaners, to give the effect of mailed armor. The ladies

¹ Christopher Fry, A Phoenix Too Frequent (London: Oxford University Press, 1946) title page

² Ibid., two pages past title page. No number.

were dressed in typical dress of the period, plain dresses with a high girdle; white for Dynamene and brown for Doto. Dynamene and Tegeus wore thong sandals, and Doto worked barefoot. Information on costume design was taken from Historic Costume for the Stage by Lucy Barton.³

The set was kept as simple as possible, the main idea being to let the words dominate the play. The four coffins were constructed by the college carpenter shop. They were intentionally oversized in order to decrease the feeling of depression usually brought on by proximity to coffins. The center piece was constructed from available materials as a set piece on which the actors could achieve a variety of levels and sitting positions. It was made from a riser sixteen inches high and measuring eight by four feet. Atop one end were placed two triangular risers which made a square eight inches high and four by four feet. Atop this was placed one triangular riser.

Early in rehearsal it was realized that something would have to be done about the bothersome overhead echo in the arena where the play was to be given. The director decided to drop a canvas overhead above the playing area in order to keep some of the sound from going directly up. The canvas was mounted in a pipe frame, and it was almost immediately realized that the lights, too, could be mounted on those pipes. A battery of blue,

³ Lucy Barton, Historic Costume for the Stage (Boston: Walter H. Baker Company, 1935) pp. 73-93.

green, and red lights was suspended around the side and two spotlights were mounted and aimed at the top level of the centerpiece. The whole set was painted in shades of gray.

Although the arena where the play was presented offered almost unlimited space in which to seat the audience, it was decided to hold the seating to a maximum of two hundred. One hundred sixty seats were arranged on risers around the playing area; when the crowd filled the seats a few more were put in around the corners. About fifty people were turned away the second night. The third night the overflow crowd was permitted to sit in the balcony of the arena, where they heard fairly well, saw fairly well, but probably lost much of the intimacy felt by those in the closer seats.

Publicity was handled by a fellow graduate student who worked at the local radio station and gave the play dozens of free plugs; and by a few large posters; and by the distribution of 1100 cheaply printed single sheet throw-aways.⁴ These throw-aways blanketed the town and were a most effective and inexpensive way of keeping the play in the minds of the people.

The interpretation of the three characters was one of keeping away grandeur. It seemed important to impress the audience with the characters' middle station of life. Tegeus is a common foot-soldier; not a mere private, but still only a corporal.

⁴ see Frontispiece

Dynamene is the wife of a minor public official; "He was certain to have become the most well organized provost the town has known, once they had made him provost." Doto was born nether, but not, as she tells her mistress "as nether as some." Doto was underplayed as much as possible, in order not to give any impression of youth; she does not necessarily have to be old, but the slightest hint of adolescence would completely destroy the part.

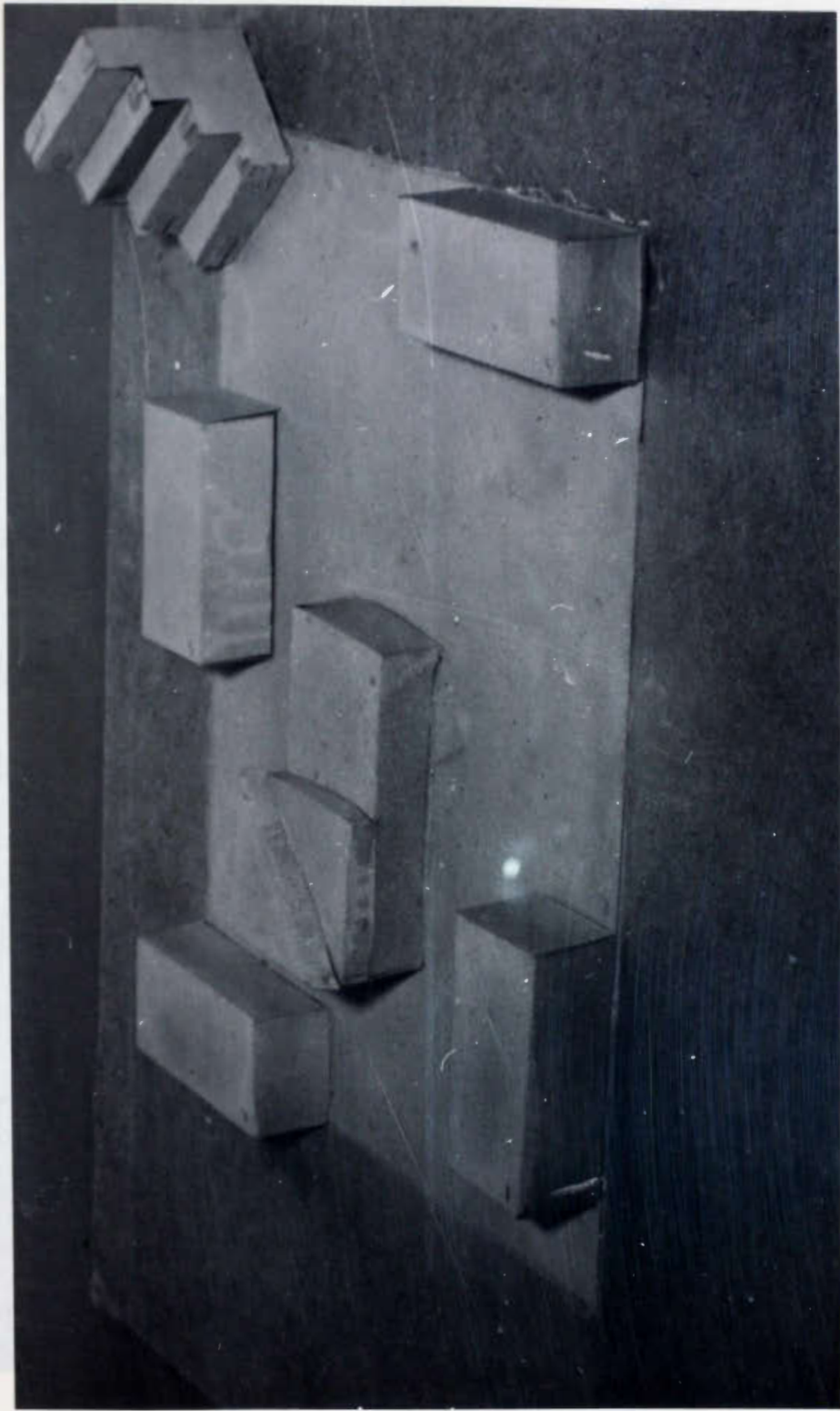
Playbill



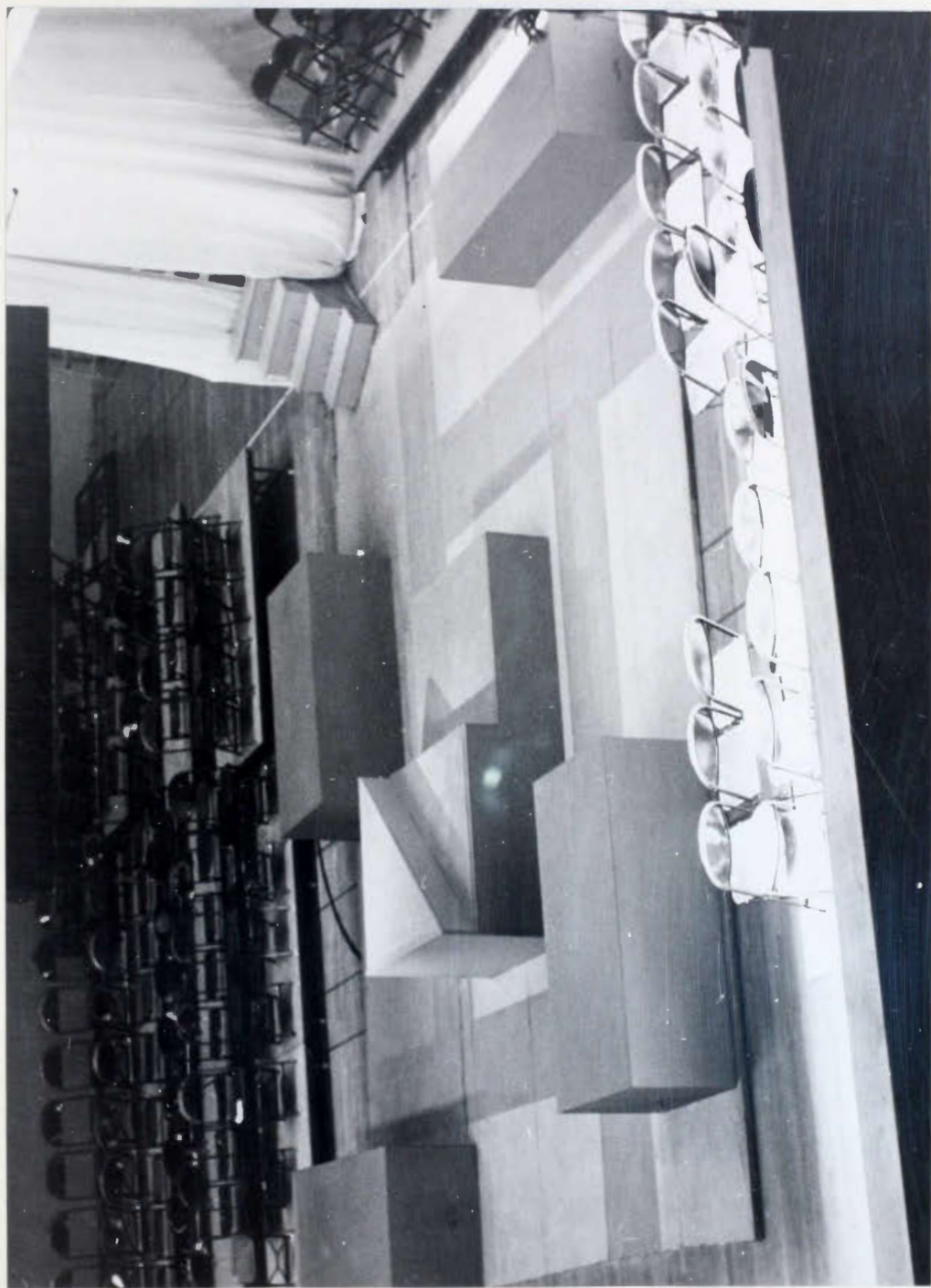
*A Phoenix
Too Frequent*

"To whom conferr'd a peacock's undecent,
A squirrel's harsh, a phoenix too frequent."
—Robert Burton quoting Martial

