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THORP, JAMES ODELL. A Thesis Production of Cat on a Hot Tin Roof by Tennessee Williams. (1976) Directed by: Dr. David Batcheller. Pp 159.

The purpose of this thesis is to present a practical manuscript for directing a production of Cat on a Hot Tin Roof by Tennessee Williams. The thesis is divided into three sections, each with a separate purpose and in completion to allow for an exact record of the production.

The purpose of Part One is to explore the historical and critical aspects of the play. These aspects include background information, personal influences, character evaluations, stylistic considerations, setting, and justifications.

The purpose of Part Two is to provide an exact record of the production via the director's prompt book. Notations in Part Two include blocking, picturization, stage business, and tempo cues.

The purpose of the final part is to evaluate the production as an entire theatrical experience. This section includes achievement of the end result in comparison to the original concept, actor-director relationships, and an evaluation of audience reactions to the production.

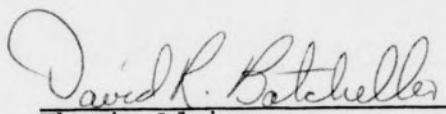
A THESIS PRODUCTION OF CAT ON A
" "
HOT TIN ROOF BY TENNESSEE
WILLIAMS

by
James Odell Thorp
"

A Thesis Submitted to
the Faculty of the Graduate School at
The University of North Carolina at Greensboro
in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
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Approved by


David R. Batcheller
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APPROVAL PAGE

This thesis has been approved by the following committee of the Faculty of the Graduate School at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro.

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PART ONE

ANALYSIS

A historical evaluation of the background of Cat on a Hot Tin Roof by Tennessee Williams is fundamental to a complete understanding of the play. The purpose of this portion of the analysis is to bring to light the various factors that become pertinent to a valid interpretation of the play. A factor such as the early life of Tennessee Williams may seem bland and unrelated to Cat on a Hot Tin Roof, but study reveals that a powerful force in the writing of the play comes from his past. The origins of the characters and the multitudes of the themes must be sifted out and scrutinized, lest the production dissipate into a maze of academic corners and crevices. And from the seemingly endless themes Williams' has inserted into the script, all must be acknowledged and considered as possible goals for a theatrical production. Finally, among the bulk of the historical material pertaining to the script, the issue of the rewritten third act arises. For several reasons the manuscript was altered by the playwright and these reasons must be discussed and accepted or rejected by a director. Thus with Cat on a Hot Tin Roof the historical background of the play not only directly affected the writing, but it now becomes germane to a valid interpretation in any production.

The Early Life of Tennessee Williams

The childhood of Tennessee Williams reads like so many of the plays he wrote; melodramatic and sensational. Williams was born in Columbus, Mississippi in 1914. His father, Cornelius Williams, was a traveling salesman for the International Shoe Company, and throughout the life of Tennessee (christened Thomas Lanier) he proved to be a very imposing figure. The nature of Cornelius Williams' job required that he travel a great deal and when his father was home, Williams reacted with awe and fear. This fear soon turned to disgust and hatred.¹ The relationship between father and son later reveals itself as a key theme in Cat on a Hot Tin Roof.

An introvert, because of a physical handicap, Williams was unable to go outside and play with the other children. He was pampered by his grandmother, mother, and sister and was the object of all of their attentions. It was then that Cornelius Williams noticed his son becoming too delicate and "sissified" for a young boy of his age. Cornelius dubbed him "Miss Nancy" and mocked his effeminate mannerisms. This bitter, sarcastic, and mocking father is later to become the principal character of Big Daddy in Cat on a Hot Tin Roof. But the immediate effect was more noticable. Tennessee turned into his own mind for escape, to a world of fantasy, private and isolated from the remainder of the world.²

¹Benjamin Nelson, Tennessee Williams, The Man and his Work (New York: Ivan Okolensky, Inc., 1961), p. 8.

²Ibid., p. 5.

At school he was an object of ridicule; at home he was unable to avoid the overpowering presence of his father, Cornelius.³

At the University of Washington, Tennessee Williams became interested in the theatre. He became an active member of the Mummers, a little theatre group, and for the first time began his career as a playwright. While it appeared that the life of Williams might become calm and allow him to complete his education, family problems again diverted his energies. Rose, the companion and sister, was going insane. Rather than attempt a cure, Cornelius ordered a frontal lobotomy performed. For this Tennessee Williams could never forgive his father.⁴ At the age of twenty-seven Williams enrolled in the University of Iowa. With the achievement of this degree from Iowa and the collapse of the Mummers, Williams moved south to New Orleans. The stay there proved to be a different time in the life of Tennessee Williams.

Williams' life style in New Orleans underwent a great change. In his effort to write for the stage, he immersed himself in a new environment. He began a Bohemian existence, drank a great deal, and lived among whores, homosexuals, pimps, and radicals, but his background could not be eradicated. "The Puritan and the Bohemian clashed and fused in

³Ibid., p. 8.

⁴Ibid., p. 30.

Tennessee Williams."⁵ This may be the reason he labels himself a "rebellious Puritan."

Tennessee Williams was fast approaching national recognition. At the age of twenty eight he entered and won an original playwriting contest sponsored by the Group Theatre in New York. Shortly thereafter he received a Rockefeller grant and went to New York to write. He enrolled at The New School for Social Research, where he became a pupil of Theresa Helburn and John Gassner. His first play of national recognition was Battle of Angels performed by the Theatre Guild in New York.⁶

Personal Influences Affecting Cat on a Hot Tin Roof

A complex network of outside influences converged to establish the foundations of the script. The first of these major influences was the South itself. Specifically with Cat on a Hot Tin Roof, this region left a deep mark imbedded in the style of Williams. The second major influence, as previously stated, was the elder Williams. The impression left on the mind of his son resulted in the creation of one of the strongest male characters in any of the Williams plays. The third factor influencing the creation of Cat on a Hot Tin Roof was Williams' admiration for D. H. Lawrence. The numerous parallels in writing style came about by a

⁵Ibid., p. 39.

⁶Ibid., p. 40.

conscious effort on the part of Williams to emulate his one time literary idol.

Tennessee Williams chose to set the play Cat on a Hot Tin Roof in the South for many reasons. The South meant many things to Williams as a boy and this was reflected in his effort to recapture those comfortable days in the South. But more important was the fact that Cat on a Hot Tin Roof could not have been set anywhere else. Southern heritage dictates much of the action of the play. The rural magnificence, the cotton fields, and the river must, of necessity, have been the immediate setting for Cat on a Hot Tin Roof. The Mississippi Delta is a powerful symbol of Williams' longing for his youth.⁷

Writing about the South may have been a status symbol for Williams. He strove to become known as a writer of the "Southern Renaissance." To fit the definition of a writer of this movement, the writer must, according to one author, have three qualities. The first is a regional loyalty to the old traditions; the second, one must write with a nostalgia for the old aristocratic life; finally, the writer must always be aware of the distinct character of the South.⁸ Williams spent twelve years of his life in the South and his

⁷Nancy Tischler, Tennessee Williams: Rebellious Puritan (New York: Citadel Press, 1961), p. 200.

⁸Signi Leanea Falk, Tennessee Williams (New York: Twayne Publishers, Inc., 1961), p. 30.

writing never failed to reflect his Southern heritage. Williams continued the Southern myth in deploring the loss of the old aristocracy, as was the case of Cat on a Hot Tin Roof, with Big Daddy and his dynasty and plantation. Replacing the old tradition, the emphasis is on gross monetary value. This is exemplified by Gooper, the materialistic and greedy son. In Cat on a Hot Tin Roof there is sympathy for the decaying aristocracy, while the businessman is a villan and a clown.⁹

But regardless of the motives, Williams had the mark of the region on his works. His women were all Southern, genteel women who had outlived their traditions. The individual was forgotten and out of place in a materialistic society. Williams made his men and women childish individuals who never went beyond the immediate and the physical.¹⁰ All of these traits are seen in Cat on a Hot Tin Roof, and in the majority of the works by Tennessee Williams.

To discuss the background of Cat on a Hot Tin Roof and neglect Cornelius Williams is impossible. His impact on the play is a marked one and yet an unusual one for Tennessee Williams. Cornelius Williams and Big Daddy are one and the same. Both are equal in coarseness, vulgarity,

⁹Ibid., p. 26.

¹⁰Ibid., p. 163.

and their immense passion for life.¹¹ However, Big Daddy was not the usual "Cornelius figure" in the writings of Williams.

Williams made it quite clear in his writings that he hated his father. But in Cat on a Hot Tin Roof a new twist is observed. In an interview Williams said that Cat on a Hot Tin Roof was definitely based on the relationship he had with his father. He stated that Cat on a Hot Tin Roof is a poetic apology for both of them, father and son. A father and son who were unable to come together in life, could in the theatre. In the play, father and son had communication and truth between them, something Williams never knew with his father.¹² But the play is more than a poetic apology. It marks the first time Williams was able to use his father in his art with any sympathy. The lifelong hatred Williams felt for the masculine tyrant finally softened after his father's death. This hatred turned to understanding, respect, and even love.¹³

Williams' personal difficulty was in indentifying himself with male sexuality. The root of the problem was in the psychic rejection of this father.¹⁴ They were unable

¹¹Nelson, Tennessee Williams, p. 3.

¹²Mike Steen, A Look at Tennessee Williams (New York: Hawthorne Books, Inc., 1969), p. 211.

¹³Tischler, Rebellious Puritan, p. 212.

¹⁴Fedder, Influence of D. H. Lawrence, p. 28.

to discuss or even approach communication. But on stage they are able to bridge the gap. The play is concerned with the essential worth of a human relationship, that of a father's love for his son.¹⁵ Eric Bentley suggests still another element to the play. He sees two people, a father and a son, in the midst of filth and incoherence, trying to be nice to each other.¹⁶ But the father and son relationship in Cat on a Hot Tin Roof is not perfect. In their attempt to find the answers to the problems that separate them, father and son lacerate each other, despite their deep love.¹⁷ These problems are ones Williams would have wanted to solve with his father: liquor, homosexuality, and understanding, the same problems confronting and disgusting Brick.

A third major influence on Cat on a Hot Tin Roof was novelist D. H. Lawrence. The playwright and the novelist had parallel family backgrounds. Both were products of incompatible marriages between puritanical women and loud, boisterous men. Both hated their fathers which resulted in over attention on the part of the mothers. Being near the mother, both men assimilated the mother's puritanical values, values against which both rebelled in later life. Both Lawrence and Williams suffered from childhood illness,

¹⁵Nelson, Tennessee Williams, p. 216.

¹⁶Falk, Tennessee Williams, p. 112.

¹⁷Nelson, Tennessee Williams, p. 205.

which caused each to become introverted. Lawrence was the literary idol of Williams and Williams adopted many devices used by Lawrence.¹⁸ Perhaps the most important of these borrowed devices, in reference to Cat on a Hot Tin Roof, is the subject of sex.

William Becker, writing for "The Hudson Review", gives credit for the sex in Cat on a Hot Tin Roof to Lawrence. "This is a play about the problem of truth, and sex is the peg it is hung upon." He goes on to state the peg (sex) is a Lawrencean device and the characters come from Lawrence.¹⁹ Both writers use the same symbolic terms to describe their characters; the fox, the moth, and the mammoth. To elaborate, the fox embodies the flesh or the sensual. The moth represents the conscience or the spirit, while the mammoth is bourgeois civilization.²⁰ In Cat on a Hot Tin Roof a clear division of these symbols exists. Big Daddy, Maggie, and Big Mama are all classified as foxes. Their major concerns are of the flesh. Brick is the moth, Puritan in concept, and guilt-ridden in life. The mammoth figures of the play are Gooper and Sister Woman. Their primary concern is money, and it is quite obvious family ties have no precedent over money.²¹

¹⁸Falk, Tennessee Williams, p. 165.

¹⁹Fedder, Influence of D. H. Lawrence, p. 98.

²⁰Ibid., p. 19.

²¹Ibid., p. 18.

Much of the origin of Cat on a Hot Tin Roof comes from a short story entitled "Three Players of a Summer Game." Written by Williams in his early life, "Three Player of a Summer Game" adds three very important aspects to the play. The first contribution taken from the short story is the theme of the deterioration of a young man by alcohol and the increasing domination of his wife. But more importantly, Williams uses the same two characters from the short story and puts them on the stage. Brick and Margaret Pollitt, with the addition of a family, become the major figures of Cat on a Hot Tin Roof. To understand the play, therefore, one must examine the themes and the character relations of the short story.

"Three Players of a Summer Game" like the play, takes place on the Mississippi Delta. A wealthy young plantation owner aids a young widow whose husband has just died of a brain tumor. Brick Pollitt soon takes the widow as his mistress and in the course of the story undergoes a change. He begins drinking heavily to cover "something" in his past, and his stature gradually deteriorates. While this occurs, his wife Margaret becomes the stronger figure. This role reversal is the same as that used in Cat on a Hot Tin Roof. Brick is gradually succumbing to liquor while Maggie begins to dominate the relationship.²²

²²Falk, Tennessee Williams, p. 102.

Brick Pollitt was a character first conceived by Tennessee Williams for "Three Players of a Summer Game." Later Williams expanded his role to meet the requirements of a full-blown stage character. In the story Brick is described as a young Delta planter, attractive and wealthy. He was a celebrated athlete but was unable to continue his athletic career.²³ Obviously Williams liked the character enough to make only minor changes. Brick in Cat on a Hot Tin Roof is now the son of a wealthy planter, still a celebrated athlete and due to an injury had to leave professional football.

Many of the plot devices used in "Three Players of a Summer Game" which relate directly to the character in the short story have been expanded and incorporated into the play. An episode goes as follows:

Late one evening when he was making one of his crazy dashes across the lawn with an imaginary football hugged against his belly, he tripped over a wicket and sprawled on the lawn²⁴

In Cat on a Hot Tin Roof the episode is expanded, though the basic concept is intact. Brick is in a leg cast after falling over a hurdle while reliving one of his past football runs.²⁵ Another example of a repeated device is the

²³Tennessee Williams, Hard Candy (New York: New Directions, 1954), p. 13.

²⁴Ibid., p. 32.

²⁵Tennessee Williams, Cat on a Hot Tin Roof, p. 16.

cause of Brick's use of liquor. In both story and play something happens that makes the character turn to drink as a means of escape. In "Three Players of a Summer Game," the incident was the mercy killing of the young doctor. While in Cat on a Hot Tin Roof the parallel event was the suicide of Skipper, a young man in love with Brick who couldn't reconcile himself to the situation. Williams describes the speed with which Brick's life changes in this passage from "Three Players of a Summer Game."

Brick seemed to be throwing his life away as if it were something disgusting that he had suddenly found in his hands. This self-disgust came upon him with all the abruptness and violence of a crash on a highway. But what had Brick crashed into?²⁶

Williams uses yet another element that has its origin in "Three Players of a Summer Game. The clasping of hands, common to both play and short story, is a symbolic representation of love. In the play, Brick's guilt stems from holding Skipper's hand between the twin beds at night during away football games. In the short story, it is this same clasping of hands that epitomizes Brick's love. Having just jabbed a needle into the arm of the suffering doctor, Brick "comforts" the young widow, as Williams explains in this passage from the short story:

She was his mistress, but that was not Brick's reason. His reason had something to do with that

²⁶Tennessee Williams, Hard Candy, p. 13.

chaste interlocking of hands at their first time together²⁷

Margaret, like Brick, was a character first conceived for "Three Players of a Summer Game." The transition from short story to play resulted in a vast change. The widow and the orphan daughter disappeared leaving Brick and Maggie. In both the story and the play, Maggie is the dominant figure in the marriage with Brick. In the short story Williams created a character with an aggressive appearance:

Margaret Pollitt lost her pale, feminine prettiness and assumed in its place something more impressive -- a firm and rough textured sort of handsomness that comes out of her indefinite chrysalis²⁸

In Cat on a Hot Tin Roof, Williams expanded this aggressive figure into an animal form. He gave her the nickname "Maggie the Cat", and shows her "claws" fighting for the property she feels belongs to Brick. In the short story, the woman was fighting to keep her husband. Brick had fallen out of love with Maggie and in love with liquor.²⁹ True to form, Brick in Cat on a Hot Tin Roof also turned to the bottle, and Maggie struggles to get him back.

²⁷Ibid., p. 17.

²⁸Ibid., p. 14.

²⁹Ibid., p. 13.

Williams Relates To His Characters

During the writing of the play Williams established personal relationships with some of the characters in Cat on a Hot Tin Roof. Personal, emotional, and psychological reasons made Williams create his characters, but some reasons for various characters were stronger than merely creating a role for the stage. To understand how he felt about his characters, and why, is necessary if one is to understand the end result. Through various rewrites, Williams would change the characters as he sympathized with them more and more during the creation of the play. Big Daddy, Brick, and Maggie were special creations to Tennessee Williams.

Big Daddy is unique to the list of characters created by Williams as the majority of the strong characters were women. But Big Daddy is the exception to the claim that Williams' men never have the reality or depth that his women do.³⁰ Big Daddy was more than just a character. He was a retrospective study of the playwright's father. It was only after some years had passed and the hatred faded, that Williams could write this play. With the resentment gone, Williams displayed a deep admiration for his father that had never been seen.³¹ But something unusual happened. Williams was unable to cope with the strength of the character he created. Deep in his mind was fear, fear of the

³⁰Tischler, Rebellious Puritan, p. 127.

³¹Ibid., p. 200.

lusty, loud, masculine father. The strength of the memory which marks his own past life was enough to make Williams eliminate Big Daddy from the final act of the play. When this figure became strong enough to stimulate distrust and apprehension, it vanished from the original version.³²

Brick Pollitt is the sympathetic figure for Tennessee Williams. With Brick, Williams associates his own father-son problem of a lack of understanding. Because of the hint of homosexuality within the play, Williams relates his own figure with Brick's.³³ But for Williams, the character of Brick is his tragic figure also. Brick's high moral standards are so inflexible that he can't discuss his relationship with Skipper. Williams says that Brick's "moral paralysis" is the basis of this personal tragedy.³⁴ Brick, in essence, is the "rebellious Puritan" on the stage, as Williams is in life.

The character of Maggie the Cat changed during the writing of the play. At first conception she was a character who was sexually aggressive and dominated her man. As the man degenerates the woman displays more power and strength.³⁵ Maggie was the Williams counterpart of the

³²Nelson, Tennessee Williams, p. 216.

³³Tischler, Rebellious Puritan, p. 214.

³⁴Falk, Tennessee Williams, p. 167.

³⁵Ibid., p. 169.

Lawrencean sex-oriented male. As far as she is concerned lovemaking is her major reason for existence.³⁶ But something occurred during the writing of the script. Williams described the change saying " . . . it so happened that 'Maggie the Cat' had become steadily more charming to me as I worked on her characterization."³⁷ The artist fell in love with his own creation. This infatuation was so obvious that even the director of the first production, Elia Kazan, noticed it and vocalized the observation that Williams had indeed fallen in love with Maggie.³⁸

The Problem Of Act Three

The writing of the third act of Cat on a Hot Tin Roof is an unusual story. The original play was published, but due to the bizzare nature of the third act, suggestions were made to the playwright by Kazan. Williams weighed his motives against his art and alterations were made in the script, but not before a great deal of discussion.