The Program



The Model Stage



The Set



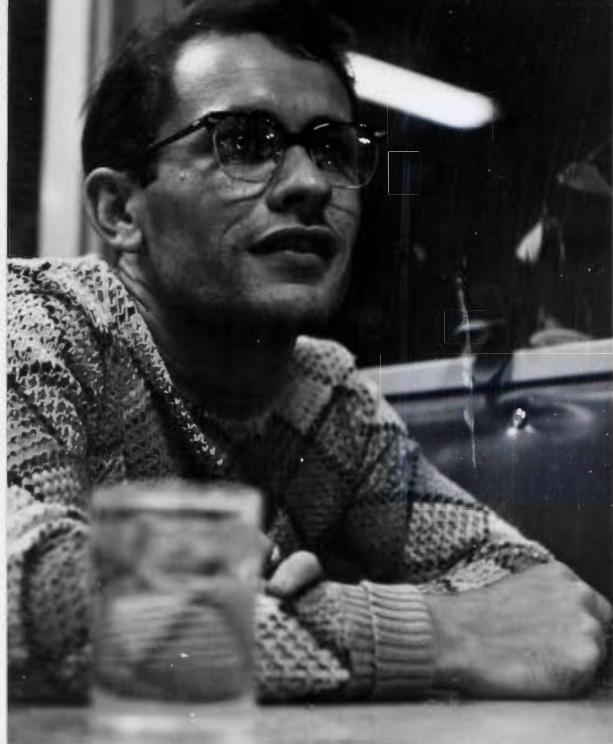
Costume - Dynamene



Costume - Tegeus



Costume - Doto



Wally Keil, Assistant Director



Dr. Geneva Herndon, Faculty Consultant











From the play "The Taming of the Shrew" by William Shakespeare

Phoenix Frequents Arena

The three responsive audiences at last week's arena performance of Christopher Fry's "A Phoenix Too Frequent" readily imagined themselves to have descended with its cast into a tomb in ancient Ephesus; only at the moment of the play's opening did the reality of the coliseum setting seem to be obtrusive. Through his use of light, costumes, and the theatre-in-the-round staging the atmosphere created by producer-director-actor Bob Fleming was unique. These all were complimentary to the play itself which presents its British author in the role of dramatic innovator of present fame.

With the three characters in the play, the audience paused in a fanciful life-or-death realm and pondered momentarily in whimsical manner on the area beyond.

Fry indulges in a fine excess of the figurative, of play on words-words, of alliteration, and of wittily incongruous images that come from mythological and other kinds of allusions.

Through their proximity to the audience, through their acting which tended to be somewhat unduly realistic in view of that very proximity, and through their veloce timing of action and dialogue, the participants gave an entertaining and artistic interpretation of the capricious comedy with its implications. Dynamene's conflict in her choice of a deadening life or a vitalizing death found personification in Vivian Fleming's performance; indecision between loyalty and her own inclinations made Fran-

ces Disney as Doto a humorously indispensable and sparkling foil to her mistress. Tegeus' anguish-distress which was felt at his failure in a soldier's duty, as portrayed by Fleming himself, was balanced in its intensity by its limited duration.

It is safely fair and fairly safe to iterate that this flavor imparted from Fry creates an inclination to see other plays of his performed effectively and skillfully as Mr. Fleming has done with his cast and staff of assistants whose share in the presentation is also to be commended.

Weariness of wordiness may use any second the exact words of another of Fry's characters and ask this convicting and persisting question:

Would you mind if I reminded you
What we were talking about when
you started talking? —EC

from the Fort Hays State College "Leader"

THE HAYS DAILY NEWS

An Independent Newspaper

Founded Armistice Day, 1929

FRANK MOTZ, Editor and Manager

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By The News Publishing Co.

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Thursday, July 10, 1952

'Phoenix Too Frequent' Turns Tragic Events Into Comedy

"A Phoenix Too Frequent" presented at Fort Hays State last night proved to be a comedy reminiscent of "Arsenic and Old Lace" with an added Roman flavor.

The play was written by Christopher Fry, the contemporary English playwright who has revised verse form dialogue. In keeping with the novelty of the Fry vehicle, the play was staged in the "theatre in the round" form.

Bob Fleming, a graduate student at the college, staged the production and played a leading role in the three-character comedy. The audience of about 165 persons was seated on all four sides of the stage which was set up in the center of the Coliseum arena.

For most of the audience the unusual staging was a new experience. The three-dimensional effect gave the audience a feeling of intimacy with the characters. There were no intermissions or scene changes to interrupt the action and destroy the mood.

Speeches Unobtrusive

Credit must be given to Fry for writing the most delightfully adult dialogue this reviewer has heard in a long time. The poetic speeches, handled deftly by the actors, were unobtrusive and consistently clever.

As the play opens, Dynamene, a Roman lady, is completing her second day of fasting in her dead

husband's tomb, preparatory, she hopes to joining him at the river Stix. With her is her maid, Doto, who is supposed to accompany her on the journey to the lower world.

Into this situation stumbles a Roman soldier, Tegeus-Chromis, seeking a quiet place to eat his lunch. After he encounters the beautiful Dynamene, he forgets he is supposed to be guarding the bodies of six men who have been hung in the square for political misdeeds.

Pledges His Love

Pledging his love to Dynamene, Chromis leaves to check his charges. Shaken, he returns with the sad news that one of the bodies is missing and he will be hanged for leaving his post. As he is about to fall on his sword, Dynamene, makes the happy suggestion that they substitute the body of her husband for the missing man.

Fleming, as soldier, turns in another smooth performance. His poise and versatility have been noted in several Fort Hays State productions.

His wife, Vivian Fleming, is perfectly cast as Dynamene. She is tall and graceful and completely at ease in the role.

Frances Disney caught the fancy of the audience with her broad comedy characterization of Doto. She seemed a lovable, if not too bright, girl who was willing to

do her mistress' bidding even after death, although she has some doubts about the merits of the plan.

"Here we are dying to be dead and where is it getting us," she asks.

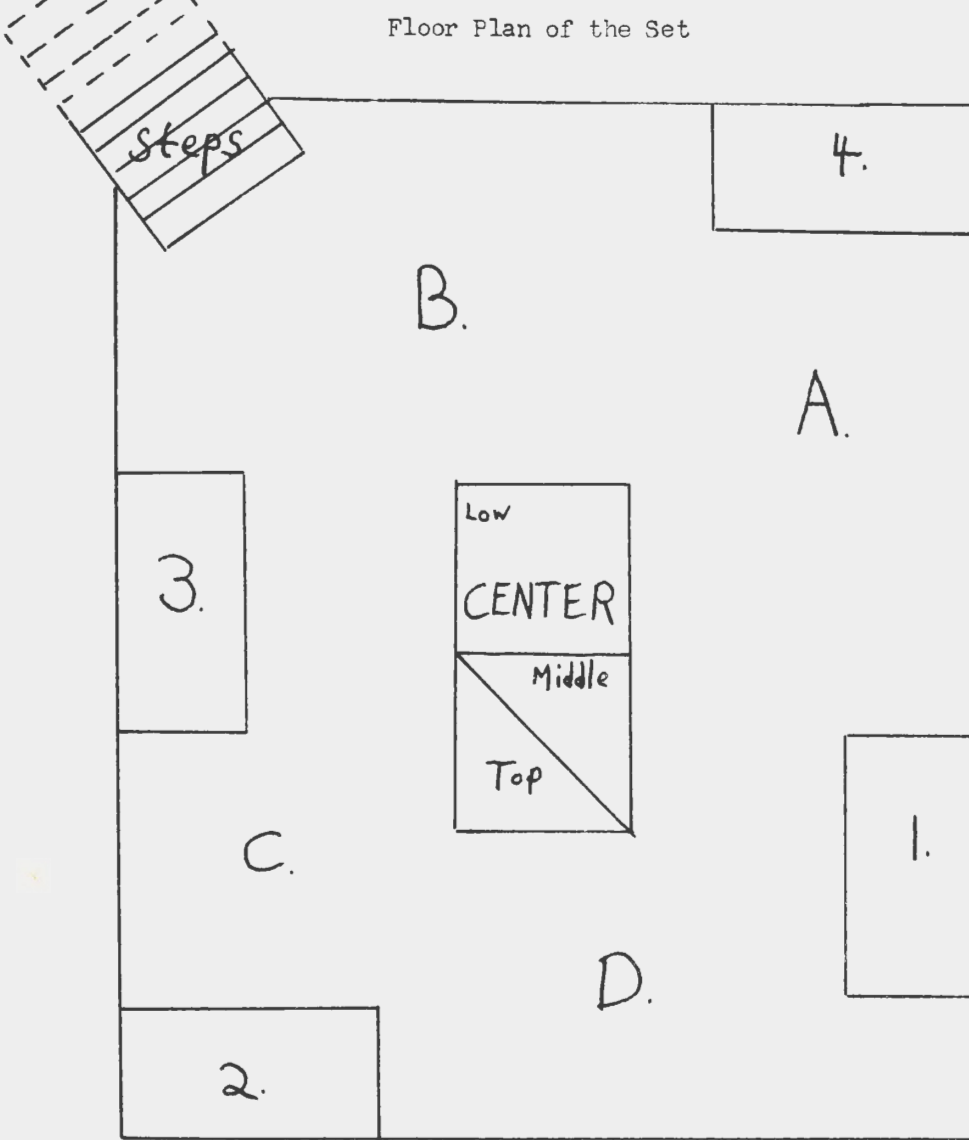
The play will be presented again at 8:15 o'clock tonight and tomorrow night. Theatre-goers will want to see this one.—C. K.

CHAPTER V

THE DIRECTOR'S SCRIPT

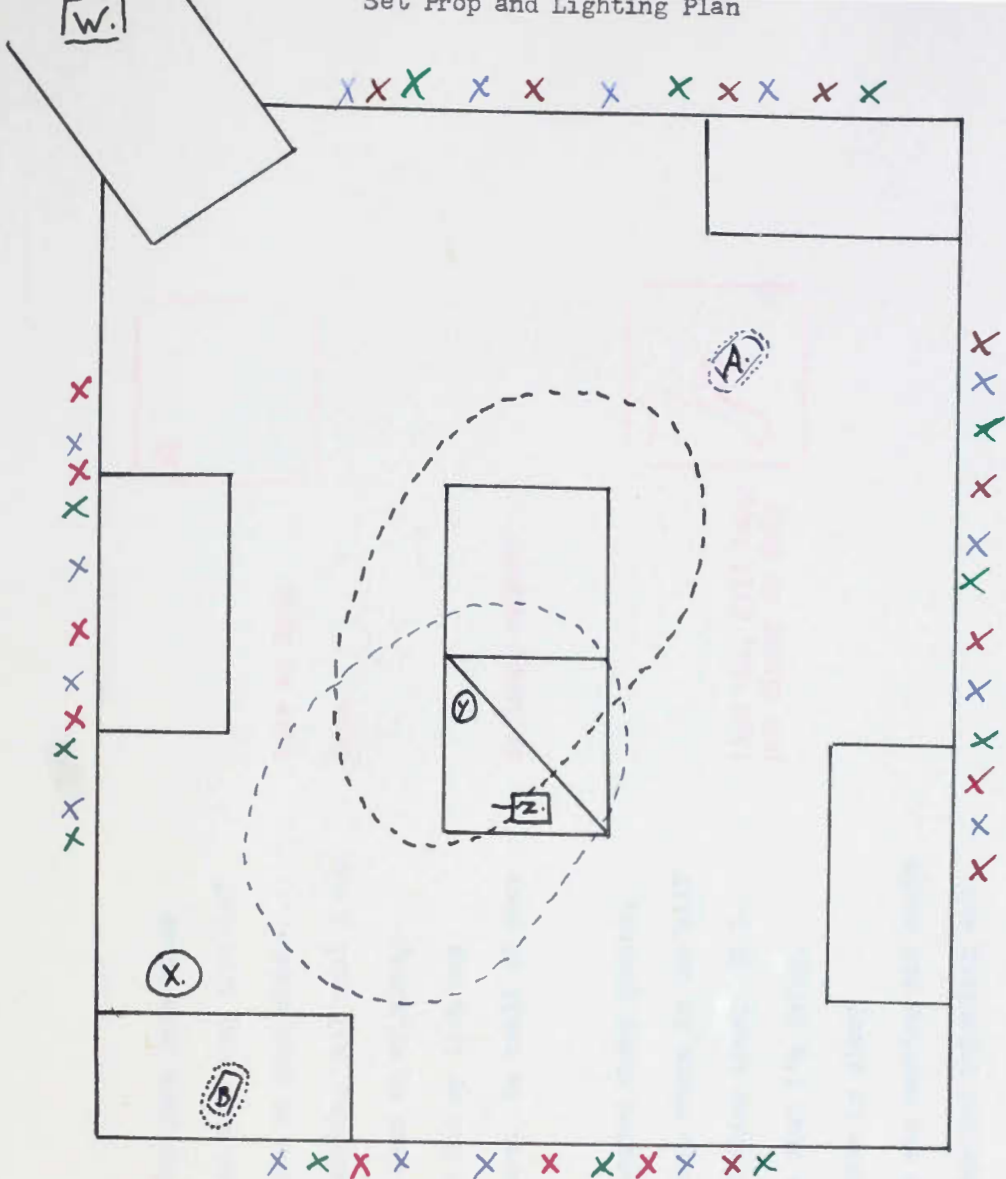
Portions of the play omitted in the production are enclosed in brackets.

Floor Plan of the Set



As the play opens, Doto is standing facing up the steps, and Dynamene is asleep atop 1. with her head at the D. end.

In the diagrams in the director's script, Dynamene is represented by a D., Doto by an M., and Tegeus by a T. An arrow, \wedge , shows the direction in which the characters are facing.



- ✕ red border
- ✕ green border
- ✕ blue border

- blue spotlight spill
- white spotlight spill

- A. Blue Overhead spot
- B. White Overhead spot
- W. wine, bowls, supper [off]
- X. oil jug, dipper
- Y. oil lamp
- Z. comb

DOTO.

Nothing but the harmless day gone into black
Is all the dark is. And so what's my trouble?
Demons is so much wind. Are so much wind.
I've plenty to fill my thoughts. All that I ask
Is don't keep turning men over in my mind,
Venerable Aphrodite. I've had my last one
And thank you. I thank thee. He smelt of sour
grass

And was likeable. He collected ebony quoits.
O Zeus! O some god or other, where is the oil?
Fire's from Prometheus. I thank thee. If I
Mean to die I'd better see what I'm doing.
Honestly, I would rather have to sleep
With a bald bee-keeper who was wearing his boots
Than spend more days fasting and thirsting and
crying

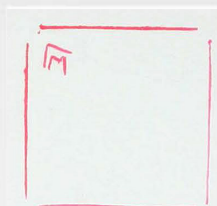
In a tomb. I shouldn't have said that. Pretend

take at Dyn.

turn

to lamp, center

find oil, fill lamp
put dipper to drip



I didn't hear myself. But life and death
Is cat and dog in this double-bed of a world.
My master, my poor master, was a man
Whose nose was as straight as a little buttress,
And now he has taken it into Elysium
Where it won't be noticed among all the other
straightness.

sit center opp. 3

Oh, them owls. Those owls. It's woken her.

swing over to Dyn.

DYN.

Ah! I'm breathless. I caught up with the ship
But it spread its wings, creaking a cry of Dew,
Dew! and flew figurehead foremost into the sun.

sit up on casket

OTO.

How crazy, madam.

DYN.

Oto, draw back the curtains.

I'll take my barley-water.

DOTO.

We're not at home

Now, madam. It's the master's tomb.

DYN.

Of course!

Oh, I'm wretched. Already I have disfigured

My vigil. My cynical eyelids have soon dropped

me

In a dream.

DOTO.

But then it's possible, madam, you might

Find yourself [in bed] with him again

In a dream, madam. Was he on the ship?

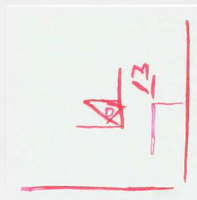
DYN.

He was the ship.

DOTO.

Oh, That makes it different.

up, sit center, comb
hair, Doto sit corner
of l. on floor



DYN. of shades, from what I've heard.

He was the ship. He had such a deck, Doto,
Such a white, scrubbed deck. Such a stern prow,
Such a proud stern, so slim from port to starboard.
If ever you meet a man with such fine masts
Give your life to him, Doto. The figurehead
Bore his own features, so serene in the brow
And hung with a little seaweed. O Virilius,
My husband, you have left a wake in my soul.
You cut the glassy water with a diamond keel.
I must cry again.

DOTO.

What, when you mean to join him?
Don't you believe he will be glad to see you,
 madam?

Thankful to see you, I should imagine, among
Them shapes and shades; all shapes of shapes
 and all

comb down

go for hanky on l.
sit, head facing
corner



Shades of shades, from what I've heard. I

know

I shall feel odd at first with Cerberus,

Sop or no sop. Still, I know how you feel,

madam.

You think he may find a temptation in Hades.

I shouldn't worry. It would help him to settle

down.

It would only be fun, madam. He couldn't go

far

With a shade.

DYN.

He was one of the coming men.

turn center

He was certain to have become the most well-

organized provost

The town has known, once they had made him

provost.

He was so punctual, you could regulate

The sun by him. He made the world succumb
To his daily revolution of habit. But who,
In the world he has gone to, will appreciate that?

O poor Virilius! To be a coming man
Already gone--it must be distraction.

Why did you leave me walking about our ambitions
Like a cat in the ruins of a house? Promising
husband,

Why did you insult me by dying? Virilius,
Now I keep no flower, except in the vase
Of the tomb.

DOTO.

O poor madam! O poor master!

I presume so far as to cry somewhat for myself
As well. I know you won't mind, madam. It's
two

Days not eating makes me think of my uncle's
Shop in the country, where he has a hardware business,

Basins, pots, ewers, and alabaster birds.

He makes you die of laughing. O madam,

Isn't it sad?

DYN.

How could I have allowed you

To come and die of my grief? Doto, it puts

A terrible responsibility on me. Have you

No grief of your own you could die of?

DOTO.

Not really, madam.

DYN.

Nothing?

DOTO.

Not really. They was all one to me.

Well, all but two was all one to me. And they,

Strange enough, was two who kept recurring.

I could never be sure if they had gone for good

Or not; and so that kept things cheerful, madam.

swing around, back
to casket

One always gave a wink before he deserted me,
The other slapped me as it were behind, madam;
Then they would be away for some months.

DYN.

Oh Doto,

What an unhappy life you were having to lead.

DOTO.

Yes, I'm sure. But never mind, madam,

It seemed quite lively then. And now I know

It's what you say; life is more big than a bed

And full of miracles and mysteries like

One man made for one woman, etcetera, etcetera.