The outstanding feature of the original third act was the absence of Big Daddy. Following Act Two, Big Daddy did not reappear. He was heard, however, in the form of cries of pain from offstage. Maggie declared her pregnancy, was

³⁶Ibid., p. 95.

³⁷Tischler, Rebellious Puritan, p. 207.

³⁸Falk, Tennessee Williams, p. 110.

confronted by Gooper and Mae, when Big Mama suddenly returned seeking the morphine left by Dr. Baugh. Groaning cries from offstage implied that Big Daddy was in severe pain. With this, the play concluded. It was evident that Brick and Big Daddy could reach no understanding about Brick's problem and the play ended with no resolution of the major conflict.

Elia Kazan was enthusiastic about the script, but he was not pleased with the third act. Yet Williams had great respect for Kazan and regarded highly his comment along with his talent:

I wanted Kazan to direct the play, and though his suggestions were not made in the form of an ultimatum, I was fearful that I would lose his interest if I didn't re-examine the script from his point of view. I did.³⁹

There were three basic faults Kazan found in the third act.

Williams summarizes Kazan's thoughts by saying:

One, he felt that Big Daddy was too vivid and important a character to disappear from the play, except as an offstage cry after the second act curtain; two, he felt that the character of Brick should undergo some apparent mutation as a result of the virtual vivisection that he undergoes in his interview with his father in Act Two. Three, he felt the character of Margaret, 'while he understood that I sympathized with her and like her myself', should be, if possible, more clearly sympathetic to an audience.⁴⁰

³⁹Tischler, Rebellious Puritan, p. 208.

⁴⁰Ibid., p. 207.

But Williams did not agree with Kazan's suggestions:

I didn't want Big Daddy to reappear in Act Three and I felt the moral paralysis of Brick was a root thing in his tragedy, and to show a dramatic progression would obscure the meaning of that tragedy in him . . . I don't believe that a conversation, however revelatory, ever effects so immediate a change in the heart or conduct of a person in Brick's state of spiritual disrepair.⁴¹

Williams had a clear choice to make. He could leave the script as it was originally written or he could re-write the script to be more acceptable to an audience. But Williams was of the philosophy that true art reaching a few people was not as good as commercially successful art reaching many people. Thus for the sake of the box office, Williams rewrote the third act.

Several changes came about as a result of Kazan's suggestions. In the new version that was produced on Broadway, a storm was added to the third act, symbolic of the violent passions on the stage. Secondly, Brick and Maggie talked longer than they did in the original script. The added element of the conversation was that Maggie says she loves Brick and Brick hints that he is developing love for her. Plainly an alliance is formed between them, apparent when Brick comes to Maggie's defense against Cooper's accusations. But the most important change was

⁴¹Nelson, Tennessee Williams, p. 221.

the reappearance of Big Daddy. Coming onstage wearing a robe given him by Brick and Maggie, symbolizing a new bond between them, Big Daddy asked for his lawyer in order to re-write his will in favor of Brick. He then exited with Big Mama.⁴² Though these changes brought success to the show, they also brought the following remarks from Williams:

Some day when time permits I would like to write a piece about the influence, its dangers and its values, of a powerful and highly imaginative director upon the development of a play, before and during production.⁴³

The origins and backgrounds of Cat on a Hot Tin Roof are scattered and varied. The setting of the play comes from the fact that Williams knew and loved the South and had several beliefs he wanted to voice. The major character of the play, Big Daddy, comes from the life of the playwright. Williams used his father as the model to create the strongest male character he ever penned. While his past had a large impact on the play, Williams wrote with a definite influence from D. H. Lawrence. The sensual overtones and themes are traits left on the playwright by the English novelist. Using an earlier work as a foundation, Williams expands a major concept. From his short story "Three Players of a Summer Game", Williams draws a theme of role reversal and the characters of Brick and Margaret Pollitt. Finally, the

⁴²Tischler, Rebellious Puritan, p. 209.

⁴³Falk, Tennessee Williams, p. 177.

last major influence is Elia Kazan. Stressing commercial success, Kazan suggested changes in Act Three that have gained a Pulitzer Prize and much success. Thus it was from these random sources that Williams drew the material from which he wrote Cat on a Hot Tin Roof.

Stylistic Considerations

A major contradiction arises when approaching a theatrical style, in that loyalty to the playwright may not result in a consistent and moving theatre experience. Williams, in a section titled "Notes to the Designer," asks for walls that mysteriously fade out of sight from the audience. He frankly states, "The set should be far less realistic than I have so far implied" ⁴⁴ He continues on with other specifications, all of which lead one to believe that there is an overwhelming expressionistic aspect to the entire script, that the entire production is observed through a telescope lens that is out of focus. ⁴⁵

In the opinion of this writer, it is upon this point of stylistic approach that the playwright is unaware of his own strengths and weaknesses. With a vast departure from naturalism, Kazan chose to call attention to a created

⁴⁴Williams, Cat on a Hot Tin Roof, p. xiv.

⁴⁵Ibid, p. xiv.

tableau, similar to a still frame in a motion picture.⁴⁶ One need only remember the story told by Eric Bentley about opening night of the production, in order to gauge the effectiveness of such a theatrical device. He recalls that his neighbor leaned over and whispered, "Why, it's a Michelangelo," after one such tableau.⁴⁷ Such a conception can in no way add or even maintain the intensity necessary if Cat on a Hot Tin Roof is to be considered effective. The greater the deviation from a naturalistic approach, the weaker the script becomes. For this reason, the direction will follow a naturalistic vein, yet leave the possibility open for a moment that can be reinforced by way of a theatrical device.

Along the realistic continuum of theatre arts, Cat on a Hot Tin Roof falls in the area of realism, yet it contains other elements. Many of the lines are intensely melodramatic and severely theatrical. The majority of such lines are spoken by Margaret, for example in Act I, she states, "Feel embarrassed! But don't continue my torture. I can't live on and on under these conditions."⁴⁸ Such a line could ruin a play if not approached from a realistic attitude, and with sincerity on the part of the actress.

⁴⁶Eric Bentley, What is Theatre (New York: Antheneum, 1968), p. 225.

⁴⁷Ibid.

⁴⁸Williams, Cat on a Hot Tin Roof, p. 32.

A director must be aware of this and decide from the very beginning just exactly what style he is working in. Williams brings the characters in his play to a point of crisis in their lives, and it must be dealt with as such.

The humor of Cat on a Hot Tin Roof is a very pertinent point when discussing stylistic consideration. Although various situations in the play are humorous, the comedy must never be played with conscious effort. The moments of humor will be successful only if handled seriously by the actors, and their awareness of the situation and circumstance will create the comic moment. The characters of Gooper and Mae should precipitate laughter in the audience, but the actors playing these roles can contribute to the ensemble and to the realistic approach only if they are sincere in their efforts. If the laughs are consciously worked for, they will be destroyed as well as any believability in the character.

The Setting

Several elements of setting become apparent when analyzing the script. The most tangible and obvious element is the bedroom where the action of the play occurs. Complete with ghosts and the odor of "mendacity", the room must create a mood that is both unique and necessary. Beyond the walls of the room, Williams has chosen to depict a dying culture,

the plantation family in the mid 1950's. While the majority of the country was stable, this small segment of the South was decaying and twisting with social upheaval. Thus combining the immediate physical aspects with the various social ramifications of the time, the setting becomes a critical function of the play.

Of the various aspects of setting, the most specific is the room in which the action occurs. By using the bedroom, Williams forces the play to focus on the vehicle of procreation, the bed, emphasizing the concept that the end result of marriage is children. For Brick and Maggie the bed is an obstacle, for Gooper and Mae a necessity. Yet this particular bedroom suggests still more. Something pervades the place, something more exists. Williams says of the room:

In other words, the room must evoke some ghosts; it is gently and poetically haunted by a relationship that must have involved a tenderness that was uncommon.⁴⁹

When considering the setting there are several elements combined to create a specific mood desired by the playwright. Mood is established through the evocation of a simple device, that of temperature. By adding this element, Williams creates an atmosphere that is stifling, sweaty, and irritable. When it is hot, tempers are short and arguments ensue. A summer evening provides a humid

⁴⁹Ibid., p. xiii.

environment where flashpoints are easily reached. The imagery of Maggie as a cat pacing on a hot tin roof gives the unmistakable impression of her state of mind and the tenacity with which she is determined to fight.

One aspect of mood, that relates directly to the time of the play, is the fact that there is inner turmoil in seeming security. The 1950's brought destruction and decay to a monarch such as Big Daddy and his kingdom, while the rest of the country saw technological advancement, growth, and security. Politically, the country was solid and stable, yet for those of the "Old South" there was decay and inevitable change. Thus, when one speaks of mood in Cat on a Hot Tin Roof the image of a house that is falling, a family torn, and a remnant of a bygone era meeting its termination is symbolized. By depicting the decline and decay of the "Old South", Williams focuses on what was at one time the stronghold of social heirachy and monetary supremacy. Only on a plantation of the Mississippi Delta could the social patterns of an age gone by, be shown in its truest form. The struggle for wealth becomes heightened when that wealth includes fertile delta land, magnificent cotton fields and the romantic opulence of a Southern plantation.

Another factor relating directly to the Southern mystique is Williams' use of the Southern aristocracy as contrasted to those who are obviously outside that fading

class. Such a contrast is clearly depicted in the relationship between Margaret and Mae. Margaret was not born into the Southern aristocracy and her lack of material wealth is her primary motivation for wanting it. Conversely, Mae was of some stature in the eyes of the upper class of the South although her wealth came from illegal stock manipulation by her father. However, the most important aspect is the hypocrisy and artificial facade Williams depicts. It is this corrosive effect of the materialistic ethic of the South that becomes a pertinent theme in the play.

The social values of the time become crucial if the play is to maintain relevancy and dramatic impact. Written as a contemporary drama in 1955, there are certain factors that require it to maintain that same dimension. The hidden taboo surrounding the possibility of a homosexual relationship between Brick and Skipper is dramatically cathartic if related to the social codes of 1955, whereas a contemporary production would seem incongruous and trivial. The relatively conservative, moralistic attitude of the 1950's would seem lost and anachronistic if Cat on a Hot Tin Roof were attempted in such an updated version. Also the romantic, or subtly melodramatic language is heightened if the play is produced as written in the 1950's. Therefore, this director will strive for consistency by keeping the play in period and adjusting fashion, make up, and hair styles accordingly.

Justification

The script Cat on a Hot Tin Roof was chosen for several reasons. The play met the basic criterion established for thesis production in that it is contemporary and that the cast is not excessively large. The play has won a Pulitzer Prize and is well known, an obvious asset when considering the box office. As it is a popular script, the play lends itself to rounding out of a theatrical season. Furthermore, Cat on a Hot Tin Roof is considered by many critics as the best of the Williams plays and the most complete in its characterizations. The roles are all challenging enough to justify an institutional production of the play, simply as an excellent learning process for actors and the production can be done without great expense and a large budget.

The production will be done in three sided arena, a flexible form of the familiar arena stage. This type of staging lends itself particularly well to the choice of script. As the play is contemporary, the fact that the audience is so close to the acting area is an asset. The realistic intensity of the action in the play is heightened by the fact that the actors are surrounded by the audience. Subtle movements are more easily created in this type of staging than on the proscenium stage. Slight underplaying will reduce the seeming awkwardness of some of the lines.

The intimacy of the actor-audience relationship permits the actor to respond more readily to the moods of the audience. While, conversely, the audience should feel like a participant instead of a mere spectator.

[The following text is extremely faint and illegible, appearing to be a series of paragraphs or a script. It contains several lines of text that are difficult to decipher due to low contrast and blurring.]

PART TWO

PROMPT BOOK

Act I

FIGURE 1.

LIGHTS.

MAGGIE ENTERS DR, CROSSES DL TO MIRROR, EXAMINING A SPOT ON HER DRESS.

MARGARET. Brick! Brick - one of those no-neck monsters hits me with a hot buttered biscuit, so I have t' change!

BRICK ANSWERS FROM UL BATHROOM.

BRICK. What'd you say, Maggie? Water was on s'loud I couldn't hear ya

MARGARET. Well, I - just remarked that - one of the no-neck monsters messed up m'lovely white dress, so I got t' change.

BRICK ENTERS FROM UL BATHROOM.

BRICK. Why d'ya call Gooper's kiddies no-neck monsters?

MARGARET. Because they've got no necks! Isn't that a good enough reason?

BRICK. Don't they have any necks?

MARGARET. None visible.

BRICK EXITS TO UL BATHROOM.

Their fat little heads are set on their fat little bodies without a bit of connection.

TRIXIE ENTERS UR, SCREAMING, CHASED BY DIXIE. BOTH EXIT UL.

Hear them? Hear them screaming? I don't know where their voice boxes are located, since they've got no necks. I tell you, I got so nervous at the table tonight, I thought I'd throw back my head and utter a howl you could hear across the Arkansas border.

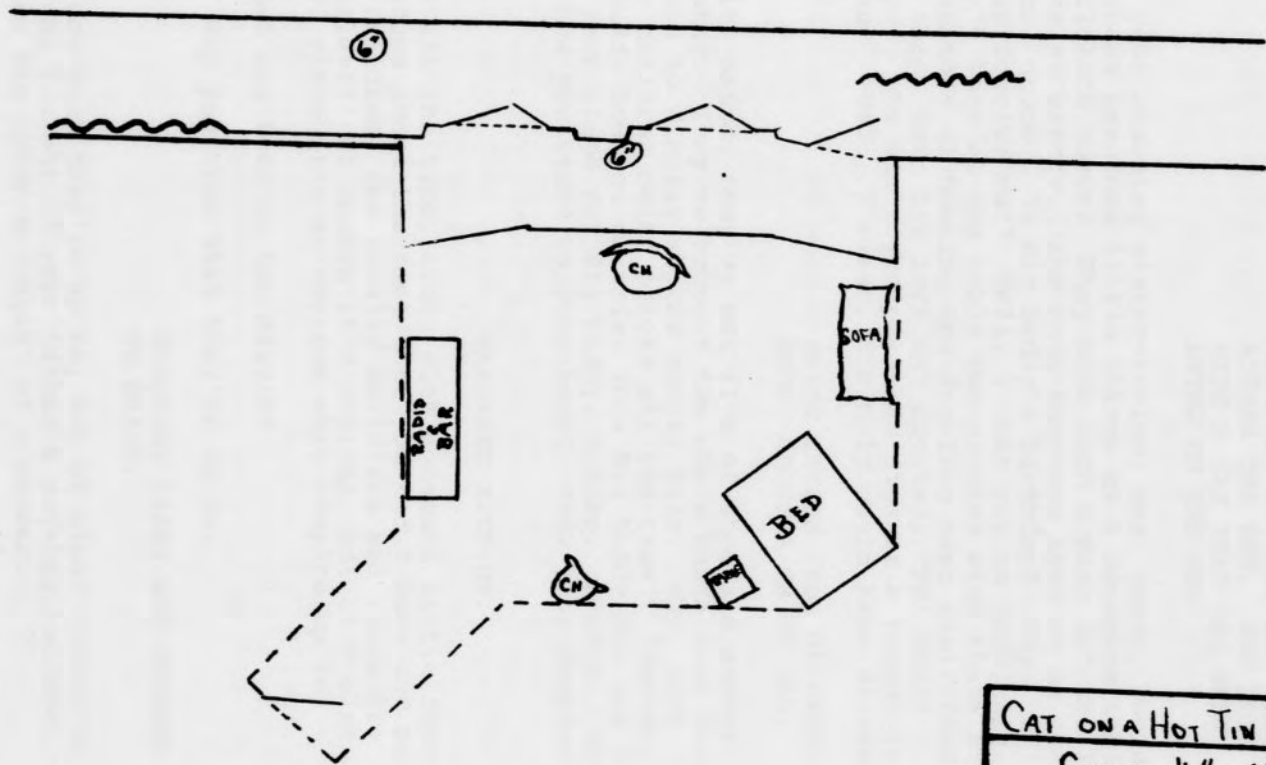


FIGURE 1

MARGARET CROSSES DL, FLOPS
ACROSS THE BED. SHE TOYS
WITH A FAN THAT HAS BEEN
LYING ON THE BED.

I said to your charming sister-in-law, Mae- honey, couldn't you feed those precious little things at a separate table with an oilcloth cover? They make such a mess an' the lace cloth looks so pretty. She made enormous eyes at me and said, "Ohhh, noooo! On Big Daddy's birthday? Why, he would never forgive me!" Well, I want you to know, Big Daddy hasn't been at the table two minutes with those five no-neck monsters slobbering and drooling over their food before he threw down his fork an' shouted, "Fo' God's sake, Gooper, why don't you put them pigs at a trough in the kitchen?" Well, I swear, I simply could have di-ied!

BRICK ENTERS FROM UL BATH-
ROOM, CROSSES SR TO BAR.

Think of it, Brick, they've got five of them and number six is coming. They've brought the whole bunch down here like animals to display at the county fair. Why, they have those children doin' tricks all the time! "Junior, show Big Daddy how you do this- show Big Daddy how you do that; say your piece fo' Big Daddy, Sister. Brother, show Big Daddy how you stand on your head! Show your dimples, Sugar!"

MARGARET SITS UP.

It goes on all the time, along with constant little remarks and innuendoes about the fact that you and I have not produced any children, are totally childless and therefore totally useless! Of course it's comical, but it's also disgusting, since it's so obvious what they're up to.

BRICK. What are they up to, Maggie?

MARGARET. Why you know what they're up to.

MARGARET RISES AND CROSSES
TO BRICK.

I'll tell you what they're up to, boy of mine! - they're up to cutting you out of your father's estate, and now that we know Big Daddy's - dyin' of - cancer.

BRICK. Do we? Do we know Big Daddy's dyin' of cancer?

MARGARET. Got the report today.

BRICK. Oh.

MARGARET. Yep, got the report just now.

MARGARET CROSSES UR AND GETS
HER SKIRT AND BLOUSE.

It didn't suprise me, Baby, I recognized the symptoms soon as we got here last spring, and I'm willin' to bet you that Brother Man and his wife were pretty sure of it, too. That more than likely explains why their usual summer migration to the coolness of the Great Smokies was passed up this summer in favor of hustlin' down here ev'ry whip-stitch with their whole screamin' tribe! And that's why so many allusions have been made to Silver Hill lately. And you know what Silver Hill is? Place that's famous for treatin' alcholics an' dope-fiends in the movies!

BRICK. I'm not in the movies.

MARGARET. No, and you don't take dope. Otherwise, you're a perfect candidate for Silver Hill, Baby, and that's where they aim to ship you.

SHE CROSSES DL TO THE BED.