Lovely. I feel sung, madam, by a baritone

In mixed company with everyone pleased.

And so I had to come with you here, madam,

For the last sad chorus of me. It's all

Fresh to me. Death's a new interest in life,

stand, walk into A

turn to Dyn.



If it doesn't disturb you, madam, to have me

crying.

It's because of us not having breakfast again.

And the master, of course. And the beautiful

world.

And you crying too, madam. Oh--Oh!

DYN.

I can't forbid your crying; but you must cry

On the other side of the tomb. I'm becoming

confused.

This is my personal grief and my sacrifice

Of self, solus. Right over there, darling

girl.

DOTO.

What, here?

DYN.

Now, if you wish, you may cry, Doto.

But our tears are very different. For me

down at Madam's lap

push away, stand
Doto back, around
center



sit, face away, chin
in hand

into area A

The world is all with Charon, all, all,
[Even the metal and plume of the rose garden,
And the forest where the sea fumes overhead
In vegetable tides, and particularly
The entrance to the warm baths in Arcite Street
Where we first met;--all!--the sun itself
Trails an evening hand in the sultry river
Far away down by Acheron.] I am lonely,
Virilius. Where is the punctual eye
And where is the cautious voice which made
Balance-sheets sound like Homer and Home
 sound
Like balance-sheets? The precision of limbs,
 the amiable
Laugh, the exact festivity? Gone from the
 world.
You were the peroration of nature, Virilius.

up on center

You explained everything to me, even the extremely
Complicated gods. You wrote them down
In seventy columns. Dear curling calligraphy!
[Gone from the world, once and for all.] And

I taught you

In your perceptive moments to appreciate me.
You said I was harmonious, Virilius,
Moulded and harmonious, little matronal
Ox-eye, your package. And then I would walk
Up and down largely, as it were making my own
Sunlight. [What a mad blacksmith creation is
Who blows his furnaces until the stars fly upward
And iron Time is hot and politicians glow
And bulbs and roots sizzle into hyacinth
And orchis, and the sand puts out the lion,
Roaring yellow, and oceans bud with porpoises,
Blenny, tunny and the almost unexisting
Blindfish; throats are cut, the masterpiece

Looms out of labour; nations and rebellions
Are spat out to hang on the wind—and] all is gone
In one Virilius, wearing his office tunic,
Checking the pence column as he went.

down, into A

Where's animation now? What is there that
stays

To dance? The eye of the one-eyed world is out.
DOTO.

lie on l.

I shall try to grieve a little, too.

It would take lessons, I imagine, to do it out
loud

For long. If I could only remember
Any one of those fellows without wanting to
laugh.

Hopeless, I am. Now those good pair of shoes
I gave away without thinking, that's a different—
Well, I've cried enough about them, I suppose.

Poor madam, poor master.

wail

TEG.

What's your trouble?

DOTO.

Oh!

Oh! Oh, a man. I thought for a moment it

was something

With harm in it. Trust a man to be where it's

dark.

What is it? Can't you sleep?

TEG.

Now, listen--

DOTO.

Hush!

Remember you're in the grave. You must go

away.

Madam is occupied.

TEG.

What, here?

enter quickly

up-dipper in hand

drop dipper in oil

toward him, out
into B

DOTO.

Becoming

Dead. We both are.

TEG.

What's going on here?

come down, leave
wine on steps

DOTO.

Grief.

Are you satisfied now?

TEG.

Less and less. Do you know

What the time is?

DOTO.

I'm not interested.

We've done with all that. Go away. Be a
gentleman.

If we can't be free of men in a grave

Death's a dead loss.

TEG.

It's two in the morning. All

I ask is what are women doing down here

At two in the morning?

DOTO.

Can't you see she's crying?

Or is she sleeping again? Either way

She's making arrangements to join her husband.

TEG.

Where?

DOTO.

Good god, in the Underworld, dear man.

Haven't you learnt

About life and death?

TEG.

In a manner, yes; in a manner;

The rudiments. So the lady means to die?

DOTO.

For love; beautiful, curious madam.

TEG.

Not curious;

I've had thoughts like it. Death is a kind of
love.

Not anything I can explain.

DOTO.

You'd better come in

And sit down.

TEG.

I'd be grateful.

DOTO.

Do. It will be my last

Chance to have company, in the flesh.

TEG.

Do you mean

You're going too?

sit center, back
to Dyna.



DOTO.

Oh, certainly I am.

Not anything I can explain.

It all started with madam saying a man
Was two men really, and I'd only noticed one,
One each, I mean. It seems he has a soul
As well as his other troubles. And I like to
know

What I'm getting with a man. I'm inquisitive,
I suppose you'd call me.

TEG.

It takes some courage.

DOTO.

Well, yes

And no. I'm fond of change.

TEG.

Would you object

To have me eating my supper here?

DOTO.

Be careful

Of the crumbs. We don't want a lot of squeaking

mice

Just when we're dying.

TEG.

What a sigh she gave then.

Down the air like a slow comet.

And now she's all dark again. Mother of me.

How long has this been going on?

DOTO.

Two days.

It should have been three by now, but at first

Madam had difficulty with the Town Council.

They said

They couldn't have a tomb used as a private

residence.

But madam told them she wouldn't be eating here,

Dyna. sigh

sit 4., sprawl
push dress between
legs

Only suffering, and they thought that would be
all right.

cry, quietly

TEG.

Two of you. Marvellous. Who would have said
I should ever have stumbled on anything like
this?

Do you have to cry? Yes, I suppose so. It's
all

Quite reasonable.

DOTO.

Your supper and your knees.

That's what's making me cry. I can't bear
sympathy

And they're sympathetic.

TEG.

Please eat a bit of something.

I've no appetite left.

DOTO.

And see her go ahead of me?

Wrap it up; put it away. You sex of wicked
beards!

It's no wonder you have to shave off your
black souls

Every day as they push through your chins.

I'll turn my back on you. It means utter

Contempt. Eat? Utter contempt. Oh, little
new rolls!

TEG.

Forget it, forget it; please forget it.

Remember

I've had no experience of this kind of thing
before.

Indeed I'm as sorry as I know how to be. Ssh,
We'll disturb her. She sighed again. O Zeus,
It's terrible! Asleep, and still sighing.

Teg. to steps
down food

Dyna. sigh
Teg. into B.

Mourning has made a warren in her spirit,

All that way below. Ponoſ! the heart

Is the devil of a medicine.

DOTO.

And I don't intend

To turn around.

TEG.

I understand how you must feel.

Would it be--have you any objection

To my having a drink? I have a little wine

here.

And, you probably see how it is: grief's in order,

And death's in order, and women--I can usually

Manage that too; but not all three together

At this hour of the morning. So you'll excuse

me.

How about you? It would make me more

comfortable

Teg. sit steps

If you'd take a smell of it.

DOTO.

One for the road?

TEG.

One for the road.

DOTO.

It's the dust in my throat. The tomb

Is so dusty. Thanks, I will. There's no

point in dying

Of everything, simultaneous.

TEG.

It's lucky

I brought two bowls. I was expecting to

keep

A drain for my relief when he comes in the

morning.

DOTO.

Are you on duty?

up to Teg.

up, bottle on
steps

TEG.

Yes.

DOTO.

It looks like it.

TEG.

Well,

Here's your good health.

drink

DOTO.

What good is that going to do me?

Here's to an easy crossing and not too much

waiting

About on the bank. Do you have to tremble

sit center

like that?

TEG.

The idea—I can't get used to it.

DOTO.

For a member

Of the forces, you're peculiarly queasy. [I wish



Those owls were in Hades--oh no; let them stay
where they are.]

Have you never had nothing to do with corpses
before?

TEG.

I've got six of them outside.

DOTO.

Morpheus, that's plenty.

What are they doing there?

TEG.

Hanging.

DOTO.

Hanging?

TEG.

On trees.

Five plane trees and a holly. The holly-
berries

Are just reddening. Another drink?

Teg. to bottle

Doto.

Why not?

Teg.

It's from Samos. Here's—

DOTO.

All right. Let's just drink it.

—How did they get in that predicament?

TEG.

The sandy-haired fellow said we should collaborate

With everybody; the little man said he wouldn't

Collaborate with anybody; the old one

Said that the Pleiades weren't sisters but cousins

And anyway were manufactured in Lacedaemon.

The fourth said that we hanged men for nothing.

The other two said nothing. Now they hang

About at the corner of the night, they're present

And absent, horribly obsequious to every

Move in the air, and yet they keep me standing

Teg. to Doto, fill
bowl

both drink

Teg. to steps, down
bottle, foot on steps

Teg. offer wine to
Doto
Doto drink

For five hours at a stretch.

DOTO.

The wine has gone

Down to my knees.

TEG.

And up to your cheeks. You're looking

Fresher. If only—

DOTO.

Madam? She never would.

Shall I ask her?

TEG.

No; no, don't dare, don't breathe it.

This is privilege, to come so near

To what is undeceiving and uncorrupt

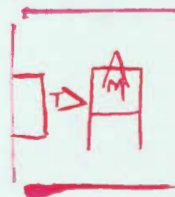
And undivided; this is the clear fashion

For all souls, a ribbon to bind the unruly

Curls of living, a faith, a hope, Zeus

Yes, a fine thing. I am human, and this

Teg. into passage
opp. 3



Teg. discover bottle in
hand, put down B center

Is human fidelity, and we can be proud

And unphilosophical.

DOTO.

I need to dance

But I haven't the use of my legs.

TEG.

No, no, don't dance,

Or, at least, only inwards; don't dance; cry

Again. We'll put a moat of tears

Round her bastion of love, and save

The world. It's something, it's more than

something,

It's regeneration, to see how a human cheek

Can become as pale as a pool.

DOTO.

Do you love me, handsome?

TEG.

To have found life, after all, unambiguous!

Teg. foot up Low center
opp. 3.

DOTO.