Then Brother Man could get a-hold of the purse strings and dole out remittances to us, maybe get power-of-attorney and sign checks for us and cut off our credit, wherever, whenever he wanted! How'd you like that, Baby? Well, you've been doin' just about ev'rything in your power to bring it about, you've just been doin' ev'rything you can think of to aid and abet them in this scheme of theirs. Quittin' work, devotin' yourself to the occupation of drinkin'! Breakin' your ankle last night on the high school athletic field: doin' what? Jumpin' hurdles! At two or three in the mornin'! Just fantastic! Got in the paper. Clarksdale Register carried a nice little item about it, human interest story about a well-known former athlete stagin' a one-man track meet on the high school athletic field last night-

BRICK MOVES UR TO DOUBLE
DOORS, FACES OFF-RIGHT.

but was slightly out of condition and didn't clear the first hurdle! Brother Man Gooper claims he exercised his influence t' keep it from goin' out over AP and UP an' every other damn P!

MARGARET CROSSES ONE STEP
TO BRICK.

But, Brick- you still have one big advantage-

BRICK. Did you say something, Maggie?

MARGARET. Big Daddy dotes on you, Honey. And he can't stand Brother Man and Brother Man's wife, that monster of fertility, Mae- she's downright odious to him!

MARGARET CROSSES TO BRICK.

Know how I know? By little expressions that flicker over his face when that woman is holdin' fo'th on one of her choice topics- such as- how she refused twilight sleep when the twins were delivered! Because she feels motherhood's an experience that a woman ought to experience fully - in order to fully appreciate the "wonder and beauty of it!" HAH!

SHE CROSSES DR TO BAR, GETS
AN ICE CUBE FROM THE ICE
BUCKET AND RUBS IT OVER HER
ARMS AND SHOULDERS.

an' how she made Brother Man come in an' stand beside her in the delivery room so he would not miss out on the "wonder and beauty of it" either! - producin' those no-neck monsters! Big Daddy shares my attitude toward those two! As for me, well,- I give him a laugh now and then and he tolerates me. In fact- I sometimes suspect that Big Daddy harbors a little unconscious "lech" for me.

BRICK TURNS, FACING MAGGIE.

BRICK. What makes you think Big Daddy has a lech for you, Maggie?

MARGARET. Why, he always drops his eyes down my body when I'm talkin' to him, drops his eyes to my boobs an' licks his old chops!

BRICK STARTS SL.

BRICK. That kind of talk is disgusting.

MARGARET. Did anyone ever tell you that you're an ass-aching Puritan, Brick?

MARGARET PLAYFULLY THROWS THE
ICE CUBE AT BRICK, HITTING
HIM ON THE BACK.

I think it's mighty fine that that ole fellow, on the doorstep of death, still takes in my shape with what I think is deserved appreciation!

MARGARET CROSSES DL TO THE MIRROR, WHILE BRICK RETURNS TO THE BAR AND REPLENISHES HIS DRINK.

Yes, sir, Baby, you should have been at the supper-table. Y'know, Big Daddy, bless his ole sweet soul, he's the dearest ole thing in the world, but he does hunch over his food as if he preferred not to notice anything else. Well, Mae an' Gooper were side by side at the table, directly across from Big Daddy, watchin' his face like hawks as they jawed and jabbered about the cuteness and brilliance of the no-neck monsters! And the no-neck monsters were ranged around the table, some in high-chairs and some on the Books of Knowledge, all in fancy little paper caps in honor of Big Daddy's birthday, and all through dinner, well, I want you to know that Brother Man and his wife never once, for one moment, stopped exchanging pokes an' pinches an' kicks an' signs an' signals!

BRICK RESTS HIS CRUTCH AGAINST THE BAR AS HE RUBS A TOWEL THROUGH HIS HAIR AND AGAINST HIS FOREHEAD.

Even Big Mama, bless her ole sweet soul, she isn't th' quickest an' brightest thing in the world, she finally noticed at last, an' said, "Gooper, what are you an' Mae makin' all these signs at each other about?" I swear't God, I nearly choked on my chicken!

BRICK STARES AT MARGARET.

What?

BRICK. Nothing.

HE TURNS TO THE BAR AND FIXES ANOTHER DRINK.

MARGARET. Y' know, your brother Gooper still cherishes the illusion he took a giant step up on the social ladder when her married Miss Mae Flynn of the Memphis Flynns.

MARGARET CIRCLE CROSSES SL TO THE UL CORNER OF THE BED.

But I have a piece of Spanish news for Gooper. The Flynn's never had a thing in this world but money, and they lost that. They were nothin' at all but fairly successful climbers. Of course Mae Flynn came out in Memphis eight years before I made my debut in Nashville, but I had friends at Ward-Belmont who came from Memphis, and they used to come see me and I used to go see them for Christmas an' spring vacations, so I know who rates an' who doesn't rate in Memphis society.

MARGARET LIES BACK ON THE
BED, PROPPING HERSELF UP
WITH THE PILLOW.

Why, y'know, ole Papa Flynn, he barely escaped doin' time in the Federal pen for shady manipulations on th' stock market when his chain-stores crashed, and as for Mae havin' been a cotton carnival queen, as they remind us so often, lest we forget, well, that's one honor I don't envy her for! Sit on a brass throne, on a tacky float an' ride down Main Street, smilin', bowin' and' blowin' kisses to all the trash on the street! Why, year before last, when Susan McPheeters was singled out fo' that honor, y'know what happened to her? Y'know what happened to poor little Susie McPheeters?

MARGARET SITS UP AT THE FOOT
OF THE BED.

BRICK. No. What happened to little Susie McPheeters?

MARGARET. Somebody spit tobacco juice in her face.

BRICK. Somebody spit tobacco juice in her face?

MARGARET LEANS OVER THE
FOOT OF THE BED.

MARGARET. That's right. Some ole drunk leaned out of a window in the Hotel Gayoso an' yelled, "Hey, hey! hey there, Queenie!" Poor Susie looked up an' flashed him a radiant smile- an' he shot a squirt of tobacco juice right in poor Susie's face!

BRICK. Well, what d'you know about that?

MARGARET. What do I know about it? I was there! I saw it!

BRICK TURNS, STUDYING MARGARET.

BRICK. Must have been kind of funny.

MARGARET. Susie didn't think so. Had hysterics. Screamed like a banshee. They had to stop the parade an' remove her -

MARGARET TURNS SLIGHTLY,
CATCHING A GLIMPSE OF BRICK.
HE STARTS TO WHISTLE "BY THE
LIGHT OF THE SILVERY MOON".

Why are you looking at me like that?

BRICK. Like what, Maggie?

MARGARET. The way y' were lookin' at me just now befo' I caught your eye and you started to whistle! I don't know how to describe it, but it froze my blood! I've caught you lookin' at me like that so often lately.

SHE CROSSES SLOWLY TO BRICK,
FOUR STEPS.

What are you thinkin' of when you look at me like that?

BRICK. I wasn't conscious of lookin' at you, Maggie.

MARGARET STEPS TO BRICK.

MARGARET. Well, I was conscious of it! What were you thinkin'?

BRICK. I don't remember thinkin' of anything, Maggie.

MARGARET. Don't you think I know that--? Don't you think I - know that--?

BRICK. Know what, Maggie?

MARGARET. That I've gone through this- hideous- transformation- become hard! Frantic! Cruel! That's what you've been observing in me lately. How could y' help but observe it? That's all right. I'm not thin-skinned any more, can't afford to be thin-skinned any more.

BRICK HOBLES US TO WICKER
CHAIR. MAGGIE TURNS, FACING
HIM.

FIGURE 2

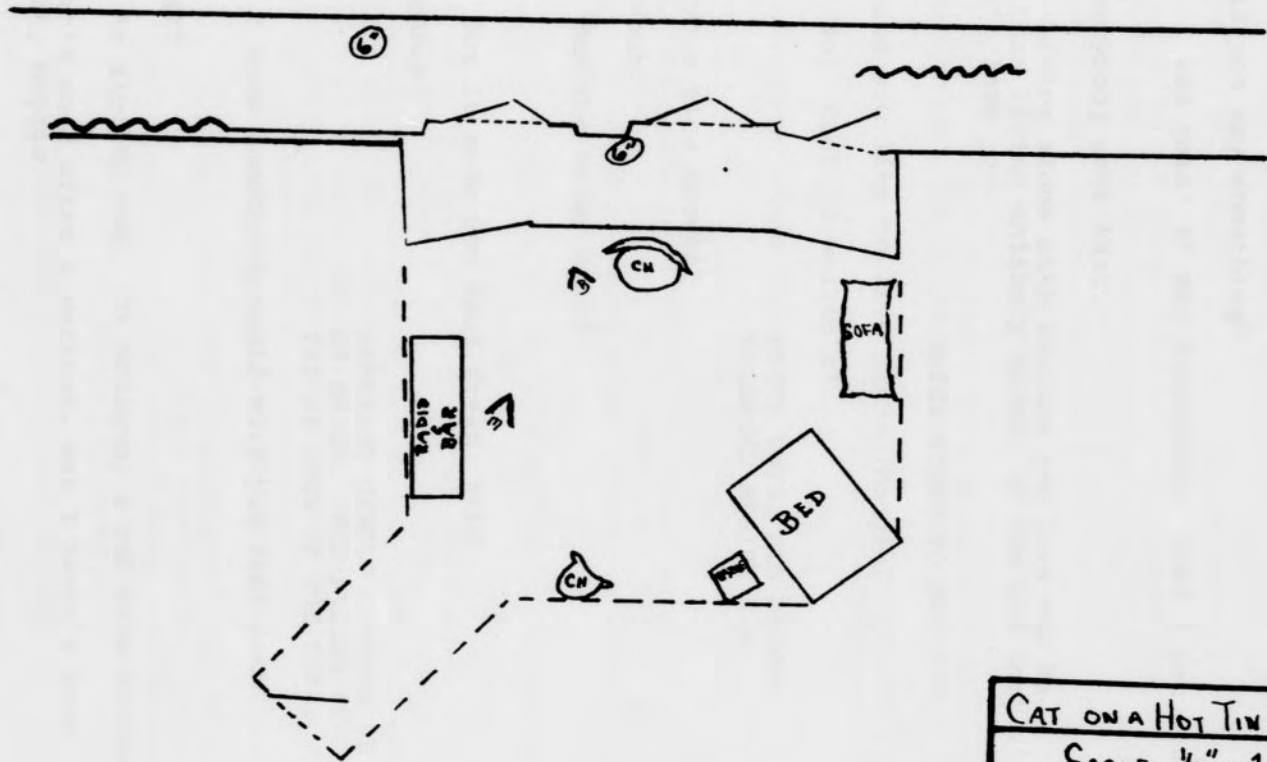


FIGURE 2

CAT ON A HOT TIN ROOF
 SCALE - 1/8" = 1'0"

But, Brick, Brick-

BRICK. Did you say something?

MARGARET. I was goin' t' say something: that I get lonely. Very!

BRICK. Everybody gets that.

MARGARET. Living alone with someone you love can be lonelier- than living entirely alone, if the one that y' love doesn't love you.

BRICK TURNS TO HER.

BRICK. Would you like to live alone, Maggie?

MARGARET. No! God! I wouldn't!

BRICK SITS, HIS DRINK
BALANCED BESIDE HIM.

Did you have a nice shower?

BRICK. Uh-huh.

MARGARET. Was the water cool?

BRICK. No.

MARGARET. But it made you feel fresh, huh?

BRICK. Fresher.

MARGARET CIRCLE CROSSES UL
OF BRICK. SHE PAUSES AT
THE DS EDGE OF THE SOFA.

MARGARET. I know something would make you feel much fresher!

BRICK. What?

MARGARET. An alcohol rub. Or cologne, a rub with cologne!

BRICK. That's good after a workout, but I haven't been workin'- out, Maggie.

MARGARET. But you've kept in good shape, though.

BRICK. You think so, Maggie?

MARGARET. I always thought drinkin' men lost their looks, but I was plainly mistaken.

BRICK. Why thanks, Maggie.

MARGARET. You're the only drinkin' man I know that it never seem t' put fat on.

BRICK. I'm gettin' softer, Maggie.

MARGARET STARTS US.

MARGARET. Well, sooner or later it's bound to soften you up. It was just beginning to soften up Skipper when--

SHE STOPS, AND TURNS TO BRICK,
BRICK QUICKLY SHOOTS HER A
LOOK.

I'm sorry. I never could keep my fingers off a sore.

SHE CROSSES DS TO HIM.

I wish you would lose your looks. It would make the martyrdom of Saint Maggie a little more bearable. But no such goddam luck. I actually believe you've gotten better looking since you've gone on the bottle.

MAGGIE KNEELS, TOUCHING BRICK'S
LEG.

A person who didn't know you would think you'd never had a tense nerve in your body or a strained muscle. Of course, you always had a detached quality as if you were playing a game without much concern whether you won or lost, and now you've lost the game, not lost but just quit playing, you have that rare sort of charm that usually only happens in very old or hopelessly sick people, the charm of the defeated. You look so cool, so cool, so enviably cool.

OFF R, A CROQUET GAME IS IN
PROGRESS BETWEEN DR. BAUGH
AND REV. TOOKER. THEIR CON-
VERSATION AND THE GAME IS
PARTLY AUDIBLE.

REV. TOOKER. Now, looka here, boy- Lemme see you get outa that!

MARGARET CIRCLE CROSSES UR,
TO UR DOUBLE DOOR.

MARGARET. They're playing croquet. The moon has appeared and it's white, just beginning to turn a little bit yellow.

SHE TURNS TO BRICK.

You were a wonderful lover.... Such a wonderful person to go to bed with and I think mostly because you were really indifferent to it. Isn't that right?

SHE CROSSES SL FIVE STEPS.

Never had any anxiety about it, did it naturally, easily, slowly, with absolute confidence and perfect calm, more like opening a door for a lady, or seating her at table, than giving expression to any longing for her. Your indifference made you wonderful at lovemaking.

SHE STEPS TOWARD BRICK.

Strange? But...

OFF R, THE MALLETS CLICK.

REV. TOOKER. Oh, that's a beauty!

DR. BAUGH. Yeah, I got you boxed.

MARGARET. You know, if I thought you would never, never, never make love to me again-

MARGARET CROSSES DR TO DOORWAY.

I would go downstairs to the kitchen and pick out the longest and sharpest knife I could find and stick it straight into my heart. I swear that I would.

SHE SLOWLY PANTOMIMES STABBING HERSELF.

REV. TOOKER. Watch out, now, you gonna miss it.

DR. BAUGH. You just don' know me, boy!

MARGARET TURNS, FACING BRICK.

MARGARET. And later tonight I'm going to tell you I love you an' maybe by that time you'll be drunk enough to believe me....

THE MALLETS CLICK AGAIN.

REV. TOOKER. Mmm! You're too slippery for me!

DR. BAUGH. Jus' like an eel, boy. Jus' like an eel!

MARGARET. Yes, they're playing croquet.

SHE CROSSES DS TO BRICK.

Big Daddy is dying of cancer.... What were you thinkin' of when I caught you looking at me like that? Were you thinking of Skipper?

BRICK RISES, CROSSES THREE STEPS UL TO BATHROOM.

Oh, excuse me, forgive me, but laws of silence don't work. No, laws of silence don't work.

MAGGIE CROSSES UL TO BRICK.

When something is festering in your memory or your imagination, laws of silence don't work. It's just like shutting a door and locking it on a house on fire in hope of forgetting that the house is burning. But not facing a fire doesn't put it out. Silence about a thing just magnifies it. It grows and festers in silence, becomes malignant....

MARGARET GRABS BRICK AS HE PULLS AWAY. THE CRUTCH FALLS TO THE FLOOR. BRICK, HOPPING ON ONE FOOT, CROSSES SR TO WICKER CHAIR AND LEANS ON IT.

BRICK. Give me my crutch.

MARGARET. Lean on me!

BRICK. No, just give me my crutch.

MARGARET. Lean on my shoulder.

MARGARET CROSSES TO BRICK AND TRIES TO HELP.

BRICK. I don't want to lean on your shoulder!

VIOLENTLY, BRICK PUSHES HER AWAY, SL.

I want my crutch. Give me my crutch. Are you going to give me my crutch or do I have to get down on my knees on the floor and-

MARGARET PICKS UP THE
CRUTCH AND THROWS IT
TO HIM.

MARGARET. Here, here, take it, take it!

BRICK. Thanks.

BRICK CROSSES DR.

MARGARET. That's the first time I've heard you raise your voice in a long time, Brick. A crack in the wall? Of composure?

BRICK. It just hasn't happened yet, Maggie.

MARGARET. What?

BRICK. The click I get in my head when I've had enough of this stuff to make me peaceful. Will you do me a favor?

MARGARET. Maybe I will. What favor?

BRICK. Will you please keep your voice down?

MARGARET. I'll do you that favor. I'll speak in a whisper, if not shut up completely, if you will do me a favor and make that drink your last one till after the party.

BRICK. What party?

MARGARET. Big Daddy's birthday party.

BRICK. Is this Big Daddy's birthday?

MARGARET. You know this is Big Daddy's birthday!

BRICK. No, I don't, I forgot it.

MARGARET. Well I remembered it for you.

MARGARET CROSSES DL TO BED
AND GETS AN ENVELOPE FROM
A GIFT BOX HIDDEN UNDER
THE BED.

BRICK. Good for you, Maggie.

BRICK CROSSES SR TO BAR.

MARGARET. You just have to scribble a few lines on this card.

BRICK. You scribble something, Maggie.

MARGARET. It's got to be your handwriting, it's your present, I've given him my present, it's got to be your handwriting!

BRICK. I didn't get him a present.

MARGARET. I got one for you.

BRICK. All right. You write on the card, then.

MARGARET. And have him know that you didn't remember his birthday?

BRICK. I didn't remember his birthday.

MARGARET. You don't have to prove you didn't.

BRICK. I don't want to fool him about it.

MAE APPEARS IN THE HALL.
SHE PAUSES TO LISTEN.

MARGARET TAKES THREE STEPS
TO BRICK.

MARGARET. Just write "Love, Brick" for God's sake!

BRICK. No.

MARGARET. You got to!

BRICK TURNS TO MAGGIE.

BRICK. I don't have to do anything I don't want to do. You keep forgetting the conditions on which I agreed to stay on living with you.

MARGARET. I'm not living with you. We occupy the same cage.

BRICK. You got to remember the conditions agreed on.

MARGARET. They're impossible conditions.

BRICK. Then why don't you-

MARGARET BECOMES AWARE OF
A NOISE IN THE HALL.

MARGARET. (To Brick) Hush!

MARGARET CROSSES DR TO THE
DOOR.

Who is out there? Is somebody at the door?

MAE ENTERS, PAST MAGGIE, TO
BRICK. BUSTER SNEAKS IN
BEHIND HER AND CROSSES TO
THE UR CORNER OF THE BED
TO HIDE.

FIGURE 3.

MAE. Brick, is this thing yours?

MARGARET. Why, Sister Woman-

MARGARET CROSSES TO MAE.

that's my Diana Trophy. Won it at an intercollegiate
archery contest on the Ole Miss campus.

MAE. It's a mighty dangerous thing to leave exposed round
a house full of nawmal rid-blooded children attracted t'
weapons.