Did you say Yes?

TEG.

Certainly; just now I love all men.

DOTO.

So do I.

TEG.

And the world is a good creature again.

I'd begun to see it as mildew, verdigris,

Rust, woodrot, or as though the sky had uttered

An oval twirling blasphemy with occasi nal

vistas

In country districts. I was within an ace

Of volunteering for overseas service. Despair

Abroad can always nurse pleasant thoughts of

home.

Integrity, by god!

sit top center,
facing C.

To Doto

DOTO.

I love all the world

And the movement of the apple in your throat.

So shall you kiss me? It would be better, I

should think,

To go moistly to Hades.

TEG.

Hers is the way,

Luminous with sorrow.

DOTO.

Then I'll take

Another little swiggy. I love all men,

Everybody, even you, and I'll pick you

Some outrageous honeysuckle for your helmet,

If only it lived here. Pardon.

DYN.

Doto. Who is it?

Dyna. wake

Teg. up, into C.

DOTO.

Honeysuckle, madam. Because of the bees.

Go back to sleep, madam.

DYN.

What person is it?

DOTO.

Yes, I see what you mean, madam. It's a kind

of

Corporal talking to his soul, on a five-hour

shift,

Madam, with six bodies. He's been having his

supper.

TEG.

I'm going. It's terrible that we should have

toward D.

disturbed her.

DOTO.

He was delighted to see you so sad, madam.

It has stopped him going abroad.

DYN.

One with six bodies?

Dyna. into D.

A messenger, a guide to where we go.

It is possible he has come to show us the way

Out of these squalid suburbs of life, a shade,

A gorgon, who has come swimming up, against

The falls of my tears (for which in truth he

would need

Many limbs) to guide me to Virilius.

I shall go quietly.

PEG.

I do assure you--

Such clumsiness, such a vile and unforgivable

Intrusion. I shall obliterate myself

Immediately.

OTO.

Oblit--oh, what a pity

To oblit. Pardon. Don't let him, the nice fellow.

DYN.

Sir: your other five bodies: where are they?

TEG.

Madam---

Outside; I have them outside. On trees.

DYN.

Quack!

TEG.

What do I reply?

DYN.

Quack, charlatan!

You've never known the gods. You came to
mock me.

Doto, this never was a gorgon, never.

Nor a gentleman either. He's completely
spurious.

Admit it, you creature. Have you even a feather

Dyna. to A.



Of the supernatural in your system? Have
you?

TEG.

Some of my relations--

DYN.

Well?

TEG.

Are dead, I think;

That is to say I have connexions--

DYN.

Connexions

With pickpockets. It's a shameless imposition.

Dyn. work in B.

Does the army provide you with no amusements?

If I were still of the world, and not cloistered

In a colourless landscape of winter thought

Where the approaching Spring is desired oblivion,

I should write sharply to your commanding

officer.

It should be done, it should be done. If my
fingers

Weren't so cold I would do it now. But they
are,

Horribly cold. [And why should insolence matter
When my colour of life is unreal, a blush on
death,

A partial mere diaphane? I don't know
Why it should matter] Oafish, non-commissioned
Young man! The boots of your conscience will
pinch for ever

If life's dignity has any self-protection.

Oh, I have to sit down. The tomb's going round.
DOTO.

Oh, madam, don't give over. I can't remember
When things were so lively. He looks marvellously
Marvellously uncomfortable. Go on, madam.

sit 3.

Tag. break
into B.

Can't you madam? Oh, madam, don't you feel up

to it?

There, do you see her, you acorn-chewing in-
fantryman?

You've made her cry, you square-bashing barbarian.

TEG.

O history, my private history, why

Was I led here? What stigmatism has got

Into my stars? Why wasn't it my brother?

He has a tacit misunderstanding with everybody

And washes in it. Why wasn't it my mother?

She makes a collection of other people's tears

And dries them all. Let them forget I came;

And lie in the terrible black crystal of grief

Which held them, before I broke it. Outside,

Tegeus.

DOTO.

Hey, I don't think so, I shouldn't say so. Come

foot on 4.

LA

on steps
back up

Down again, uniform. Do you think you're going
To half kill an unprotected lady and then
Back out upwards? Do you think you can leave
her like this?

TEG.

Yes, yes, I'll leave her. O directorate of gods,
How can I? Beauty's bit is between my teeth.
She has added another torture to me. Bottom
Of Hades' bottom.

come down
sit steps

DOTO.

Madam. Madam, the corporal
Has some wine here. It will revive you, madam.
And then you can go at his again, madam.

TEG.

It's the opposite of everything you've said,
I swear. I swear by Horkos and the Styx,
I swear by the nine acres of Tityos,
I swear the Hypnotic oath, by all the Titans--

By Koeos, Krios, Iapetos, Kronos, and so on--
By the three Hekatoncheires, by the insomnia
Of Tisiphone, by Jove, by jove, and the dew
On the feet of my boyhood, I am innocent
Of mocking you. Am I a Salmoneus
That, seeing such a flame of sorrow--

DYN.

You needn't

Labour to prove your secondary education.

Perhaps I jumped to a wrong conclusion, perhaps

I was hasty.

DOTO.

How easy to swear if you're properly educated.

Wasn't it pretty, madam? Pardon.

DYN.

If I misjudged you

I apologize, I apologize. Will you please leave

us?

Teg. stand

Dyn. up into B

You were wrong to come here. In a place of

mourning

Light itself is a trespasser; nothing can have

The right of entrance except those natural symbols

Of mortality, [the jabbing, funeral, sleek-

With-omen raven, the death-watch beetle which

mocks

Time:] particularly, I'm afraid, the spider

Weaving his home with swift self-generated

Threads of slaughter; and, of course, the worm.

I wish it could be otherwise. Oh dear,

They aren't easy to live with.

DOTO.

Not even a little wine, madam?

DYN.

Here, Doto?

DOTO.

Well, on the steps perhaps,

Dyn. sit center,
opp. 3.

Except it's so draughty.

DYN.

Doto! Here?

DOTO.

No, madam;

I quite see.

DYN.

I might be wise to strengthen myself

In order to fast again; it would make me

abler

For grief. I will breathe a little of it,

Doto.

DOTO.

Thank god. Where's the bottle?

DYN.

What an exquisite bowl.

TEG.

Now that it's peacetime we have pottery classes.

Teg. to Dyn. with
bowl, sit 3.



DYN.

You made it yourself?

TEG.

Yes. Do you see the design?

The corded god, tied also by the rays
Of the sun, and the astonished ship erupting
Into vines and vine-leaves, [inverted pyramids
Of grapes, the uplifted hands of the men
(the raiders),

And here the headlong sea, itself almost
Venturing into leaves and tendrils, and Proteus
With his beard braiding the wind,] and this
Held by other hands is a drowned sailor---

DYN.

Always, always.

DOFO.

Hold the bowl steady, madam.

Pardon.

DYN.

Doto, have you been drinking?

DOTO

Here, madam?

I coaxed some a little way towards my mouth,

madam,

But I scarcely swallowed except because I had

to. The hiccup

Is from no breakfast, madam, and not meant to

be funny.

DYN.

You may drink this too. Oh, how the inveterate

body,

Even when cut from the heart, insists on leaf,

[Puts out, with a separate meaningless will,

Fronds to intercept the thankless sun.]

put bowl on triangle
up, through C and D
to A

How it does, oh, how it does. And how it confuses

The nature of the mind.

TEG.

Yes, yes, the confusion;

That's something I understand better than
anything.

DYN.

When the thoughts would die, the instincts
will set sail

For life. And when the thoughts are alert
for life

The instincts will rage to be destroyed on the
rocks.

To Virilius it was not so; his brain was an
ironing-board

For all crumpled indecision: and I follow him,
The hawser of my world. You don't belong
here,

You see; you don't belong here at all.

TEG.

If only

I did. If only you knew the effort it costs

me

To mount those steps again into an untrust-

worthy,

Unpredictable, unenlightened night,

And turn my back on--on a state of affairs,

I can only call it a vision, a hope, a promise,

A--By that I mean loyalty, enduring passion,

Unrecking bravery and beauty all in one.

DOTO.

He means you, or you and me; or me, madam.

TEG.

It only remains for me to thank you, and to

say

That whatever awaits me and for however long

8

30

1

Teg. up, into B.



I may be played by this poor musician,
existence,

Your person and sacrifice will leave their
trace

As clear upon me as the shape of the hills

Around my birthplace. Now I must leave you to
your husband.

OTO.

Oh! You, madam.

DYN.

I'll tell you what I will do.

I will drink with you to the memory of my
husband,

Because I have been curt, because you are kind,

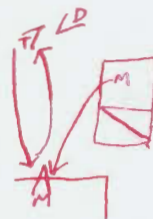
And because I'm extremely thirsty. And then we

will say

Good-bye and part to go to our opposite corruptions,
The world and the grave.

start out.

Teg. hand her bowl,
fill own. Oto to
oil lid, sit 2. Teg.
fill and back to B.
leave bottle center



TEG.

The climax to the vision.

DYN.

My husband, and all he stood for.

Teg. and Dyn.
face 1.

TEG.

Stands for.

DYN.

Stands for.

TEG.

Your husband.

DOTO.

The master.

all drink

DYN.

How good it is,

How it sings to the throat, purling with summer.

TEG.

It has a twin nature, winter and warmth

in one,

Moon and meadow. Do you agree?

DYN.

Perfectly;

A cold bell sounding in a golden month.

TEG.

Crystal in harvest.

DYN.

Perhaps a nightingale

Sobbing among the pears.

TEG.

In an old autumnal midnight.

DOTO.

Grapes.--Pardon. There's some more here.

TEG.

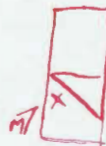
Plenty.

I drink to the memory of your husband.

DYN.

My husband.

Dot to bottle, X,
center



Dot to fill lid,
sit 2.

DOTO.

The master.

DYN.

He was careless in his choice of wines.

TEG.

And yet

Rendering to living its rightful poise

is not unimportant.

DYN.

A mystery's in the world

Where a little liquid, with flavour, quality,

and fume

Can be as no other, can hint and flute our

senses

As though a music played in harvest hollows

[And a movement was in the swathes of our memory]

Why should scent, why should flavour come

With such wings upon us? Parsley, for instance.

Dyn. sit center,
Send

TEG.

Seaweed.

DYN.

Lime trees.

DOTO.

Horses.

[TEG.

Fruit in the fire.]

DYN.

Do I know your name?

TEG.

Tegeus.

DYN.

That's very thin for you,

It hardly covers your bones. Something quite

different,

Altogether other. I shall think of it

presently.

TEG. ... of their voices, that they are

Darker vowels, perhaps.

DYN. I found the rest of the world to be

Yes, certainly darker vowels.

And your consonants should have a slight angle,

And a certain temperature. Do you know what

I mean?

It will come to me.

TEG.

Now your name--

DYN.

It is nothing

To any purpose. I'll be to you the She

In the tomb. You have the air of a natural-

historian

As though you were accustomed to handling

birds' eggs,

Or tadpoles, or putting labels on moths. [You see?

The genius of dumb things, that they are
nameless.

Have I found the seat of the weevil in human
brains?]

Our names. They make us broody; we sit and sit
To hatch them into reputation and dignity.
And then they set upon us and become despair,
Guilt and remorse. We go where they lead.

We dance
Attendance on something wished upon us by the
wife

Of our mother's physician. [But insects meet
and part

And put the woods about them, fill the dusk
And freckle the light and go and come without
A name among them, without the wish of a name
And very pleasant too.] Did I interrupt you?

Dot down on floor

TEG.

I forget. We'll have no names then.

DYN.

I should like

You to have a name too; if only for something

To remember. Have you still some wine in

your bowl?

To wine, top
center

DYN.

Not altogether.

TEG.

We haven't come to the end

By several inches. Did I splash you?

DYN.

It doesn't matter.

Well, here's to my husband's name.

TEG.

Your husband's name.

DOTO.

The master.

DYN.

It was kind of you to come.

TEG.

It was more than coming. I followed my

future here,

As we all do if we're sufficiently inattentive

And don't vex ourselves with questions; or do

I mean

Attentive? If so, attentive to what? Do I sound

Incoherent?

DYN.

You're wrong. There isn't a future here,

Not here, not for you.

TEG.

Your name's Dynamene.

all drink

Teg. up on center

DYN.

Who--Have I been utterly irreverent?

Are you--

Who made you say that? Forgive me the question,

But are you dark or light? I mean which shade

Of the supernatural? Or if neither, what

prompted you?

TEG.

Dynamene--

DYN.

No, but I'm sure you're the friend of nature,

It must be so, I think I see little Phoebuses

Rising and setting in your eyes.

DOTO.

They're not little Phoebuses,

They're hoodwinks, madam. Your name is on

your brooch.

No little Phoebuses to-night.

up, leave bowl
bottom center
A corner

DYN.

That's twice

You've played me a trick. Oh, I know practical

jokes

Are common on Olympus, but haven't we at all

Developed since the gods were born? Are gods

And men both to remain immortal adolescents?

How tiresome it all is.

TEG.

It was you, each time,

Who said I was supernatural. When did I

say so?

You're making me into whatever you imagine

And then you blame me because I can't live

up to it.

DYN.

I shall call you Chromis. It has a breadlike

sound.

Dyna. sit on l.

Teg. sit center
opp. Dyn.

I think of you as a crisp loaf.

TEG.

And now

You'll insult me because I'm not sliceable.

DYN.

I think drinking is harmful to our tempers.

TEG.

If I seem to be frowning, that is only because

I'm looking directly into your light: I must

look

Angrily, or shut my eyes.

DYN.

Shut them.—Oh,

You have eyelashes! A new perspective of you.

Is that how you look when you sleep?

TEG.

My jaw drops down.

DYN.

Show me how.

[TEG.

Like this.]

DYN.

It makes an irresistible

Moron of you. Will you waken now?

It's morning; I see a thin dust of daylight

Blowing on to the steps.

TEG.

Already? Dynamene,

You're tricked again. This time by the moon.

DYN.

Oh well,

Moon's daylight, then. Doto is asleep.

TEG.

Doto is asleep...

DYN.

Chromis, what made you walk about

In the night? What, I wonder, made you not
stay

Sleeping wherever you slept? Was it the
friction

Of the world on your mind? Those two are
difficult

To make agree. Chromis—now try to learn
To answer your name. I won't say Tegeus.

TEG.

And I

Won't say Dynamene.

DYN.

Not?

TEG.

It makes you real.

Forgive me, a terrible thing has happened. Shall I

Say it and perhaps destroy myself for you?
Forgive me first, or, more than that, forgive
Nature who winds her furtive stream all through
Our reason. Do you forgive me?

DYN.

I'll forgive
Anything, if it's the only way I can know
What you have to tell me.

TEG.

I felt us to be alone;
Here in a grave, separate from any life,
I and the only one of beauty, the only
Persuasive key to all my senses,
In spite of my having lain day after day
And pored upon the [sepals, corolla, stamen,
and bracts
Of the yellow bog-iris. Then my body
ventured



A step towards interrupting your perfection

of purpose

And my own renewed faith in human nature.

Would you have believed that possible?

DYN.

I have never

Been greatly moved by the yellow bog-iris. Alas,

It's as I said. This place is for none but

the spider,

Raven and worms, not for a living man.

TEG.

It has been a place of blessing to me. It will

always

Play in me, a fountain of confidence

When the world is arid. But I know it is

true

I have to leave it, and though it withers my

soul

Teg. up, into A



I must let you make your journey.

DYN.

No.

TEG.

Not true?

DYN.

We can talk of something quite different.

TEG.

Yes, we can!

Oh yes, we will! Is it your opinion

That no one believes who hasn't learned to
doubt?

Or, another thing, if we persuade ourselves

To one particular Persuasion, become

Sophist,

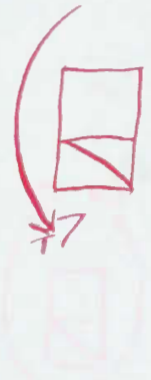
Stoic, Platonist, anything whatever,

Would you say that there must be areas of
soul

Dyn. up,
to him

They are close

Teg. break-into B
Down into C



Lying unproductive therefore, or dishonoured
Or blind?

DYN.

Do, I don't know.

TEG.

No. It's impossible

To tell. Dynamene, if only I had

Two cakes of pearl-barley and hydromel

I could see you to Hades, leave you with

your husband

And come back to the world.

DYN.

Ambition, I suppose,

Is an appetite particular to man.

What is your definition?

TEG.

The desire to find

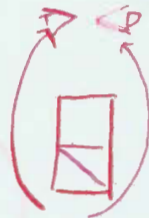
A reason for living.

Dyn. into D



Close again

Dyn. break, back
to A



Teg. up to B

DYN. ...

But then, suppose it leads,

As often, one way or another, it does,

to death.

TEG.

Then that may be life's reason. Oh, but how

Could I bear to return, Dynamene? The earth's

Daylight would be my grave if I had left you

In that unearthly night.

DYN. ...

O Chromis--

TEG. ...

Tell me,

What is your opinion of Progress? Does it,

for example,

Exist? Is there ever progression without

retrogression?

Therefore is it not true that mankind

close again

Teg. break,
down to C.



Dyn. to D.

Can more justly be said increasingly to Gress?

As the material improves, the craftsmanship

deteriorates

And honour and virtue remain the same. I love

you,

Dynamene.

DYN.

Would you consider we go round and round?

TEG.

We concertina, I think; taking each time

A larger breath, so that the farther we go out

The farther we have to go in.

DYN.

There'll come a time

When it will be unbearable to continue.

TEG.

Unbearable.



close in D.

DYN.

Perhaps we had better have something
To eat. The wine has made your eyes so quick
I am breathless beside them. It is
Your eyes, I think; [or your intelligence
Holding my intelligence up above you
Between its hands] Or the cut of your uniform.

TEG.

Here's a new roll with honey. In the gods'
names

Let's sober ourselves.

DYN.

As soon as possible.

TEG.

Have you

Any notion of algebra?

Dyn. to A.
sit low center
Teg. to steps
with bottle,
bring back
food



Teg. sit
middle center

both eat for
about 30
seconds

DYN.

We'll discuss you, Chromis.

We will discuss you, till you're nothing
but words.

TEG.

I? There is nothing, of course, I would rather
discuss,
Except—if it would be no intrusion—you,
Dynamene.

DYN.

No, you couldn't want to. But your birth-
place, Chromis,
With the hills that placed themselves in you
for ever

As you say, where was it?

TEG.

My father's farm at Pyxa.

DYN.

There? Could it be there?

TEG.

I was born in the hills

Teg. feet up

Between showers, a quarter of an hour

before milking time.

Do you know Pyxa? It stretches to the

crossing of two

Troublesome roads, and buries its back

in beechwood,

[From which come the white owls of our nights

And the mulling and cradling of doves in the

day.]

I attribute my character to those shadows

And heavy roots; and my interest in music

To the sudden melodious escape of the young

river

Where it breaks from nosing through the

cresses and kingcups.

That's honestly so.

DYN.

You used to climb about

Among the windfallen tower of Phrasidemus

Looking for bees' nests.

TEG.

What? When have I

Said so?

DYN.

Why, all the children did.

TEG.

Yes: but, in the name of light, how do

you know that?

DYN.

I played there once, on holiday.

TEG.

O Klotho, Lachesis and Atropos!

DYN.

It's the strangest chance:

I may have seen, for amoment, your boyhood.

TEG.