TAKING THE BOW, MARGARET
CIRCLE CROSSES ABOVE MAE.

MARGARET. "Nawmal rid-blooded children attracted t'
weapons" ought t' be taught to keep their hands off things
that don't belong to them.

MARGARET CROSSES UL TILL
SHE IS STOPPED BY BUSTER
TUGGING AT THE BOW. MAE
CLAPS HER HANDS TO STOP HIM.

MAE. Maggie, honey, if you had children of your own you'd
know how funny that is. Will you please lock that up and
put the key out of reach?



FIGURE 3

MARGARET. Sister Woman, nobody is plotting the destruction of your kiddies. Brick and I still have our special archer's license-

MARGARET STARTS UL TOWARD
BATHROOM.

We're goin' deer-hunting on Moon Lake as soon as the season starts. I love to run with dogs through chilly woods, run, run, leap over obstructions-

BUSTER CHASES HER AND GRABS
THE BOW A SECOND TIME.

MAE. Buster! Go!

BUSTER EXITS DR. MARGARET
EXITS INTO BATHROOM.

How's the injured ankle, Brick?

BRICK. Doesn't hurt. Just itches.

MAE CROSSES TWO STEPS TO BRICK.

MAE. Oh, my! Brick-- Brick, you should've been downstairs after supper! Kiddies put on a show! Polly played the piano, Buster an' Sonny drums, an' then they turned out the lights an' Dixie an' Trixie puhfawmed a toe-dance in fairy-costume with spahkluhs! Big Daddy beamed! He just beamed!

MARGARET ENTERS, CROSSES DS
THREE STEPS. SHE LAUGHS,
SHARPLY.

MARGARET. Oh, I bet! It breaks my heart that we missed it! But, Mae? Why did y' give dawgs' names to all your kiddies?

MAE. Dawgs' names?

MARGARET. Dixie an' Trixie an' Sonny an' Polly. Sounds t' me like an animal act in the circus. Four dogs and a parrot!

MAE CROSSES TO MAGGIE.

MAE. Maggie, honey, why are you so catty?

MARGARET. Mae would you know a joke if you bumped into it on Main Street in Memphis at noon?

MAE. You know the names of my children! Buster's real name is Robert. Sonny's real name is Saunders. Trixie's real name is Marlene. An' Dixie's is--

GOOPER ENTERS DR.

GOOPER. Hey, Mae! Sister Woman! Intermission's over!

MAE. Intermission is over! See y' later!

MAE EXITS DR.

GOOPER. How's your liquor supply holdin' up, Buddy?

HE EXITS DR, FOLLOWING MAE.

MARGARET. I wonder what Dixie's real name is?

BRICK. Maggie- why are you so catty?

MARGARET. I don't know. Why am I so catty? 'Cause I'm consumed with envy and eaten up with longing.

MARGARET CROSSES UR, GETS
BRICK'S SUIT AND CROSSES DL
TO THE BED. SHE LAYS THE
SUIT ON THE BED.

Brick, I'm going to lay out your beautiful shantung silk suit from Rome and one of your monogrammed silk shirts.

SHE CROSSES SR TO THE NIGHT
STAND AND GETS THE CUFFLINKS
FROM THE TOP DRAWER.

I'll put your cufflinks in it, these lovely star sapphires I get you to wear so rarely.

BRICK CROSSES TO UL PATIO
DOOR.

BRICK. I can't get trousers on over this plaster cast.

MARGARET. Yes, you can- I'll help you.

BRICK. I'm not going to get dressed, Maggie.

MARGARET. Will you just put on a pair of pajamas?

BRICK. Yes, I'll do that, Maggie.

MARGARET. Thank you, thank you so much.

BRICK. Don't mention it.

MARGARET QUICKLY CROSSES
UL TO BRICK.

MARGARET. Oh, Brick- Brick, how long does it have t' go on? This punishment? Haven't I done time enough? Haven't I served my term? Can't I apply for a - pardon?

BRICK. Maggie, lately your voice always sounds like you'd been running upstairs to warn somebody that the house is on fire!

MARGARET. Well, no wonder, no wonder. Y' know what I feel like, Brick? I feel all the time like a cat on a hot tin roof!

BRICK TURNS TO MAGGIE.

BRICK. Then jump off the roof, jump off it. Cats can jump off roofs and land on their four feet uninjured.

MARGARET. Oh, yes!

BRICK. Do it- fo' God's sake, do it!

MARGARET. Do what?

BRICK. Take a lover.

MARGARET. I can't see a man but you! Even with my eyes closed, I just see you! Why don't you get ugly, Brick, why don't you please get fat or ugly or something so I could stand it?

SOUND CUE. THE CHILDREN ARE
SINGING "JESUS LOVES ME".

Brick- Brick-

MARGARET LOOKS, THEN CROSSES
DR TO HALL DOOR.

The concert is still going on. Bravo, no-necks! Bravo!

SHE SLAMS AND LOCKS THE
DOOR.

Brick!

BRICK. What did you lock the door for?

MARGARET TAKES TWO STEPS
TO BRICK.

MARGARET. To give us a little privacy for a while.

BRICK. You know better, Maggie.

MARGARET. No, I don't know better.

BRICK. Don't make a fool of yourself.

MARGARET. I don't mind makin' a fool of myself over you!

BRICK. I mind, Maggie. I feel embarrassed for you!

MARGARET CROSSES TO BRICK.

MARGARET. Feel embarrassed! But don't continue my torture.
I can't live on and on under these circumstances.

BRICK. You agreed to-

MARGARET. I know but-

BRICK. -accept that condition!

BIG MAMA ENTERS HALL. SHE
CROSSES TO THE LOCKED DOOR.

BIG MAMA. Son! Son! Son!

MARGARET. I can't! I can't! I can't!

BIG MAMA. Son!

MARGARET SITS ON THE ARM
OF UC CHAIR.

MARGARET. What is it, Big Mama?

BIG MAMA. Oh, son! We got the most wonderful news about
Big Daddy. I just had t' run up an' tell you right this--

What's this door doin' locked faw? You all think there's robbers in the house?

MARGARET CROSSES DR TO THE DOOR, AS BRICK EXITS TO BATHROOM, WHISTLING.

MARGARET. Big Mama, Brick is dressin', he's not dressed yet.

BIG MAMA. That's all right, it won't be the first time I've seen Brick not dressed. Come on, open this door!

MARGARET OPENS THE DOOR AND BIG MAMA SWEEPS PAST HER. BIG MAMA CROSSES SIX STEPS TO UL.

MARGARET. Big Mama?

BIG MAMA. Where's Brick?

BIG MAMA CROSSES THREE STEPS TO THE BATHROOM.

Brick! Hurry on out of there, son, I just have a second and want to give you the news about Big Daddy. (To Margaret) I hate locked doors in a house.

MARGARET. I've noticed you do, Big Mama, but people have got to have some moments of privacy, don't they?

BIG MAMA. No, ma'am, not in my house!

BIG MAMA CROSSES SL.

Whacha took off that white dress faw? I thought that little white dress was so sweet on you.

MARGARET. I thought it looked sweet on me, too, but one of m' cute little table-partners used it for a napkin, so-!

BIG MAMA. So what?

BIG MAMA FOLDS MAGGIE'S DRESS AND PUTS IT ON THE SOFA. MARGARET CROSSES TO BIG MAMA.

MARGARET. You know, Big Mama, Mae and Gooper's so touchy about those children- thanks, Big Mama- that you just don't dare to suggest there's any room for improvement in their-

BIG MAMA. Hurry out, Brick!

BIG MAMA CROSSES TO MAGGIE.

Shoot, Maggie, you just don't like children.

MARGARET. I do so like children! Adore them! - well brought up...

BIG MAMA. Well, why don't you have some and bring them up well, then, instead of all the time pickin' on Gooper's an' Mae's?

GOOPER CALLS FROM OFF RIGHT.

GOOPER. Hey! Hey, Big Mama! Betsy an' Hugh got to go! Waitin' t' tell yuh g'by!

BIG MAMA TAKES THREE STEPS
UR.

BIG MAMA. Tell 'em to hold their hawses, I'll be down in a jiffy!

GOOPER. Yes, ma'am.

BIG MAMA CROSSES TO BATH-
ROOM DOOR.

BIG MAMA. Son? Can you hear me in there?

BRICK. Yes, Big Mama.

BIG MAMA. We got the full report from the laboratory at the Ochsner Clinic, completely negative, son, ev'rything negative, right on down the line! Nothin' a-tall's wrong with him but some little functional thing-(Shouting.) called a spastic colon. Can you hear me, son?

MARGARET. He can hear you, Big Mama.

BIG MAMA. Then why don't he say something? God A'mighty, a piece of news like that should make him shout. It made me shout, I can tell you. I shouted, an' sobbed an' fell right down on my knees! Look!

SHE DISPLAYS HER KNEES.

See the bruises where I hit my knee caps? Took both doctors to haul me back on my feet! Big Daddy was furious with me!

BIG MAMA CROSSES TO MARGARET
AND EMBRACES HER.

But ain't that wonderful news? After all the anxiety we been through to get a report like that on Big Daddy's birthday?

SOUND CUE. PHONE RINGS IN
HALL.

Big Daddy tried to hide how much of a load that news took off his mind, but he didn't fool me. He was mighty close t' cryin' about it himself.

GOOPER. Big Mama!

BIG MAMA CROSSES TWO STEPS
UR.

BIG MAMA. Hold those people down there! Don't let 'em go!

MAE ENTERS HALL DR., AND
ANSWERS PHONE.

MAE. It's Memphis, Mama! It's Miss Sally in Memphis!

BIG MAMA. I got to go shout at that old deaf fool on the phone. All right, Mae. (Calls to bathroom.) Now get dressed! We're all comin' up to this room fo' Big Daddy's birthday party because of your ankle! (To Margaret) Does it hurt much still?

BIG MAMA EXITS DR TO PHONE.

MARGARET. I'm afraid I can't give you that information, Big Mama. You'll have to ask Brick if it hurts much still or not.

BIG MAMA. Hello, Miss Sally! How are you, Miss Sally?

BRICK ENTERS, CROSSES TO BAR.

Yes- well, I was gonna call you about it- !

MARGARET. Brick- don't!

BRICK EMPTIES A BOTTLE AND
TOSSES IT OVER HIS SHOULDER
TO MAGGIE. SHE CROSSES TO
THE BED AND FALLS ON IT.

BRICK EXITS INTO THE BATHROOM
WITH HIS DRINK.

BIG MAMA. Shoot! Miss Sally, don't ever call me from the
Gayoso Lobby! S'too much talk goes on in that hotel lobby,
no wonder you can't hear me! Now, listen, Miss Sally, we
got the report just now! I say there's serious wrong but
a thing called a spastic- SPAS-TIC- colon!

BIG MAMA STEPS INSIDE THE
ROOM.

Maggie, you come out here an' talk to that fool on the
phone!

MARGARET RISES, CROSSES INTO
HALL.

MARGARET. Miss Sally? This is Brick's wife, Maggie. So
nice to hear your voice.

BIG MAMA CROSSES TO BED,
PICKS UP THE BOTTLE AND SETS
IT ON THE NIGHT STAND. SHE
THEN CROSSES TO THE SOFA AND
PICKS UP BRICKS PILLOW.

Well, good! Big Mama just wanted you to know that they've
got the report from the Ochsner Clinic and what Big Daddy
has is a spastic colon. Yes, spastic colon, Miss Sally.
G'bye, Miss Sally, hope I'll see you real soon!

MARGARET RE-ENTERS FROM HALL.

She heard me perfectly.

BIG MAMA TOSSES THE PILLOW
ONTO THE BED.

BIG MAMA. Miss Sally sure is a case!

GOOPER. Big Mama! Come on now! Betsy an' Hugh cain't
wait no longer!

BIG MAMA. I'm comin' !

BIG MAMA POINTS TO THE BOTTLE
ON THE NIGHT STAND.

MARGARET. Hmmm?

BIG MAMA. Shoot! Stop playin' so dumb! I mean has he
been drinkin' that stuff much yet?

MARGARET. Oh- I think he had a high-ball after supper.

BIG MAMA. Don't laugh about it! Some single stop drinkin'
when they git married and others start! Brick never touched
liquor until-

MARGARET. That's not fair!

BIG MAMA. Fair or not fair, I want to ask you a question,
one question: d'you make Brick happy in bed?

MARGARET. Why don't you ask if he makes me happy in bed?

BIG MAMA. Because I know that-

MARGARET. It works both ways!

GOOPER. Come on, Big Mama!

BIG MAMA. Something's not right. You're childless, and
my son drinks.

BIG MAMA CROSSES TO BED AND
FIRMLY PATS IT.

When a marriage goes on the rocks, the rocks are here,
right here!

BIG MAMA EXITS THROUGH UR
DOORS, OFF RIGHT.

MARGARET. That's not fair....

MARGARET CROSSES SL, FULL
FRONT TO MIRROR.

Who are you? I am Maggie the Cat!

BRICK. (From bathroom) Has Big Mama gone?

MARGARET. She's gone.

BRICK APPEARS, CROSSES SR TO BAR.

You know, our sex life didn't just peter out in the usual way, it was cut off short, long before the natural time for it to, and it's going to revive again, just as sudden as that. I'm confident of it. That's what I'm keeping myself attractive for. For the time when you'll see me again like other men see me. Yes, like other men see me. They still see me, Brick, and they like what they see.

BRICK CROSSES US TO UR GALLERY DOOR, STARES OUT.

Look, Brick! How high my body stays on me! - nothing has fallen on me! - not a fraction! My face looks strained sometimes, but I've kept my figure as well as you've kept yours, and men admire it. I still turn heads on the street. Why, last week in Memphis, everywhere that I went men's eyes burned holes in my clothes, at the country club and in restaurants and department stores, there wasn't a man I met or walked by that didn't just eat me up with his eyes and turn around when I passes him and look back at me.

SHE TURNS TO BRICK.

Why, at Alice's party for her New York cousins, the best lookin' man in the crowd followed me upstairs and tried to force his way into the powder room with me, followed me to the door and tried to force his way in!

BRICK. Why didn't you let him in, Maggie?

MARGARET. Because I'm not that common, for one thing. Not that I wasn't almost tempted to.

MARGARET CROSSES TO BRICK, BUT STAYS ON THE LOWER LEVEL.

FIGURE 4.

You like to know who it was- hmmm? It was Sonny Boy Maxwell, that's who!

BRICK CROSSES DL TO SOFA.

BRICK. Oh, yeah, Sonny Boy Maxwell, he was a good broken-field runner but he had a little injury to his back and had to quit.

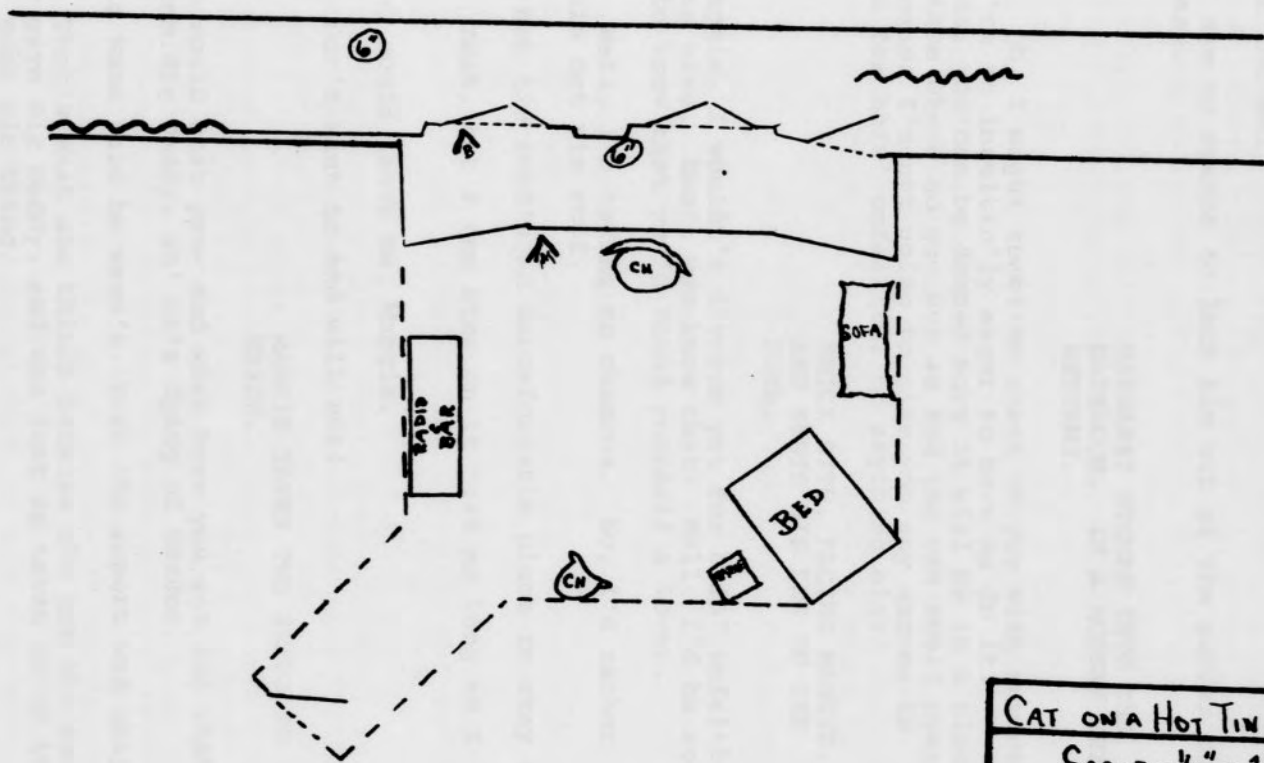


FIGURE 4

CAT ON A HOT TIN ROOF
SCALE - $\frac{1}{8}'' = 1'0''$

MARGARET. He has no injury now and has no wife and still has a lech for me!

BRICK. I see no reason to lock him out of the powder room in that case.

MARGARET STOMPS INTO THE BATHROOM. IN A MOMENT SHE RETURNS.

MARGARET. Oh, I might sometime cheat on you with someone, since you're so insultin'ly eager to have me do it! - But if I do, you can be damned sure it will be in a place and at a time where no one but me and the man could possibly know. Because I'm not going to give you any excuse to divorce me for bein' unfaithful or anything else!

BRICK SITS, FACING MAGGIE, AND RESTS HIS LEG ON THE SOFA.

BRICK. Maggie, I wouldn't divorce you for bein' unfaithful or anything else. Don't you know that? Hell, I'd be so relieved to know that you'd found yourself a lover.

MARGARET. Well, I'm taking no chances. No, I'd rather stay on this hot tin roof.

BRICK. A hot tin roof's an uncomfortable place to stay on.

MARGARET. Yeah, but I can stay on it just as long as I have to.

BRICK. You could leave me, Maggie.

MARGARET. Don't want to and will not!

MAGGIE TAKES TWO STEPS TO BRICK.

Separation would cost you- and what have you got but what you get from Big Daddy, an' he's dying of cancer.