I may

Have seen something like an early flower

Something like a girl. If I only could

remember how I must

Have seen you. Were you after the short

white violets?

Maybe I blundered past you, taking your

look,

And scarcely acknowledged how a star

Ran through me, to live in the brooks of

my blood for ever.

[Or I saw you playing at hiding in the cave

Where the ferns are and the water drips.]

DYN.

I was quite plain and fat and I was usually
Hitting someone. I wish I could remember you.

I'm envious of the days and children who

saw you

Then. It is curiously a little painful

Not to share your past.

TEG.

How did it come

Our stars could mingle for an afternoon

So long ago, and then forget us or tease us

Or helplessly look on the dark high seas

Of our separation, while time drank

The golden hours? What hesitant fate is that?

DYN.

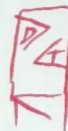
Time? Time? Why--how old are we?

TEG.

Young,

Thank both our mothers, but still we're older than
tonight

Teg. down on level with
Dyn. (love seat style)



And so older than we should be. Wasn't I born
In love with what, only now, I have grown to
meet?

I'll tell you something else. I was born
entirely

For this reason. I was born to fill a gap
In the world's experience, which had never
known

Chromis loving Dynamene.

DYN.

You are so
Excited, poor Chromis. What is it? Here you sit
With a woman who has wept away all claims
To appearance, unbecoming in her oldest
clothes,

With not a trace of liveliness, a drab

Of melancholy, entirely shadow without
A smear of sun. Forgive me if I tell you
That you fall easily into superlatives.

TEG.

Very well, I'll say nothing, then. I'll fume
With feeling.

DYN.

Now you go to the extreme. Certainly
You must speak. You may have more to say.

Besides

You might let your silence run away with you
And not say something that you should. And

how

Should I answer you then? Chromis, you boy,

I can't look away from y u. You use

The lamplight and the moon so skilfully,

So arrestingly, [in and around your furrows.

A humorous ploughman goes whistling to a team

Of sad sorrow, to and fro in your brow
And over your arable cheek,] Laugh for me.

Have you

Cried for women, ever?

TEG.

In looking about for you.

But I have recognized them for what they were.

DYN.

What were they?

TEG.

Never you: never, although

They could walk with bright distinction

into all men's

Longest memories, never you, by a hint

Or a faint quality, or at least not more

Than reflectively, [stars lost and uncertain

In the sea, compared with the shining salt,

the shiners,

The galaxies, the clusters, the bright grain

whirling

Over the black threshing-floor of space.]

Will you make some effort to believe that?

DYN.

No, no effort.

It lifts me and carries me. It may be wild

But it comes to me with a charm, like trust

indeed,

And eats out of my heart, dear Chromis,

Absurd, disconcerting Chromis. You make me

Fell I wish I could look my best for you.

I wish, at least, that I could believe myself

To be showing some beauty for you, to put

in the scales

Between us. But they dip to you, they sink

With masculine victory.

TEG.

Eros, no! No!

If this is less than your best, then never,
in my presence.

Be more than your less: never! If you should
bring

More to your mouth or to your eyes, a moisture
Or a flake of light, anything, anything fatally
More, perfection would fetch her unsparing rod
Out of pickle to flay me, and what would have
been love

Will be the end of me. O Dynamene,
Let me unload something of my lips' longing
On to yours receiving. Oh, when I cross
Like this the hurt of the little space between

us

I come a journey from the wrenching ice
To walk in the sun. That is the feeling.

Teg. up into A.

Teg. sit close to
Dyn.

DYN.

Chromis,

Where am I going? No, don't answer. It's

death

I desire, not you.

TEG.

Where is the difference? Call me

Death instead of Dhromis. I'll answer to

anything.

In death, but Chromis either way. Is it so?

Do you not love me, Dynamene?

DYN.

How could it happen?

I'm going to my husband. I'm too far on the

way

To admit myself to life again. Love's in

Hades.

Dyn. up into B.



TEG.

Also here. And here are we, not there

TEG. UP to her

In Hades. Is your husband expecting you?

DYN.

Surely, surely?

TEG.

Not necessarily. I,

Teg. into A.

If I had been your husband, would never dream

Of expecting you. I should remember your body

Descending stairs in the floating light, but

not

Descending in Hades. I should say 'I have

left

My wealth warm on the earth, and, hell, earth

needs it.'

'Was all I taught her of love,' I should say,

'so poor

That she will leave her flesh and become shadow?'



'Wasn't our love for each other' (I should
continue)

'Infused with life, and life infused with our
love?

Very well; repeat me in love, repeat me in life,
And let me sing in your blood for ever.'

DYN.

Stop, stop, I shall be dragged apart!
Why should the fates do everything to keep me
From dying honourably? They must have got
Tired of honour in Elysium. Chromis, it's
terrible

To be susceptible to two conflicting norths.
I have the constitution of a whirlpool.
Am I actually twirling, or is it just sensation?

TEG.

You're still; still as the darkness.

Dyn. into C.

DYN.

What appears

Is so unlike what is. And what is madness

To those who only observe, is often wisdom

To those to whom it happens.

TEG.

Are we compelled

To go into all this?

DYN.

Why, how could I return

To my friends? Am I to be an entertainment?

TEG.

That's for to-morrow. To-night I need to

kiss you,

Dynamene. Let's see what the whirlpool does

Between my arms; let it whirl on my breast.

O love,

Come in.

DYN.

I am there before I reach you; my body

Only follows to join my longing which

Is holding you already.--Now I am

All one again.

DYN.

I feel as the gods feel:

This is their sensation of life, not a man's:

Their suspension of immortality, to enrich

Themselves with time. O life, O death, O body,

O spirit, O Dynamene.

DYN.

O all

In myself; it so covets all in you,

My care, my Chromis. Then I shall be

Creation.

TEG.

You have the skies already;

Dyn. to Teg.

embrace

Out of them you are buffeting me with your
gales
Of beauty. Can we be made of dust, as they
tell us?
What! dust with dust releasing such a light
And such an apparition of the world
Within one body? A thread of your hair has
stung me.

Dyn. push

Why do you push me away?

DYN.

There's so much metal
About you. Do I have to be imprisoned
In an armoury?

TEG.

Give your hand to the backles and then
To me.

DYN.

Don't help; I'll do them all myself.

Teg. back toward
Dyn.

TEG.

O time and patience! I want you back again.

DYN.

We have a lifetime. O Chromis, think, think

Of that. And even unfastening a buckle

Is loving. And not easy. Very well,

You can help me. Chromis, what zone of

miracle

Did you step into to direct you in the dark

To where I waited, not knowing I waited?

TEG.

I saw

The lamplight. That was only the appearance

Of some great gesture in the bed of fortune.

I saw the lamplight.

DYN.

But here? So far from life?

drop armor in A.

What brought you near enough to see lamplight?

TEG.

Zeus, that reminds me.

DYN.

What is it, Chromis?

TEG.

I'm on duty.

[DYN.

Is it warm enough to do without your greaves?]

TEG.

Darling loom of magic, I must go back

To take a look at those boys. The whole business

Of guard had gone out of my mind.

DYN.

What boys, my heart?

TEG.

My six bodies.

DYN.

Chromis, not that joke again.

TEG.

No joke, sweet. To-day our city

Held a sextuple hanging. I'm minding the

bodies

Until five o'clock. Already I've been away

For half an hour.

DYN.

What can they do, poor bodies,

In half an hour, or half a century?

You don't really mean to go?

TEG.

Only to make

My conscience easy. Then, Dynamene,

No cloud can rise on love, no hovering thought

Fidget, and the night will be only to us.

Teg. to foot
of steps

DYN.

But if every half-hour---

TEG.

Hush, smile of my soul,

My spring, my sovereign: this is to hold your
eyes,

I sign my lips on them both: this is to keep
Your forehead--do you feel the claim of my
kiss

Falling into your thought? And now your throat
Is a white branch and my lips two singing
birds--

They are coming to rest. Throat, remember me
Until I come back in five minutes. Over all
Here is my parole: I give it to your mouth
To give me again before it's dry. I promise:
Before it's dry, or not long after.

DYN.

Run,

Run all the way. You needn't be afraid of
stumbling.

There's plenty of moon. The fields are blue.

Oh, wait,

Wait! My darling. No, not now: it will keep
Until I see you; I'll have it here at my lips.

Hurry.

TEG.

So long, my haven.

Teg. exit

DYN.

Hurry, hurry!

DOTO.

Yes, madam, hurry; of course. Are we there
Already? How nice. Death doesn't take
Any doing at all. We were gulped into Hades
As easy as an oyster.

DYN.

Doto!

DOTO.

Hurry, hurry,

Yes, madam.—But they've taken out all my
bones.

I haven't a bone left. I'm a Shadow: wonderfully shady

In the legs. We shall have to sit out
eternity, madam,

If they've done the same to you.

DYN.

You'd better wake up.

Dyn. to Doto

If you can't go to sleep again, you'd better
wake up.

Oh dear.—We're still alive, Doto, do you
hear me?

DOTO.

You must speak for yourself, madam. I'm
quite dead.

I'll tell you how I know. I feel

Invisible. I'm a wraith, madam; I'm only
Waiting to be wafted.

DYN.

If only you would be.

Do you see where you are? Look. Do you see?

Dyn. shake Doto

DOTO.

Yes. You're right, madam. We're still alive.

Isn't it enough to make you swear?

Here we are, dying to be dead,

Doto up

And where does it get us?

DYN.

Perhaps you should try to die

In some other place. Yes! Perhaps the air

here

Suits you too well. You were sleeping
very heavily.

DOTO.

And all the time you alone and dying.

Doto into D.

I shouldn't have. Has the corporal been
long gone,

Madam?

DYN.

He came and went, came and went,

You know the way.

DOTO.

Very well I do. And went

He should have, come he should never. Oh

dear, he must

Have disturbed you, madam.

DYN.

He could be said

To've disturbed me. Listen: I have something

to say to you.