BRICK. Big Mama said he wasn't, that the report was okay.

MARGARET. That's what she thinks because she got the same story they gave Big Daddy, and was just as taken in by it as he was, poor ole thing.

MARGARET CROSSES UR FOUR STEPS.

But tonight they're going to tell her the truth about it. When Big Daddy goes to bed, they're going to tell her that he's dying of cancer. It's malignant and it's hopeless.

BRICK. Does Big Daddy know it?

MARGARET. Hell, do they ever know it? Nobody says, "You're dying." You have to fool them. They have to fool themselves.

MARGARET TURNS TO BRICK.

So this is Big Daddy's last birthday, and do you know something, Brick? Big Daddy's made no will. Big Daddy never made out any will in his life, and that's why Mae and Gooper have launched their campaign to impress him as forcibly as they can with the fact that you drink, and I've borne no children.

MARGARET QUICKLY CROSSES TO BRICK.

Oh, Brick, Brick, y'know, I've been so goddam disgustingly poor all my life. That's the truth, Brick!

BRICK. I'm not saying it isn't.

MARGARET. Always had to suck up to people I couldn't stand because they had money and I was as poor as Job's turkey.

MARGARET MOVES DL TO THE BED.
SHE GETS HER DRESS AND BEGINS
TO DRESS IN THE DC AREA.

You don't know what that's like. Well, I'll tell you, it's like you would feel a thousand miles away from Echo Springs- and you had to get back to it on that broken ankle- without a crutch! That's how it feels to be as poor as Job's turkey and have to suck up to relatives that you hated because they had money and all you had was a bunch of hand-me-down clothes and a few old mouldy three percent government bonds. My daddy loved his liquor, he fell in love with his liquor like you've fallen in love with Echo Springs! And my poor mama, havin' to maintain some semblence of social position to keep appearance up, on an income of one hundred and fifty dollars a month on those old government bonds! When I came out, the year that I made my debut, I had just two evening dresses- one my mother made me from a pattern in Vogue, the other a hand-me-down from a snotty rich cousin

I hated. The dress that I married you in was my grandmother's wedding gown! You can be young without money, but you can't be old without it. You've got to be old with money because to be old without it is just too awful, you've got to be one or the other, either young or with money, you can't be old and without it. That's the truth, Brick.

BRICK RISES, CROSSES SR TO BAR.

Well, now, I'm dressed. I'm all dressed and there's nothing else for me to do. I'm dressed, all dressed, nothing else for me to do.

SHE STARES OFF LEFT.

I know where I made my mistake. I've thought a whole lot about it and I know where I made my mistake.

MARGARET CROSSES SL TWO STEPS,
PAUSES, AND TURNS TO BRICK.

Yes, I made my mistake when I told you the truth about that thing with Skipper.

BRICK TURNS. MAGGIE TAKES
TWO STEPS TO HIM.

Never should have confessed it, a fatal error tellin' you about that thing with Skipper.

BRICK. Maggie, shut up about Skipper. I mean it, Maggie, you got to shut up about Skipper.

MAGGIE STEPS TOWARD BRICK.

MARGARET. You ought to understand that Skipper and I-

BRICK. You don't think I'm serious, Maggie? You're fooled by the fact that I'm sayin' this quiet?

BRICK CROSSES US.

Look, Maggie, what you're doin' is a dangerous thing to do. You're- you're- you're foolin' with somethin' that nobody ought to fool with!

MARGARET TAKES FOUR STEPS
TO BRICK.

MARGARET. This time I'm going to finish what I have to say to you, - you superior creature- you god-like being! Yes! Truth, truth! What's so awful about it? I like it. I think truth is-

BRICK TURNS, STEPS TO MAGGIE.

BRICK. It was Skipper that told me about it. Not you, Maggie.

MARGARET. I told you!

TRIXIE ENTERS UL ON GALLERY,
CHASED BY BUSTER. DIXIE SKIPS
BEHIND THEM. ALL CROSS SR.

BRICK. After he told me!

MARGARET. What does it matter who-

BRICK CROSSES UL TO GALLERY DOOR.

BRICK. Little girl! Hey, little girl! Tell the folks to come up! Bring everybody upstairs!

MARGARET CROSSES UL TO BRICK.

MARGARET. I can't stop myself! I'd go on telling you this in front of them all, if I had to!

BRICK. Little girl! Go on, go on, will you? Do what I told you! You bring everybody up here!

MARGARET. Because it's got to be told and you, you- you never let me! You had one of those beautiful ideal things they tell about in the Greek legends, it couldn't be anything else, you being you, and that's what made it so sad, that's what made it so awful, because it was a love that never could be carried through to anything satisfying or even talked about plainly.

BRICK CROSSES DL TOWARD MAGGIE.

BRICK. Maggie, you got to stop this!

MARGARET. Brick, I tell you, you got to believe me, Brick. I do understand all about it! I- I think it was- noble!

MAGGIE CROSSES US.

Can't you tell I'm sincere when I say I respect it? My only point, the only point I'm makin', is life has got to be allowed to continue even after the dream of life is all over.

BRICK RAPS HIS CRUTCH ON
THE ARM OF CS CHAIR.

BRICK. Maggie, do you want me to hit you with this crutch? Don't you know that I could kill you with this crutch?

MARGARET CIRCLE CROSSES DR.

MARGARET. Good Lord, man. D'you think I'd care if you did?

BRICK. One man has one great good true thing in his life. One great good thing which is true. I had friendship with Skipper. You are namin' it dirty!

MARGARET. Then you haven't been listenin', not understood what I'm sayin'! I'm namin' it so damn clean that it killed poor Skipper! You two had somethin' that had to be kept on ice, yes, incorruptible, yes! and death was the only icebox where you could keep it!

BRICK STEPS TO MAGGIE, LIFT-
ING HIS CRUTCH THREATINGLY.

BRICK. I married you, Maggie. Why would I marry you, Maggie- if I was- ?

MARGARET. Brick, don't! Let me finish!

MAGGIE BACKS AWAY, AND MAKES
A CIRCLE CROSS DL TO THE BED.
BRICK MIRRORS HER CROSS,
MOVING TO SL SIDE OF BED.

I know, believe me, I know that it was only Skipper that harbored even any unconscious desire for anything not perfectly pure between you two! You married me early that summer we graduated out of Ole Miss, and we were happy, weren't we, we were blissfull, yes, hit heaven together, every time that we loved! But that Fall you an' Skipper turned down wonderful offers in jobs in order to keep on bein' football heroes- pro-football heroes. You organized the Dixie Stars that Fall so you could keep on bein' teammates forever! But somethin' was not right with it, - me included! - between you. Skipper began hittin' the bottle...

you got a spinal injury- you couldn't play the Thanksgivin' game in Chicago, watched it on TV from a traction bed in Toledo. I joined Skipper. The Dixie Stars lost because poor Skipper was drunk. We drank together that night all night in the bar of the Blackstone and when cold day was comin' up over the Lake an' we were comin' out drunk to take a dizzy look at it, I said, "Skipper! Stop lovin' my husband or tell him that he's got to let you admit it to him!" - one way or another!

BRICK STRIKES THE BED WITH HIS CRUTCH.

He slapped me hard in the mouth! - then turned and ran without stoppin' once, all the way back to his room at the Blackstone. That night, when I came to his room that night, with a little scratch, like a shy little mouse at the door, he made that pitiful, ineffectual little attempt to prove that what I had said wasn't true.

BRICK CHARGES AT MAGGIE WITH THE CRUTCH AND FALLS ON THE BED. MAGGIES CROSSES SR.

No, no, no! In this way, I destroyed him, by telling him truth that his world which he was born and raised in, had taught him couldn't be told! From then on Skipper was nothin' at all but a receptacle for liquor an' drugs. Who shot Cock Robin? I- with my merciful arrow!

BRICK RISES, CROSSES TO US EDGE OF BED. MAGGIE TAKES ONE STEP TO BRICK.

Brick, Brick! I'm not tryin' to whitewash my behavior, Christ, no! Brick, I'm not good. I don't know why people have to pretend to be good, nobody's good. The rich or the well-to-do can afford to respect moral patterns, conventional moral patterns, but I never could afford to, yeah, but I'm honest! Give me credit for just that, will you, please? Born poor, raised poor, expect to die poor unless I can manage to get us something out of what Big Daddy leaves when he dies of cancer! But, Brick!

MAGGIE STEPS TO BRICK.

Skipper is dead! I'm alive! Maggie the Cat is Alive!
I'm alive, alive!

BRICK SWINGS THE CRUTCH AT MAGGIE. SHE DUCKS, AS THE CRUTCH FLIES US. BRICK FALLS TO THE FLOOR AS TRIXIE, DIXIE, AND BUSTER ENTER UR. FIRING CAP PISTOLS AND SHOUTING, THEY CIRCLE THE BED THEN DISPERSE ABOUT THE ROOM. TRIXIE BOUNCES ON THE BED, DIXIE IS SR, AND BUSTER IS US.

FIGURE 5.

Little children, your mother or someone should teach you to knock at a door before you come into a room, otherwise people might think that you lack good breedin'.

TRIXIE. What's Uncle Brick doin' on the floor?

BRICK. I tried to kill your Aunt Maggie, but I failed, and I fell.

MARGARET. Give your uncle his crutch, he's a cripple, honey.

BUSTER CROSSES DS, HANDS
BRICK THE CRUTCH.

He broke his ankle last night jumpin' hurdles on the high school athletic field.

BUSTER. Why were you jumpin' hurdles, Uncle Brick?

BRICK. Because I used to jump them, an' people like t' do what they used t' do, even after they've stopped bein' able to do it.

MARGARET. That's right, that's your answer- now go away!

THE CHILDREN CHARGE TO MAGGIE,
FIRING THEIR CAP PISTOLS.

Stop! You stop that, you monsters!

THEY CIRCLE MAGGIE, THEN
EXIT UR, OFF RIGHT. DIXIE
STOPS IN THE DOORWAY AND
TURNS TO MAGGIE.

DIXIE. You're jealous. You're just jealous because you can't have babies!

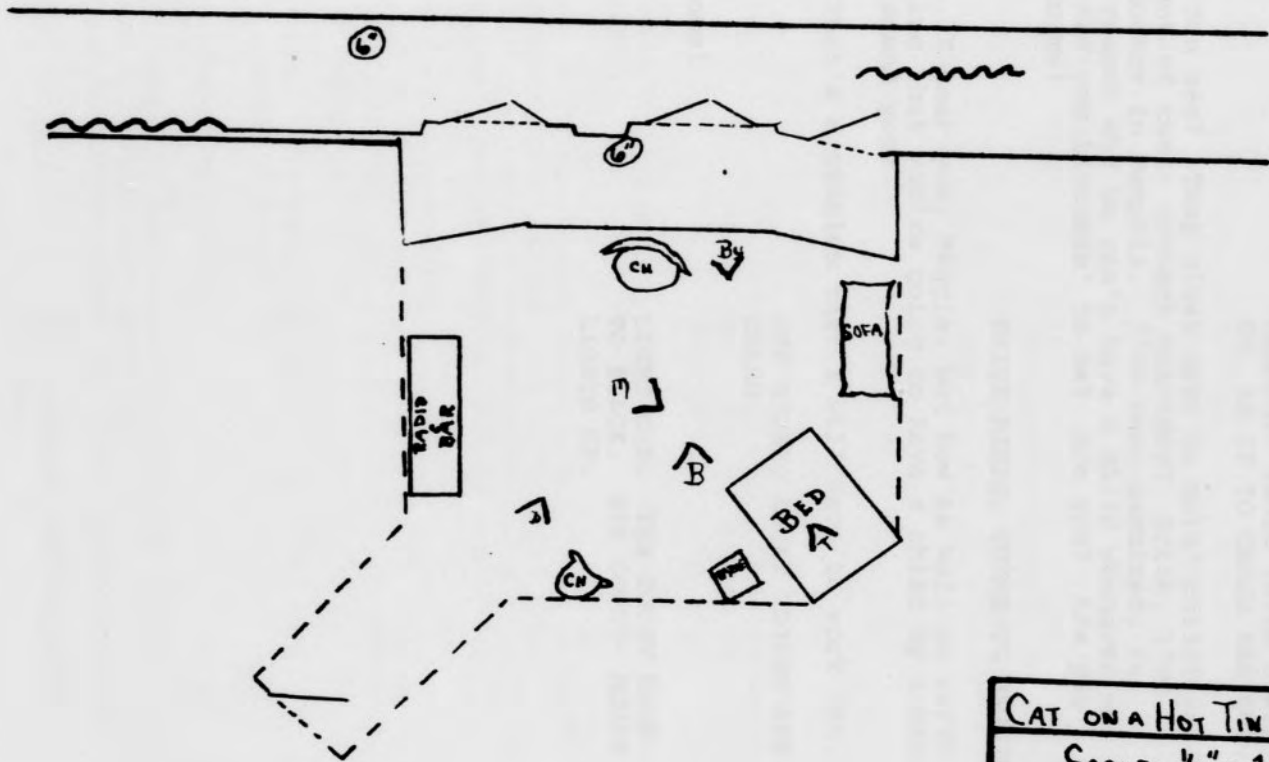


FIGURE 5

CAT ON A HOT TIN ROOF
 SCALE - $\frac{1}{8}$ " = 1'0"

DIXIE RUNS OUT, OFF RIGHT.
MARGARET TAKES THREE STEPS
UR, AS IF TO CHASE HER OUT.

MARGARET. You see? They gloat over us bein' childless, even in front of their no-neck monsters! Brick, I've been to a doctor in Memphis. I've been examined, an' there's no reason why we can't have a child whenever we want one. Are you listenin' to me? Are you? Are you listenin' to me?

BRICK RISES, TURNS TO MAGGIE.

BRICK. Yes, I hear you, Maggie, but how in hell on earth do you imagine that you're going to have a child by a man that can't stand you?

MARGARET. That's a problem that I will have to work out.

OFF RIGHT, ADULT VOICES ARE
HEARD.

Here they come!

LIGHT CUE. TEN COUNT FADE
TO BLACK. SIX COUNT- HOUSE
LIGHTS UP.

Act II

LIGHTS.
MARGARET AND BRICK ARE IN THE
SAME POSITIONS THEY HELD AT
THE END OF ACT I.

MARGARET. Here they come!

MARGARET CROSSES SL TO SOFA
AS BIG DADDY ENTERS USL.

BIG DADDY. Hello, Brick.

BRICK. Hello, Big Daddy. Congratulations.

BIG DADDY. Crap!

GOOPER AND REV. TOOKER ENTER
UR. MAE AND DR. BAUGH ENTER
DR. THE FOLLOWING DIALOGUE
OVERLAPS.

GOOPER. I read in the Register that you're gettin' a new
memorial window.

REV. TOOKER. Isn't that nice, but St. Paul's in Grenada
has three memorial windows, an' th' latest one is a
Tiffany stain' glass window that cost \$2500, a picture of
Chirst-- the Good Shepherd with a lamb in his arms.

GOOPER. Who give that window, Preach?

REV. TOOKER. Clyde Fletcher's widow. Also presented St.
Paul's with a baptismal front.

GOOPER. Y' know, what somebody oughta give your church
is a coolin' system, Preach.

REV. TOOKER. Yessiree, bob!

MAE: (To Dr. Baugh.) Let's see now, they've had their
typhoid shots, an' their tentanus shots, their diptheria
shots an' their hepatitis shots an' their polio shots----

MAE CROSSES TWO STEPS TO
GOOPER.

MAE. Gooper! Hey, Gooper! What all have the kiddies been shot fo'?

GOOPER. Everything but stealin' chickens, I guess!

GENERAL LAUGHTER.

MAE TURNS TO DR. BAUGH.

MAE. They get those shots ev'ry month, May through September.

REV. TOOKER. An' y' know what Gus Hanna's fam'ly gave in his mem'ry t' th' Church at Two Rivers? A complete new stone parish house with a basketball court in the basement an'----

BIG DADDY CROSSES TWO STEPS
SR.

BIG DADDY. Hey, Preach! What's all this talk about memorials, Preach? Y' think somebody's about t' kick off around here? 'S that it?

MARGARET. Turn on the Hi-Fi, Brick. Let's have some music t' start th' party with.

BRICK. You turn it on.

MARGARET. I don't know how to turn it on.

MAE CROSSES SR. TO RADIO-
BAR UNIT AND TURNS IT ON.

GOOPER. We gave 'em that thing for a third anniversary present, got three speakers in it.

SOUND CUE. RADIO ANNOUNCER.

VOICE. Th' disgustin' mendacity which my opponent has shown----

BIG DADDY. Turn that thing off!

BIG MAMA ENTERS DR, CROSSES
TO MAE.

BIG MAMA. Wha's mah Brick? Wha's mah precious baby!!

BIG DADDY. Sorry! Turn it back on!

MAE TURNS THE KNOBS ON THE
RADIO. BIG MAMA CROSSES
SL TO BRICK.

BIG MAMA. Here he is, here's mah precious baby! What's
that you got in your hand? Yo' hand was made fo' holdin'
somethin' better 'in that! You put that liquor down,
son!

BRICK DRINKS.

GOOPER. Look at ole Brick put it down!

BIG DADDY CROSSES US AND
SITS IN THE CS WICKER CHAIR.

BIG MAMA. Oh, you bad boy, you're my bad little boy.
Give Big Mama a kiss, you bad boy, you! Look at him shy
away, will yuh? Brick never liked bein' kissed or made a
fuss ovah, I guess because he's always had too much of
it----

SOUND CUE. RADIO ANNOUNCER.

VOICE. --there's a man on second--and there's the pitch---!

BIG MAMA. You turn that thing off!

BIG MAMA WALKS TO THE UR
CORNER OF THE BED AND SITS.

I can't stand radio, phonograph was bad enough, but radio
has gone it one better--I mean, one worse! Now, what am
I sitt'n here faw? I want to sit nex' to mah sweetheart,
hold hands with him, an' love him up a little!

SHE RISES AND CROSSES US TO
BIG DADDY AND TRIES TO GET
INTO THE CHAIR WITH HIM.

Move over! Just like Brick!

BIG DADDY RISES AND CROSSES
DS FOUR STEPS.

Preacher, Preacher, Hey, Preach! Give me yo' hand an'
he'p me up from this chair!

REV. TOOKER CROSSES TO DR
OF BIG MAMA.

REV. TOOKER. None of your tricks, Big Mama!

BIG MAMA. What tricks? You give me yo' hand so I can git up an'---

REV. TOOKER GIVES BIG MAMA HIS HAND. SHE PULLS HIM DOWN INTO HER LAP AND BOUNCES HIM UP AND DOWN TO GENERAL LAUGHTER.

Ever see a preacher in a lady's lap? Hey, folks! Ever see a preacher in a lady's lap?

MAE CROSSES US TO GOOPER, WHERE THEY EXCHANGE A WHISPER. SHE THEN EXITS DR.

BIG DADDY. Big Mama, will you quit horsin'?

BIG MAMA. Get up, Preacher.

REV. TOOKER RISES, CROSSES UL.

BIG DADDY. You're courtin' a stroke!

MAE RE-ENTERS WITH TRIXIE, DIXIE, AND BUSTER. DIXIE IS CARRYING A HUGE BIRTHDAY CAKE. MAE GIVES A CUE ON A PITCH PIPE AND THE CHILDREN SING "HAPPY BIRTHDAY".

FIGURE 6

Happy birthday to you.
Happy birthday to you.
Happy birthday, Big Daddy.

Skinamarinka--dinka--dink
Skinamarinka--do
We love you.
Skinamarinka--dinka--dink
Skinamarinka--do
Big Daddy, you!
We love you in the morning
We love you in the night.



FIGURE 6

We love you when we're with you,
 And we love you out of sight.
 Skinamarinka--dinka--dink
 Skinamarinka--do.
 Big Mama, too!

BIG MAMA TURNS DOWN, CRIES.
 BIG DADDY TURNS TO BIG MAMA.

BIG DADDY. Now, Ida, what the hell is the matter with you?

BIG MAMA. Here comes Big Daddy's birthday!

BIG DADDY CROSSES UR. GOOPER
 CROSSES DR TO THE CHILDREN.

BIG DADDY. Je-sus! Ida, what the hell's the matter with you?

GOOPER TAKES THE CAKE AND
 SETS IT ON THE RADIO. MAE
 CROSSES TO BIG MAMA.

MAE. She's just so happy!

BIG MAMA. I'm just so happy, Big Daddy, I have to cry, or somethin'! Brick, do you know the wonderful news Doc Baugh got from th' clinic about Big Daddy? Big Daddy's one hundred percent!

MARGARET. Isn't that wonderful?

BIG MAMA. He's just one hundred percent. Passed the examination with flyin' colors. Now that we know there's nothin' wrong with Big Daddy but a spastic colon, I can tell you somethin'. I was worried sick, half out of my mind, fo' fear that Big Daddy might have a thing like----

MAGGIE RISES, CROSSES TO
 BRICK. SHE THEN PULLS A
 PACKAGE FROM BENEATH THE
 BED AND SETS IT ON THE BED.

MARGARET. Brick, honey, aren't you going to give Big Daddy his birthday present? Here it is, Big Daddy, this is from Brick!

THE CHILDREN SHRIEK AND RACE
 TO THE BED, THROWING THEM-
 SELVES ON THE BED AND THE

GIFT. THEY RIP THE WRAPPING
OFF THE BOX. MAE CROSSES TO
THE BED AND SHOOS THE CHILD-
REN OFF, DR. BRICK CROSSES
TO USL DOUBLE DOOR, AND
STARES OFF.

BIG MAMA. This is the biggest birthday Big Daddy's ever
had, a hundred presents and bushels of telegrams from----
What is it, Brick?

GOOPER. I bet 500 to 50 Brick doesn't know what it is.

MARGARET CROSSES DSL TO
THE BED.

BIG MAMA. The fun of presents is not knowin' what they
are till you open the package. Open your present, Big
Daddy.

BIG DADDY. Open it you'self.

BIG DADDY CROSSES TWO STEPS
SL.

I want to ask Brick somethin'. Come here, Brick.

BIG MAMA. Open it! Open it!

REV. TOOKER, GOOPER AND DR.
BAUGH GATHER AT THE BAR.

GOOPER. Big Daddy's callin' you, Brick.

BRICK. Tell Big Daddy I'm crippled.

BIG DADDY. I see you're crippled. I want to know how you
got crippled.

MAGGIE REMOVES THE GIFT
FROM THE BOX, HOLDING IT
UP FOR ALL TO SEE.

MARGARET. O look, oh, look, why it's a cashmere robe.

MAE. You sound surprised, Maggie.

MARGARET. I never saw one before.

MAE. That's funny--Hah!

MARGARET. Why is it funny?

BIG DADDY TAKES TWO STEPS
DS TO MAE.

BIG DADDY. Quiet!

BRICK. Quiet!

MAE TAKES ONE STEP TO
MAGGIE.

MAE. You bought it yourself at Lowenstein's in Memphis last Saturday. You know how I know?

BIG DADDY. I said "Quiet"!

BRICK. Quiet!

MAE. I know because the salesgirl that sold it to you waited on me an' said, "Oh, Mrs. Pollitt, your sister-in-law just bought a cashmere robe for your husband's father!"

MARGARET. Sister Woman----!

BIG DADDY. Quiet!

BRICK. Quiet

REV. TOOKER. --the stork and the Reaper are runnin' neck an' neck!

BIG DADDY. Preacher, I hope I'm not buttin' in on more talk about memorial stained glass windows, am I, Preacher?

MAE CROSSES DR TO DR. BAUGH
AND REV. TOOKER.

MAE. I wonder if the mosquitoes are active tonight?

BIG DADDY. What's that, Little Mama? Did you make some remark?

MAE. Yes, I said I wondered if the mosquitoes would eat us alive if we went out on th' gallery---

BIG DADDY. Well, if they do, I'll have your bones pulverized for fertilizer!

BIG MAMA. Last week we had a airplane sprayin' th' place an' I think it done some good, at least I haven't had a---

BRICK SLAPS AT A MOSQUITO.
BIG DADDY TAKES TWO STEPS
USL TOWARD BRICK.

BIG DADDY. Brick, they tell me, if what they tell me is true, that you done some jumpin' last night on the high school athletic field?

BIG MAMA CROSSES US TO
BRICK.

BIG MAMA. Brick, Big Daddy is talkin' to you, son.

BRICK. What was that, Big Daddy?

BIG DADDY. They say you done some jumpin' on the high school track field last night.

BRICK. That's what they told me, too.

BIG DADDY. Was it jumpin' or bumpin' that you were doin' out there?

BIG MAMA CROSSES TO BIG
DADDY.

BIG MAMA. Oh, Big Daddy!

BIG DADDY. What were you doin' out there at three a.m.?

MAE CROSSES TO REV. TOOKER
AS GOOPER AND DR. BAUGH
CHUCKLE.

FIGURE 9

BIG MAMA. Big Daddy, you are off the sick-list now an' I'm not goin' to excuse you for talkin----

BIG DADDY. Quiet!

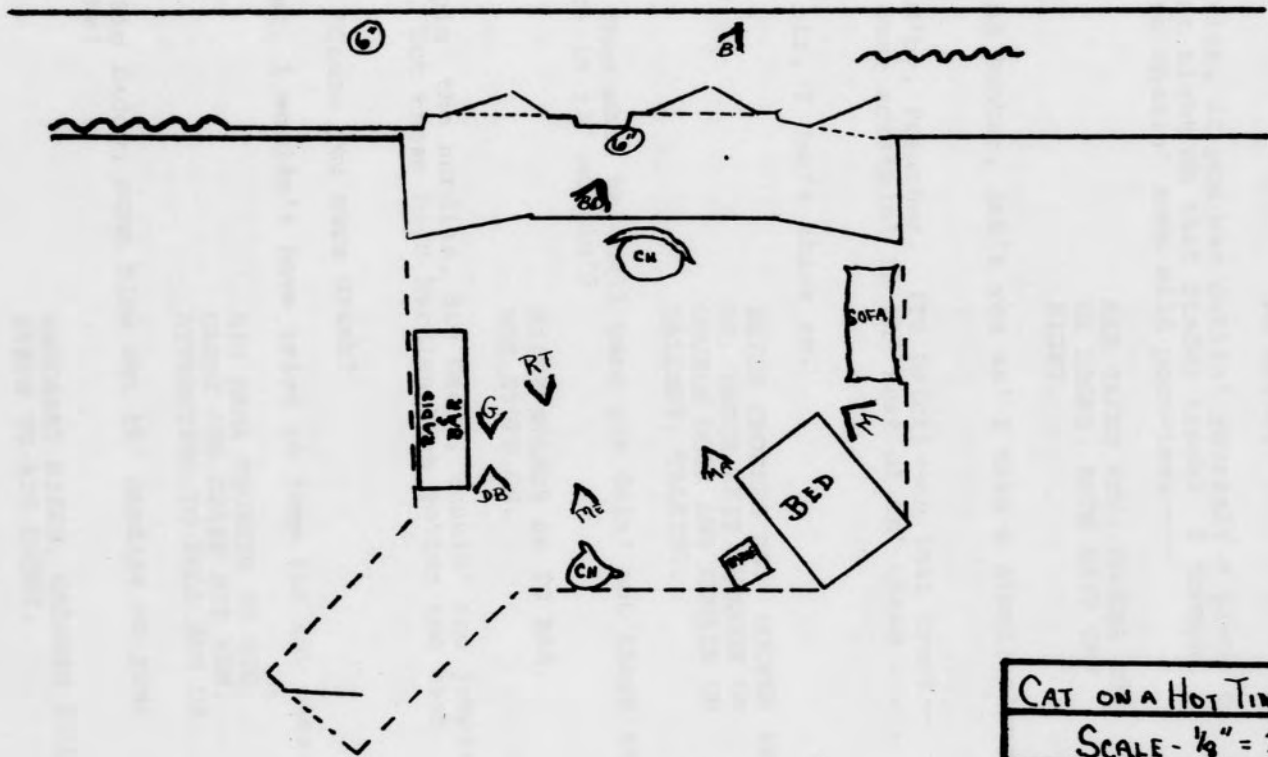
BIG MAMA. --so nasty--

BIG DADDY. Be quiet!

BIG MAMA CROSSES DR THREE
STEPS.

BIG MAMA. In front of Preacher an'----

BIG DADDY. Quiet!



CAT ON A HOT TIN ROOF
 SCALE - $\frac{1}{8}'' = 1'0''$

FIGURE 7

BIG DADDY TAKES ONE STEP
TO BRICK.

I ast you, Brick, if you was cuttin' yourself a piece o' poon-tang last night on that cinder track? I thought maybe you were chasin' some wild poon-tang----

MAE TAKES REV. TOOKER OUT
UR DOORS, BOTH EXIT OFF
RIGHT.

MAE. Reverend Tooker, let's you an' I take a stroll along th' gallery.

BIG DADDY. G'by, Preacher. (To Brick)--on that track--an' tripped over somethin' in th' heat of th' chase . . . is that it?

BRICK. No, sir, I don't think so.

BRICK CROSSES DL. GOOPER AND
DR. BAUGH EXIT THROUGH UR
DOUBLE DOOR AND REMAIN ON
GALLERY, TALKING.

BIG DADDY. Then what th' hell were you doin' out there at three o'clock in th' mornin'?

BRICK STARTS DR TO BAR,
BUT STOPS CS.

BRICK. Jumpin' the hurdles, Big Daddy, runnin' and jumpin' the hurdles, but those high hurdles have gotten too high for me now.

BIG DADDY. 'Cause you were drunk?

BRICK. Sober, I wouldn't have tried to jump the low ones.

BIG MAMA CROSSES TO BIG
DADDY AND GRABS HIS ARM,
ATTEMPTING TO PULL HIM DR.

BIG MAMA. Big Daddy, come blow out th' candles on your birthday cake!

MARGARET RISES, CROSSES FOUR
STEPS TO BIG DADDY.

MARGARET. I want to propose a toast to Big Daddy Pollitt on his sixty-fifth birthday, the biggest cotton-planter in---

BIG DADDY. I told you to stop it, now stop it, quit this bull!

MARGARET EXITS THROUGH UL
DOORS. OFF LEFT.

BIG MAMA. Big Daddy, I will not allow you to talk that way, not even on your birthday. I---

BRICK CROSSES SR TO THE BAR
AND FIXES HIMSELF A DRINK.

BIG DADDY. I'll talk like I want to on my birthday, Ida, or any goddam day of the year an' anybody here that don't like it knows what they can do!

BIG MAMA. You don't mean that!

BIG DADDY. What makes you think I don't mean it!

BIG MAMA. I just know you don't mean it.

BIG DADDY. You don't know a goddam thing an' you never did!

BIG MAMA. Big Daddy, you don't mean that.

BIG DADDY. Oh, yes, I do, oh, yes, I do mean it! I put up with a whole lot of crap around here because I thought I was dyin'----

BIG DADDY CIRCLE CROSSES TO
SL OF WICKER CHAIR.

An' you thought I was dyin' an' you started takin' over; well, you can stop takin' over, now, Ida, because I'm not goin' to die, you can just stop this business of takin' over because you're not takin' over because I'm not dyin'. I went through that laboratory and the exploratory operation and there's nothin' wrong with me but a spastic colon. An' I'm not dyin' of cancer which you thought I was dyin' of. Ain't that so? Didn't you think that I was dyin' of cancer? Ain't that so, Ida?

MAE AND REV. TOOKER ENTER ON
UR GALLERY AND JOIN THE CON-
VERSATION OF GOOPER AND DR.
BAUGH.

Didn't you have an idea I was dyin' of cancer an' now you could take control of this place an' everything on it? I got that impression, I seemed to get that impression. Your loud voice everywhere, your damn' busy ole body buttin' in here an' there!

BIG MAMA. Hush! The Preacher!

BIG MAMA CROSSES USR AND
CLOSES THE GALLERY DOORS.

BIG DADDY. Rut the Preacher! Did you hear what I said? Rut the cotton-pickin', chicken-eatin', memorial-stained-glass Preacher!

BIG MAMA. I never seen you act like this before an' I can't think what's got into you!

MAE TAKES REV. TOOKER OFF
LEFT, WHILE GOOPER AND DR.
BAUGH EXIT OFF RIGHT.

BIG DADDY. I went through all that laboratory an' operation an' all so I would know if you or me was boss here! Well, now it turns out that I am an' you ain't--and that's my birthday present--an' my cake an' champagne--because for three years now you been gradually takin' over.

BIG DADDY "SASHAYS" UL.

Bossin', talkin', sashayin' your ole butt aroun' this place I made! I made this place! I was overseer on it! I was the overseer on th' ole Straw an' Ochello plantation. I quit school at ten! I quit school at ten years old an' went to work like a nigger in th' fields.

BRICK CROSSES DR AND EXITS.

An' I rose to be overseer of th' Straw an' Ochello plantation. An' ole Straw died an' I was Ochello's partner an' the place got bigger an' bigger an' bigger an' bigger! I did all that myself with no goddam help from you, an' now you think that you're just about to take over. Well, I'm just about to tell you that you are not just about to take over, you are not just about to take over a goddam thing. Is that clear to you, Ida? Is that very plain to you now? Is that understood completely? I been through the laboratory from A to Z. I've had the goddam exploratory operation, an' nothin' is wrong with me but a spastic colon--

made spastic, I guess, by all th' goddam lies an' liars that I have had to put up with, an' all th' hypocrisy that I have lived with all these forty years that I been livin' with you! Now, blow out the candles on th' birthday cake! Take a deep breath an' blow out th' goddam candles on th' cake!

BIG MAMA CROSSES TO BIG DADDY.

BIG MAMA. Oh, Big Daddy, in all these years you never believed that I loved you----

BIG DADDY. Huh!

BIG MAMA. And I did, I did so much. I did love you. I even loved your hate an' your hardness, Big Daddy!

BIG MAMA EXITS UR, OFF RIGHT.

BIG DADDY. Wouldn't it be funny if that was true? Brick! Hey, Brick!

MARGARET ENTERS DR THREE STEPS.

I didn't call you, Maggie. I called Brick.

MARGARET. I'm just deliverin' him to you.

MARGARET CROSSES TO THE DOOR AND HELPS BRICK IN THE ROOM. SHE KISSES HIM, THEN GOES OUT DR. BRICK WIPES MAGGIE'S KISS FROM HIS MOUTH.

BIG DADDY. Why did you do that?

BRICK. Do what, Big Daddy?

BIG DADDY. Wipe her kiss off your mouth?

BRICK. I don't know, I wasn't conscious of it.

BIG DADDY CROSSES FIVE STEPS TO BRICK.

BIG DADDY. That woman of yours has a better shape on her than Gooper's got on his woman.

BRICK. 'S that all the difference you notice?

BIG DADDY. Diff'rences in shape is pretty important.

BRICK. But don't you think they's a fundamental resemblance, I mean like between a couple of Plymouth Rocks or Rhode Island Reds?

BIG DADDY. Sure, sure--but it's funny.

BRICK. What's funny?

BIG DADDY. That you an' Gooper, in spite of bein' so diff'rent, would pick out more or less the same type of woman.

BRICK. We married into society, Big Daddy.

BIG DADDY. Why do both of 'em have the same anxious look?

BRICK CROSSES DL TO THE
CORNER OF THE BED.

BRICK. Well, they're sittin' in th' middle of a big piece of land, Big Daddy, twenty-eight thousand acres is a pretty big piece of land an' so they're squarin' off on it, each determined to knock off a bigger piece of it than th' other whenever you let go.

MAE ENTERS UL ON GALLERY AND
STOPS AT THE UL DOOR, LISTEN-
ING TO THE CONVERSATION IN THE
ROOM.

BIG DADDY. I got a surprise for those women. I'm not goin' to let it go for a long time yet, if that's what they're waitin' for.

BRICK. That's right, Big Daddy. You just sit tight an' let 'em scratch each other's eyes out.

BIG DADDY. You bet your life I'm goin' to sit tight on it an' let 'em scratch their eyes out. But Gooper's wife is a good breeder, you got to admit she's fertile.

BIG DADDY CROSSES DR TO
HALL DOOR.

Hell, at supper tonight she had 'em all at the table an' they had to put in a couple of extra leaves in the table to make room for 'em, she's got five head of 'em now, an' another one's comin'.

BRICK. Yep, number six is comin'.

BIG DADDY. Six, hell, she'll probably drop a litter next time!

GOOPER APPEARS UR ON
GALLERY.

GOOPER. Mae! Hey, Mae!

MAE, HIDING ON THE GALLERY,
TRIES TO SHUSH GOOPER.
GOOPER LEAVES.

BIG DADDY. Somebody out there? Gooper? Gooper?

MAE BURSTS THROUGH UL DOOR.

MAE. Do you want Gooper, Big Daddy?

BIG DADDY. No, I don't want Gooper an' I don't want you! I want some privacy here while I'm havin' a confidential talk with my son Brick. Now it's too hot in here to close them doors, but if I have to close them ruttin' doors in order to have a private talk with my son Brick, just let me know an' I'll close 'em.

BIG DADDY TAKES TWO STEPS
TO MAE.

Because I hate eavesdroppers. I don't like any kind of sneakin' an' spyin'----

MAE. Why, Big Daddy, I didn't----

BIG DADDY. You stood on the wrong side of the moon, it threw your shadow!

MAE. I was just----

BIG DADDY CROSSES TO MAE.

BIG DADDY. You was just nothin' but spyin' an' you know it!

MAE. Oh, Big Daddy, you're so unkind for some reason to those that really love you!!

BIG DADDY. Shut up, shut up, shut up!

BIG DADDY BACKS MAE UL
AND OUT OF THE ROOM.

I'm goin' to move you an' Gooper out of that room next to this!! It's none of your goddam business what goes on here at night between Brick an' Maggie. You listen at night like a couple of ruttin' peek-hole spies, an' go an' give a report on what you hear to Big Mama an' she comes to me an' says they say such an' such an' so an' so about what they heard goin' on between Brick an' Maggie, an' Jesus, it makes me sick!