DOTO.

I expect so, madam. Maybe I could have kept
him out

But men are in before I wish they wasn't.

I think quickly enough, but I get behindhand
With what I ought to be saying. It's a kind
of stammer

In my way of life, madam.

DYN.

I have been unkind,
I have sinfully wronged you, Doto.

DOTO.

Never, madam.

DYN.

Oh yes, I was letting you die with me,
Doto, without

Any fair reason. I was drowning you

In grief that wasn't your. That was wrong,

Doto.

DOTO.

But I haven't got anything against dying,

madam.

I may like the situation, as far as I like

Any situation, madam. Now if you'd said

mangling,

A lot of mangling, I might have thought

twice about staying.

We all have our dislikes, madam.

DYN.

I'm asking you

To leave me, Doto, at once, as quickly as

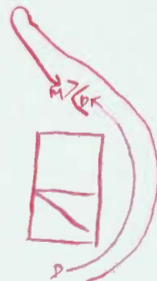
possible,

Now, before--now, Doto, and let me forget

My bad mind which confidently expected you

To companion me to Hades. Now good-bye,

Dyn. to Doto
usher into B.
Doto up steps
and down again



Good-bye.

DOTO.

No, it's not good-bye at all.

I shouldn't know another night of sleep,

wondering

How you got on, or what I was missing, come

to that,

I should be anxious about you, too. When

you belong

To an upper class, the netherworld might

come strange.

Now I was born nether, madam, though not

As nether as some. No, it's not good-bye,

madam.

DYN.

Oh Doto, go; you must, you must! And if

I seem

Without gratitude, forgive me. It isn't so,
It is far, far from so. But I can only
Regain my peace of mind if I know you're gone.

DOTO.

Besides, look at the time, madam. Where
should I go

At three in the morning? Even if I was to
think

Of going; and think of it I never shall.

DYN.

Think of the unmatchable world, Doto.

DOTO.

I do

Think of it, madam. And when I think of it,

what

Have I thought? Well, it depends, madam.

DYN.

I insist,

Doto sit Bend of 4.

Obey me! At once! Doto!

DOTO.

Here I sit.

DYN.

What shall I do with you?

DOTO.

Ignore me, madam.

I know my place. I shall die quite un-
obtrusive.

Oh look, the corporal's forgotten to take
his equipment.

DYN.

Could he be so careless?

DOTO.

I shouldn't hardly have thought so.

Poor fellow. They'll go and deduct it off
his credits.

I suppose, madam, I suppose he couldn't be

thinking

Of coming back?

DYN.

He'll think of these. He will notice

He isn't wearing them. He'll come; he is

sure to come.

DOTO.

Oh.

DYN.

I know he will.

DOTO.

Oh, Oh.

Doto up

Is that all for to-night, madam? May I go

now, madam?

DYN.

Doto! Will you?

DOTO.

Just you try to stop me, madam.

Sometimes going is a kind of instinct with me.

I'll leave death to some other occasion.

DYN.

Do,

Doto. Any other time. Now you must hurry.

I won't delay you from life another moment.

Oh, Doto, good-bye.

DOTO.

Good-bye. Life is unusual,

Isn't it, madam? Remember me to Cerberus.

DOTO.

You left something behind. Ye gods, what a

moon!

DYN.

Chromis, it's true; my lips are hardly dry.

Time runs again; the void is space again;

Space has life again; Dynamene has Chromis.

Doto on steps

Re-enter Teg.

Doto out

Dyn. into Teg.
arms in B.

TEG. ...

It's over.

DYN. ...

Chromis, you're sick. As white as wool.

Come, you covered the distance too quickly.

Rest in my arms; get your breath again.

TEG. ...

I've breathed one night too many. Why did

I see you,

Why in the name of life did I see you?

DYN. ...

Why?

Weren't we gifted with each other? O heart,

What do you mean?

TEG.

I mean that joy is nothing

But the parent of doom. [Why should I have

found

break, Teg. into C.

four constancy such balm to the world and yet
Find, by the same vision, its destruction
A necessity?] We're set upon by love
To make us incompetent to steer ourselves,
To make us docile to fate. I should have
known:

Indulgences, not fulfilment, is what the world
Permits us.

DYN.

Chromis, is this intelligible?

Help me to follow you. What did you meet
in the fields

To bring about all this talk? Do you still
love me?

TEG.

What good will it do us? I've lost a body.

DYN.

A body?

One of the six? Well, it isn't with them

you propose

To love me; and you couldn't keep it for ever.

Are we going to allow a body that isn't there

To come between us?

TEG.

But I'm responsible for it.

I have to account for it in the morning.

To Dyn. in B.

Surely

You see, Dynamene, the horror we're faced with?

The relatives have had time to cut him down

And take him away for burial. It means

A court martial. No doubt about the sentence.

I shall take the place of the missing man.

To be hanged, Dynamene! Hanged, Dynamene!

DYN.

No; it's monstrous! Your life is yours, Chromis.

TEG.

Anything but. That's why I have to take it.

At the best we live our lives on loan,

At the worst in chains. And I was never born

To have life. Then for what? To be had by it,

And so are we all. But I'll make it what it is,

By making it nothing.

DYN.

Chromis, you're frightening me.

What are you meaning to do?

TEG.

I have to die,

Dance of my heart, I have to die, to die,

To part us, to go to my sword and let it part

us.

I'll have my free will even if I'm compelled to it.

I'll kill myself.

up on center

DYN.

Oh, no! No, Chromis!

It's all unreasonable--no such horror

Can come of a pure accident. Have you

hanged?

How can they hang you for simply not being

somewhere?

How can they hang you for losing a dead man?

They must have wanted to lose him, or they

wouldn't

Have hanged him. No, you're scaring yourself

for nothing

And making me frantic.

TEG.

It's section six, paragraph

Three in the Regulations. That's my doom.

I've read it for myself. And, by my doom,

Since I have to die, let me die here, in love,

Dyn. fall on sword



Teg. on floor by Dyn.



Promoted by your kiss to tower, [in dying,
High above my birth.] For god's sake let me
die

On a wave of life, Dynamene, with an action
I can take some pride in. How could I settle
to death

Knowing that you last saw me stripped and
strangled

On a holly tree? Demoted first and then
hanged!

DYN.

Am I supposed to love the corporal
Or you? It's you I love, from head to foot
And out to the ends of your spirit. What
shall I do

If you die? How could I follow you? I
should find you

Dyn. up on center,
sit



Discussing me with my husband, comparing your

feelings,

Exchanging reactions. Where should I put

myself?

Or am I to live on alone, or find in life

Another source of love, in memory

Of Virilius and of you?

TEG.

Dynamene,

Not that! Since everything in the lives of

men

Is brief to indifference, let our love at

least

Echo and perpetuate itself uniquely

As long as time allows you. Though you go

To the limit of age, it won't be far to

contain me.

Teg. on center,
sit



DYN.

It will seem like eternity ground into
days and days.

TEG.

Can I be certain of you, for ever?

DYN.

But, Chromis,

Surely you said-----

TEG.

Surely we have sensed

Our passion to be greater than mortal? Must I
Die believing it is dying with me?

DYN.

Chromis,

You must never die, never! It would be
An offence against truth.

TEG.

I cannot live to be hanged.

DYN.

It would be an offence against life.

Give me my sword,

Dynamene. O Hades, when you look pale

You take the heart out of me. I could die

Without a sword by seeing you suffer. Quickly!

Give me my heart back again with your lips

And I'll live the rest of my ambitions

In a last kiss.

DYN.

Oh, no, no, no!

Give my blessing to your desertion of me?

Never, Chromis, never. Kiss you and then

Let you go? Love you, for death to have you?

Am I to be made the fool of courts martial?

Who are they who think they can discipline

souls

Right off the earth? What discipline is that?

Chromis, love is the only discipline

And we're the disciples of love. I hold you

to that?

Hold you, hold you.

TEG.

We have no chance. It's determined

In section six, paragraph three, of the

Regulations.

That has more power than love. It can

snuff the great

Candles of creation. It makes me able

To do the impossible, to leave you, to go

from the light

That keeps you.

DYN.

No!

TEG.

O dark, it does. Good-bye,

Teg. snatch sword,
to steps

My memory of earth, my dear most dear
Beyond every expectation. I was wrong
To want you to keep our vows existent
In the vacuum that's coming. It would make you
A heaviness to the world, when you should be,
As you are, a form of light. Dynamene, turn
Your head away. I'm going to let my sword
Solve all the riddles.

DYN.

Chromis, I have it! I know!

Virilius will help you.

TEG.

Virilius?

DYN.

My husband. He can be the other body.

Dyn. to End of 1.

TEG.

Your husband can?

DYN.

He has no further use

For what he left of himself to lie with us

here.

Is there any reason why he shouldn't hang

On your holly tree? Better, far better, he,

Than you who are still alive, and surely better

Than idling into corruption?

TEG.

Hang your husband?

Dynamene, it's terrible, horrible.

DYN.

How little you can understand. I loved

His life not his death. And now we can give

his death

The power of life. Not horrible: wonderful!

Isn't it so? That I should be able to feel

Teg. to A end
of 1.

He moves again in the world, accomplishing
Our welfare? It's more than my grief could
do.

TEG.

What can I say?

DYN.

That you love me; as I love him
And you. Let's celebrate your safety then.
Where's the bottle? There's some wine un-
finished in this bowl.

I'll share it with you. Now forget the fear
We were in; look at me, Chromis. Come away
From the pit you nearly dropped us in. My
darling,

I give you Virilius.

TEG.

Virilius

And all that follows.

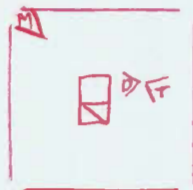
Teg. drop sword
on 1.

drink, Doto swing in
with bottle

DOTO.

The master. Both the masters.

Doto drink from
bottle



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