BRICK CROSSES SR TO BAR AND
FRESHENS HIS DRINK.

I'm goin' to move you an' Gooper out of that room. I can't stand sneakin' an' spyin', it makes me puke!

MAE TURNS, EXITS OFF LEFT.
BIG DADDY RE-ENTERS THE ROOM.

BRICK. They listen, do they?

BIG DADDY. Yeah, they listen an' give reports to Big Mama on what goes on here between you an' Maggie.

BIG DADDY CROSSES SL TO THE
SOFA.

They say that you won't sleep with her, that you sleep on the sofa. Is that true or not true? If you don't like Maggie, get rid of Maggie! What are you doin' there now?

BRICK. Fresh'nin up my drink.

BIG DADDY CIRCLE CROSSES TO
SL OF WICKER CHAIR.

BIG DADDY. Son, you know you got a real liquor problem?

BRICK. Yes, sir, yes, I know.

BIG DADDY. Is that why you quit sports-announcin', because of this liquor problem?

BRICK. Yes, sir, yes, sir, I guess so.

BIG DADDY. Son, don't guess about it, it's too important.

BRICK. Yes, sir.

BIG DADDY. An' listen to me--don't look at that dam' chandelier! Somethin' else we picked up at the big fire sale in Europe. Life is important. There's nothin' else to hold onto. A man that drinks is throwin' his life away. Don't do it. Hold onto your life, there's nothin' else to hold onto. Son----

BIG DADDY LIGHTS A CIGAR,
COUGHS.

BRICK. Huh?

BIG DADDY. Whew! That cigar made me a little light-headed----So you quit. How'd that come about? Some disappointment?

BRICK. I don't know, do you?

BIG DADDY. I'm askin' you. How in hell would I know if you don't?

SOUND CUE. CLOCK CHIMES
ELEVEN TIMES.

Why is it so damned hard for people to talk?

BRICK. That ole clock makes some nice remarks about time. I like to hear it all night.

BIG DADDY. We got that clock the summer we went to Europe, me an' Big Mama on that damn' Cook's Tour, never had such a lousy time in my life! I'm tellin' you, son, those gooks over there, they gouge your eyeballs out in their grand hotels.

BRICK CROSSES UC TO CHAIR
AND SITS. HIS CRUTCH RESTS
ON THE SR ARM OF THE CHAIR.

An' Big Mama bought more stuff than you could haul in a couple of box cars, that's no crap. Everywhere she went on this whirlwind tour she bought, bought, bought. Why, half that stuff she bought is still crated up an' mildewin' in the basement. Under water last spring! That Europe is nothin' on earth but a great big auction, that's all it is, that bunch of old, wornout places, it's just a

big fire sale, the whole ruttin' thing, an' Big Mama went wild in it! Why, you couldn't hold that woman with a mule's harness! Bought, bought, bought! Lucky I'm a rich man, yessiree, bob, it's lucky I'm a rich man, it sure is lucky, well, I am a rich man, Brick, yep, I'm a mighty rich man. You know how much I'm worth?

BIG DADDY MOVES UR TO BRICK
AND PICKS UP BRICK'S CRUTCH.
HE FIRMLY RAPS BRICK'S CAST.

Guess, Brick. Guess how much I'm worth! Close on ten million in cash an' blue chip stocks outside, mind you, of 28,000 acres of the richest land this side of the Valley Nile!

FIGURE 8

BIG DADDY CROSSES UL OF
BRICK.

But a man can't buy his life with it, he can't buy back his life when his life has been spent, that's one thing not offered in th' Europe fire sale or in th' American markets or any markets on earth, a man can't buy his life with it, he can't buy back his life with it when his life is finished . . . That's a sobering thought, a very sobering thought, and that's a thought that I was turning over in my head, over an' over an' over, until today--I'm wiser an' sadder, Brick, for this experience which I just gone through. They's one thing else I remember in Europe.

BRICK. What's that, Big Daddy?

BIG DADDY. The hills around Barcelona in the country of Spain an' th' children runnin' over those bare hills in their bare skins, beggin' like starvin' dogs with howls an' screeches, an' how fat the priests are on th' streets of Barcelona, so many of 'em, an' so fat an' so pleasant. Y' know, I could feed that country?

BIG DADDY CROSSES DL TO
SOFA.

I got money enough to feed that goddam country, but the human animal is a selfish beast an' I don't reckon the money I passed out there to those howlin' children in th' hills around Barcelona would more than upholster one of the chairs in this room----I mean pay to put a new cover on this chair!

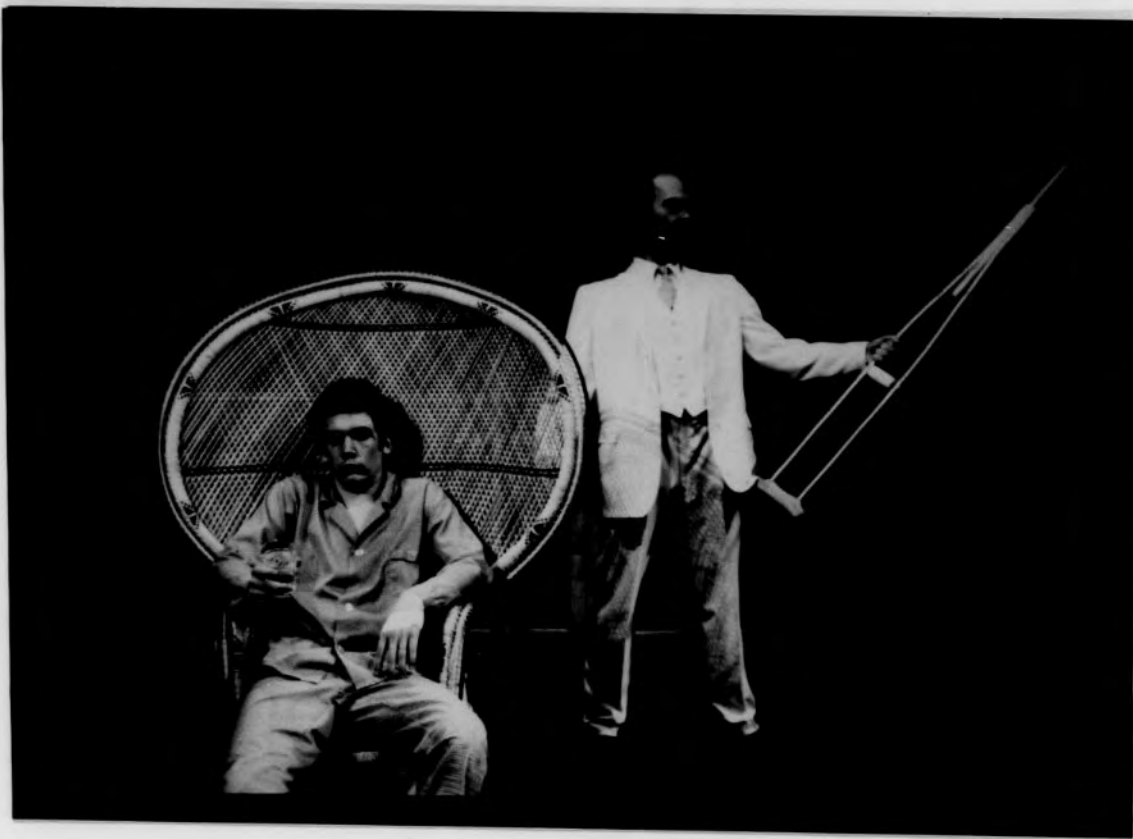


FIGURE 8

HE TURNS AND STRIKES THE
SOFA WITH THE CRUTCH.

Well, I threw them money like you'd scatter feed corn for chickens, I threw money at 'em just to get rid of 'em long enough to climb back into th' car an' drive away.

HE CIRCLE CROSSES SR TO
THE HEAD OF THE BED. HE
FACES BRICK AND RESTS ON
THE HEADBOARD OF THE BED.

An' then in Morocco, them Arabs, why, prostitution begins at four or five, that's no exaggeration, why, I remember one day in Marrakesh, that old walled Arab city, I set on a broken-down wall to have a cigar, it was fearful hot there an' this Arab woman stood in the road an' looked at me till I was embarrassed, she stood stock still in th' dusty hot road an' looked at me till I was embarrassed. But listen to this. She had a naked child with her, a little naked girl with her, barely able to toddle, an' after a while, she set this child on th' ground, whispered somethin' to her, an' give her a shove. This child come toward me, barely able t' walk, come toddlin' up to me an'-- Jesus! It makes y' sick t' remember a thing like this! It stuck out its hand and tried to unbutton my trousers! That child was not yet five! Can you believe me? Or do you think that I am makin' this up? I went back to the hotel an' said to Big Mama, "Big Mama! Git packed!" "We're clearin' out of this country!"

BRICK. Big Daddy, you're on a talkin' jag tonight.

BIG DADDY. Yes, sir, that's how it is, the human animal is a beast that dies but the fact that he's dyin' don't give him pity for others, no, sir, it----

BIG DADDY CROSSES DS FOUR
STEPS, AND TOSSES BRICK'S
CRUTCH ONTO THE BED.

BRICK. Gimme my crutch.

BIG DADDY. Did you say somethin'?

BRICK. Yes, sir.

BIG DADDY. What?

BRICK. Hand me over that crutch so I can get up.

BIG DADDY. Where you goin'?

BRICK. I'm takin' a little short trip to Echo Spring.

BIG DADDY. Echo Spring?

BIG DADDY GETS CRUTCH,
CROSSES TO BRICK.

BRICK. Liquor cabinet.

HE HANDS BRICK THE CRUTCH.
BRICK RISES, TAKES ONE STEP
SR. BIG DADDY QUICKLY STEPS
UR, CUTTING OFF BRICK'S PATH
TO THE BAR.

BIG DADDY. Yes, sir, boy, the human animal is a beast that dies an' if he's got money he buys an' buys an' buys an' I think the reason he buys everything he can buy is that in the back of his mind he has the crazy hope that one of his purchases will be life everlastin'!--which it never can be--hear me?

BRICK CIRCLES AROUND BIG
DADDY, AND CROSSES TO THE
BAR. BIG DADDY FOLLOWS.

BRICK. Big Daddy, you sure are shootin' the breeze here tonight.

BIG DADDY. I been quiet here lately, spoke not a word, just sat an' stared into space. I had somethin' heavy weighin' on my mind, but tonight that load was took off me.

BIG DADDY CROSSES TO UL
GALLERY DOOR.

That's why I'm talkin'. The sky looks diff'rent to me!

BRICK. You know what I like to hear most?

BIG DADDY. What?

BRICK. Solid quiet--Perfect--unbroken--quiet.

BIG DADDY. Why?

BRICK. Because it's more peaceful.

BIG DADDY TURNS, STEPS TO
BRICK.

BIG DADDY. Man, you'll be hearin' a lot of that soon
enough in th' grave.

BRICK. Are you through talkin' to me?

BIG DADDY. Why are you so anxious to shut me up?

BRICK. Well, sir, ever' so often you say to me, Brick, I
want to have a talk with you, but when we talk, it never
materializes.

BRICK CROSSES SL TO SOFA,
AND SITS.

You gas about this an' that an' I look like I listen. I
try to look like I listen, but I don't listen, not much.
Big Daddy, communication between two people is very diffi-
cult, and somehow, between you an' me, it just does not
happen.

BIG DADDY LOOKS US TO GALLERY,
THEN CROSSES DR TO HALL AND
LOOKS. HE STOPS AND TURNS
TO BRICK.

BIG DADDY. Have you ever been scared? I mean have you
ever felt down-right terror of somethin'? Son, I thought
I had it. I thought the old man made out of bones had
laid his cold an' heavy hand on my shoulder!

BRICK. Well, Big Daddy, you kept a tight mouth about it.

BIG DADDY. A pig squeals. A man keeps a tight mouth
about it, in spite of a man not havin' a pig's advantage.

BRICK. What advantage is that?

BIG DADDY. Ignorance of mortality is a comfort. A man
don't have that comfort, he's the only living thing that
conceives of death, that knows what it is, the others go
without knowing. A pig squeals, but a man, sometimes he
can keep a tight mouth about it. I wonder if----

BRICK. What, Big Daddy?

BIG DADDY. A whiskey highball would injure this spastic
condition?

BRICK. No, sir, it might do it good.

BIG DADDY CROSSES TO BAR
AND FIXES DRINK.

BIG DADDY. I can't tell you, boy! The sky is open! It's open again! It's open, boy it's open!

BRICK. You feel better, Big Daddy?

BIG DADDY. Better? Hell! I can breathe!

BIG DADDY CROSSES TWO STEPS
DR.

All my life I been like a doubled up fist---poundin', smashin', drivin'! Now I'm goin' to loosen these doubled up hands an' touch things easy with 'em. You know what I'm contemplatin'?

BRICK. No, sir, what are you contemplatin'?

BIG DADDY. Pleasure! Pleasure with women. Yes, boy, I'll tell you something that you might not guess. I still have desire for women and this is my 65th birthday!

BRICK RISES, CROSSES UR
FIVE STEPS.

BRICK. I think that's mighty remarkable, Big Daddy.

BIG DADDY. Remarkable?

BRICK. Admirable, Big Daddy.

BIG DADDY. You're goddam right it is, remarkable an' admirable both. I realize now that I never had me enough. I let many chances slip by because of scruples about it, scruples, convention, crap! All that stuff is bull! It took the shadow of death to make me see it. Now that shadow's lifted, I'm goin' to cut loose an' have, what is it they call it, have me a ball!

SOUND CUE. PHONE RINGS.

BRICK. A ball, huh?

BIG DADDY. That's right, a ball, a ball! Hell, I slept with Big Mama till, let's see, five years ago, till I was sixty an' she was fifty-eight, an' never even liked her, never did!

BIG MAMA ENTERS USL, CROSSES
DR TO BIG DADDY.

BIG MAMA. Don't you men hear that phone ring? I heard it
way out on th' gall'ry.

SHE KISSES BIG DADDY.

BIG DADDY. There's five rooms off this front gall'ry that
you could go through. Why do you go through this one?

BIG MAMA LAUGHS AND EXITS
DR TO PHONE.

When Big Mama goes out of a room, I can't remember what
she looks like----

BIG MAMA. Hello----

BIG DADDY. But when Big Mama comes back into a room, boy,
then I see what she looks like, an' I wish I didn't!

BRICK CROSSES UL TO GALLERY
DOOR, AND STARTS TO EXIT.

FIGURE 9.

BIG MAMA. Hello, Miss Sally!

BIG DADDY. Hey! Where you goin'?

BRICK. Out for a breather.

BIG DADDY. Not yet you ain't. Stay here till this talk
is finished, young fellow.

BRICK. I thought it was finished, Big Daddy.

SOUND CUE. CLOCK CHIMES
ONCE.

BIG DADDY. It ain't even begun!

BRICK. I just wanted to feel that river breeze.

BIG MAMA. Miss Sally, you're a caution, Miss Sally!

BIG DADDY. Come back in here!

BRICK. My mistake, excuse me.

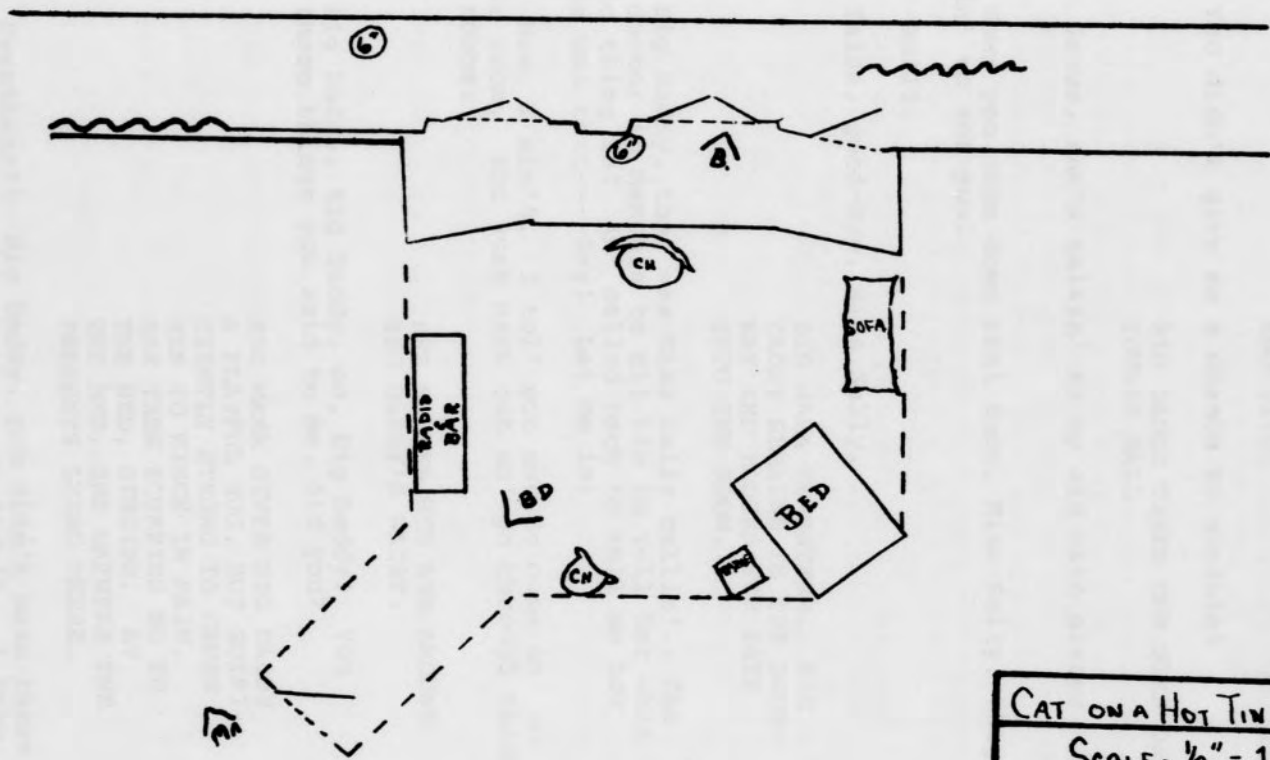


FIGURE 9

CAT ON A HOT TIN ROOF
 SCALE - $\frac{1}{8}'' = 1'0''$

BRICK CROSSES SL TO SOFA
AND SITS.

BIG MAMA. You didn't give me a chance to explain!

BIG DADDY TAKES ONE STEP DR
TOWARD HALL.

BIG DADDY. Jesus, she's talkin' to my old maid sister
again.

BIG MAMA. Now, you come down real soon, Miss Sally. Big
Daddy's dyin' to see you!

BIG DADDY. Bull!

BIG MAMA. Yaiss, good-bye, Miss Sally.

BIG MAMA RE-ENTERS. BIG
DADDY REMAINS IN THE DOOR-
WAY AND BLOCKS HER PATH
INTO THE ROOM.

BIG MAMA. Big Daddy, that was Miss Sally callin'. She
called her doctor in Memphis to git him to tell her what
that spastic thing is! An' called back to tell me how
relieved she was that----Hey! Let me in!

BIG DADDY. Naw, I ain't. I tol' you not to come an' go
through this room. You just back out an' go through those
other five rooms.

SHE SNEAKS HER ARM AROUND
BIG DADDY'S WAIST.

BIG MAMA. Big Daddy, Big Daddy, oh, Big Daddy! You
didn't mean those things you said to me, did you?

BIG MAMA GIVES BIG DADDY
A PLAYFUL HUG, BUT SUFFI-
CIENTLY STRONG TO CAUSE
HIM TO WINCE IN PAIN.
SHE THEN SCURRIES SL TO
THE BED, SINGING. AT
THE BED, SHE GATHERS THE
PRESENTS LYING THERE.

Sweetheart, Sweetheart! Big Daddy, you didn't mean those
awful things you said to me? I know you didn't. I know
you didn't mean those things in your heart.

BIG MAMA EXITS UL, OFF LEFT,
SINGING. BIG DADDY CROSSES
UL, LOOKING OFF IN THE DI-
RECTION OF BIG MAMA.

BIG DADDY. All that I ask of that woman is that she leaves me alone. But she can't admit to herself that she makes me sick. That comes of having slept with her too many years. Should have quit much sooner, but that ole woman, she never got enough of it. An' I was good in bed. I never should have wasted so much of it on her. They say you got just so many an' each one is numbered. Well, I got a few left in me, a few, an' I'm goin' to pick me a good one to spend 'em on. I'm goin' to pick me a choice one. I don't care how much she costs. I'll smother her in minks! I'll strip her naked an' smother her in minks an' choke her with diamonds! I'll strip her naked an' choke her with diamonds an' smother her with minks and hump her from hell to breakfast! Non-stop! Yes, son, I'm happy. I'm happy, son, I'm happy!

BRICK RISES, CROSSES SR.

What makes you so restless? Have you got ants in your britches?

BRICK. Yes, sir.

BIG DADDY. Why?

BRICK. Something--hasn't--happened.

BIG DADDY. Yeh, what is that?

BRICK STOPS.

BRICK. The--click.

BIG DADDY. Did you say "click"?

BRICK. Yes, click.

BIG DADDY. What click?

BRICK. A click that I get in my head that makes me peaceful.

BIG DADDY. I sure in hell don't know what you're talkin' about, but it disturbs me.

BRICK CONTINUES TO BAR.

BRICK. It's just a mechanical thing.

BIG DADDY. What is a mechanical thing?

BRICK. This click that I get in my head that makes me peaceful. I got to drink till I get it. It's just a mechanical thing, something like a--like a--like a--

BIG DADDY. Like a--what?

BRICK TOUCHES THE GLASS TO
HIS FOREHEAD.

BRICK. Like a switch clicking off in my head, turnin' the hot light off an' the cool light on, an' all of a sudden there's peace!

BIG DADDY. Jesus! I didn't know it had gotten that bad with you. Why, boy, you're alcoholic!

BRICK. That's the truth, Big Daddy. I'm alcoholic.

BIG DADDY. This shows how I let things go!

BRICK. I have to hear that little click in my head that makes me peaceful. Usually I hear it sooner than this, sometimes as early as noon, but today it's dilatory---- I just haven't got the right level of alcohol in my bloodstream yet.

BIG DADDY CROSSES DSL OF
BED.

BIG DADDY. Expectin' death made me blind. I didn't have no idea that a son of mine was turnin' into a drunkard under my nose.

BRICK. Well, now you do, Big Daddy, the news has penetrated. And so if you'll excuse me----

BRICK STARTS US.

BIG DADDY. No, I won't excuse you.

BRICK. I'd better sit by myself till I hear that click in my head, it's just a mechanical thing but it don't happen except when I'm alone or talkin' to no one.

BIG DADDY CROSSES US OF
BRICK, BLOCKING HIS EXIT.

BIG DADDY. You got a long, long time to sit still, boy, and talk to no one, but now you're talkin' to me. At least I'm talkin' to you. An' you set there an' listen until I tell you the conversation is over!

BRICK. But this talk is like all the others we've ever had together in our lives! It's nowhere, nowhere! It's--- it's painful, Big Daddy!

BIG DADDY. All right, then, let it be painful!

BIG DADDY PULLS BRICK'S
CRUTCH OUT FROM UNDER HIS
ARM. BRICK FALLS TO FLOOR,
CLINGING TO HIS DRINK.

BRICK. I can hop on one foot, an' if I fall, I can crawl!

BRICK CRAWLS SL TO THE CS
CHAIR AND SITS.

BIG DADDY. If you ain't careful you're goin' to crawl off this plantation an' then, by Jesus, you'll have to hustle your drinks along Skid Row!

BRICK. That'll come, Big Daddy.

BIG DADDY CROSSES DSR OF
BRICK, AND CONFRONTS HIM.

BIG DADDY. No, it won't! You're my son an' I'm goin' to straighten you out, now that I'm straightened out, I'm goin' to straighten you out!

BRICK. Yeah?

BRICK STARTS TO RISE
SEVERAL TIMES AND IS
REPEATEDLY PUSHED BACK
BY BIG DADDY, WEILDING
BRICK'S CRUTCH.

BIG DADDY. Stay here, you son of a bitch, till I say go!

BRICK. I can't.

BIG DADDY. You sure in hell will, God damn it!

BRICK. No, I can't. We talk, you talk--in circles! We get nowhere. You say you want to talk to me and don't have a thing to say to me.

BIG MAMA APPEARS UL ON GALLERY.

BIG DADDY. Nothin' to say when I tell you I'm goin' to live when I thought I was dyin'!

BRICK. Oh--that! Is that what you have to say to me?

BIG DADDY. Why, you son of a bitch! Ain't that, ain't that---important?

BRICK. Well, you said that, that's said, and now I----

BRICK STARTS TO RISE. BIG DADDY PUSHES HIM BACK.

BIG DADDY. Now you set back down!

BRICK. You're all balled up!

BIG DADDY. I ain't balled up!

BRICK. You are, you're all balled up!

BIG DADDY. Don't tell me what I am, you drunken whelp!

BRICK. Big Daddy----

BIG DADDY. I want you to know I'm back in the driver's seat now!

BIG MAMA ENTERS THE ROOM, APPREHENSIVELY.

BIG MAMA. Big Daddy----why----?

BIG DADDY. What in hell do you want here, Big Mama?

BIG DADDY CROSSES USR. RELEASED, BRICK SCRAMBLES FOR HIS DISCARDED CRUTCH.

BIG MAMA. Oh, Big Daddy! Why are you shoutin' like that? I just cain't stainnd it! I tell you, I just cain't----

BIG DADDY. Git out a here!

BRICK HOBBLER DR. BIG DADDY
 TURNS, CROSSES TO HIM AND
 SEIZES THE CRUTCH, SENDING
 BRICK TO THE FLOOR. BIG
 MAMA CRIES AND STARTS TOWARD
 BRICK.

Leave him alone!

FIGURE 10.

BIG MAMA EXITS UL, OFF LEFT.

BRICK. Christ----!

BIG DADDY. Yeah! Christ!----is right.

BRICK. Big Daddy--give me my crutch! Give me my crutch,
 Big Daddy.

BIG DADDY. Why do you drink?

BRICK. Don't know--give me my crutch!

BIG DADDY. You better think why you drink or give up
 drinkin'!

BRICK. Will you please give me my crutch so I can get up
 off this floor?

BIG DADDY. First you answer my question. Why do you
 drink? Why are you throwin' your life away, boy, like
 somethin' disgustin' you picked up on the street?

BRICK. Big Daddy, I'm in pain, I stepped on that foot.

BIG DADDY. Good! I'm glad you're not too numb with
 liquor in you to feel some pain!

BIG DADDY CROSSES UC AND
 KNOCKS BRICK'S DRINK OVER.

BRICK. You--spilled my drink.

BIG DADDY. I'll make a bargain with you. You tell me
 why you drink an' I'll hand you one. I'll pour you the
 liquor myself an' hand it to you.

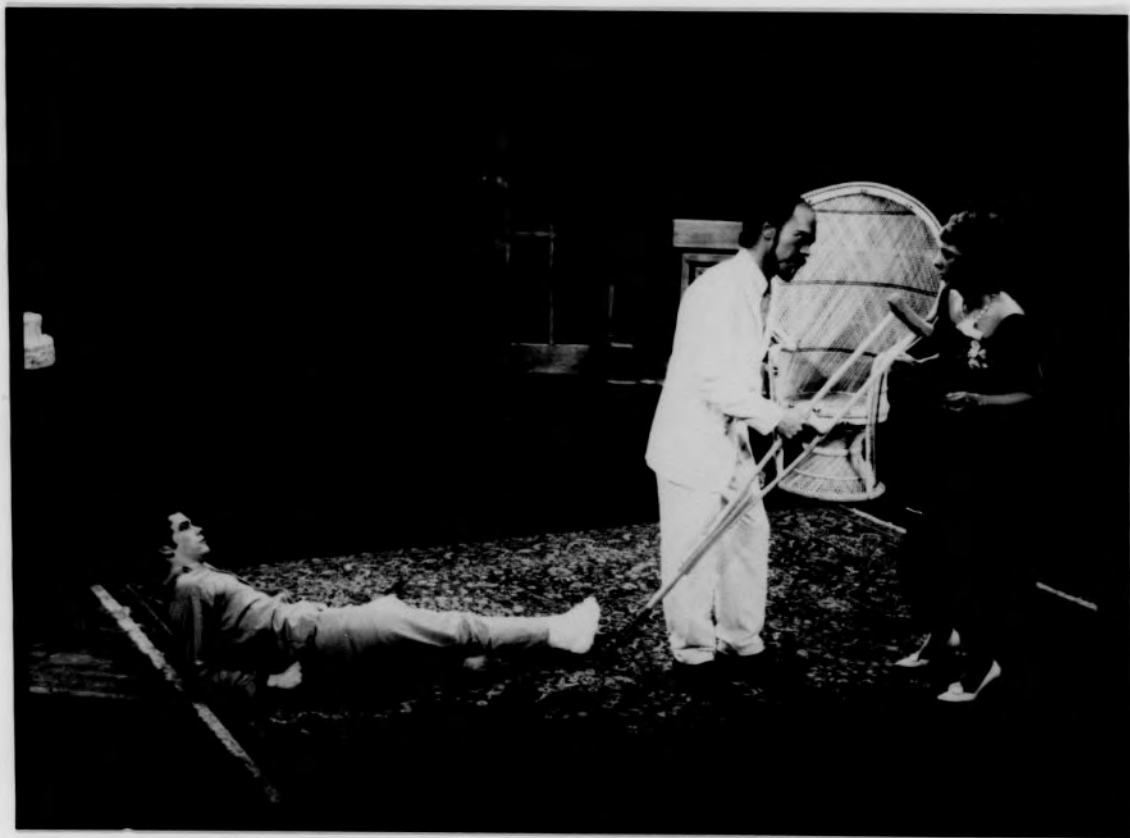


FIGURE 10

BRICK. Why do I drink?

BIG DADDY. Yeah---Why?

BRICK. Give me a drink and I'll tell you.

BIG DADDY. Tell me first!

BRICK. I'll tell you in one word.

BIG DADDY. What word?

BRICK. Disgust!

SOUND CUE. CLOCK CHIMES
TWICE.

Now how about that drink?

BIG DADDY. What are you disgusted with? You got to tell me that, first. Otherwise bein' disgusted don't make no sense.

BRICK STRUGGLES TO HIS FEET.

BRICK. Give me my crutch----

BIG DADDY. You heard me, you got to tell me what I asked you first.

BRICK. I told you, I said to kill my disgust!

BIG DADDY. Disgust with what?!

EXHAUSTED, BRICK SLUMPS
INTO BIG DADDY'S ARMS.

BRICK. You strike a hard bargain.

BIG DADDY. You want liquor that bad?

BRICK. Yeah, I want it that bad.

BIG DADDY. If I give you a drink will you tell me what it is you're disgusted with, Brick?

BRICK. Yes, sir, I will try to.

BIG DADDY HANDS BRICK HIS
CRUTCH AND CROSSES TO THE
BAR TO FIX BRICK'S DRINK.
BRICK CROSSES SL AND SITS
ON THE BED.

Have you ever heard the word "mendacity"?

BIG DADDY CROSSES TO BRICK
AND HANDS HIM THE DRINK.

BIG DADDY. Sure. Mendacity is one of them five dollar
words that cheap politicians throw back an' forth at each
other.

BRICK. You know what it means?

BIG DADDY. Don't it mean lyin' an' liars?

BRICK. Yes, sir, lyin' an' liars.

BIG DADDY. Has someone been lyin' to you?

GOOPER, MAE, WITH TRIXIE,
DIXIE, AND BUSTER ENTER
SR ON GALLERY, MARCHING
AS IN A PARADE.

MAE AND CHILDREN. We want Big Dad-dee!
We want Big Dad-dee!

THE PROCESSION PAUSES AT
THE UR GALLERY DOOR.

FIGURE 11.

BIG DADDY SHOUTS "JESUS"
IN FRUSTRATION.

GOOPER. Big Daddy, the kiddies are shoutin' for you out
there.

BIG DADDY. Keep out, Gooper!

GOOPER. "Scuse me!"

THEY MOVE OFF LEFT.

BIG DADDY. Who's been lyin' to you? Has Margaret been
lyin' to you, has your wife been lyin' to you about some-
thin', Brick?

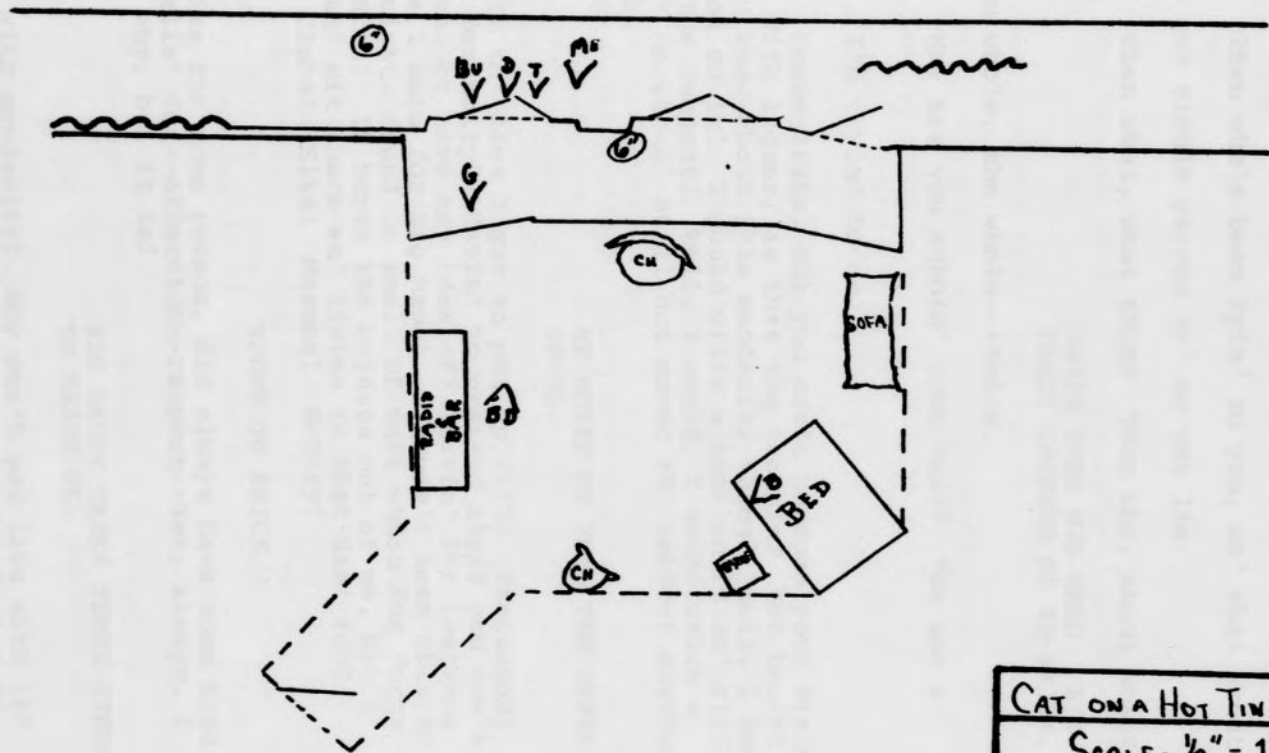


FIGURE 11

BRICK. Not her. That wouldn't matter.

BIG DADDY. Then who's been lyin' to you, an' what about?

BRICK. No one single person an' no one lie.

BIG DADDY. Then what, what then? Then who, about what?

BRICK RUBS HIS HEAD. BIG
DADDY CROSSES DL TO BRICK.

BRICK. The whole, the whole---thing.

BIG DADDY. Why are you rubbin' your head? You got a headache?

BRICK. No, I'm tryin' to---

BIG DADDY. Concentrate, but you can't because your brain's all soaked with liquor, is that the trouble? Wet brain! What do you know about this mendacity thing? Hell, I could write a book on it! I could write a book on it an' still not cover the subject! Well, I could, I could write a goddam book on it an' still not cover th' subject anywhere near enough!

HE MOVES US ONTO THE UPPER
LEVEL.

Think of all th' lies I got to put up with! Pretenses! Ain't that mendacity? Havin' to pretend stuff you don't think or feel or have any idea of? Havin' for instance to act like I care for Big Mama! I haven't been able to stand the sight, sound or smell of that woman for forty years! Church! It bores the bejesus out of me, but I go! I go an' sit there an' listen to that dam' fool preacher! Clubs! Elks! Masons! Rotary!

TURNS TO BRICK.

You I do like for some reason, did always have some kind of real feelin' for--affection--respect--Yes, always, I don't know why, but it is!

BIG DADDY TAKES THREE STEPS
TO BRICK DL.

I've lived with mendacity! Why can't you live with it? Hell, you got to live with it, there's nothin' else to live with except mendacity, is there?

BRICK. Yes, sir, yes, sir, there is somethin' else that you can live with.

BIG DADDY. What?

BRICK. This!

BIG DADDY. That's not livin', that's dodgin' away from life.

BRICK. I want to dodge away from it.

BIG DADDY. Then why don't you kill yourself, man?

BRICK. I like to drink.

BIG DADDY. God! I can't talk to you.

BRICK. I'm sorry, Big Daddy.

BIG DADDY. Not as sorry as I am. I'll tell you somethin'. A little while back when I thought my number was up, before I found out it was just this--spastic--colon, I thought about you. Should I or should I not, if the jig was up, give you this place when I go? I hate Gooper an' those five screamin' monkeys like parrots in a jungle an' that bitch Mae! Why should I turn over 28,000 acres of the richest land this side of the Valley Nile to not my kind? But why in hell on the other hand, Brick, should I subsidize a dam' fool on the bottle? Liked or not liked, well, maybe even--loved! Why should I do that? Subsidize worthless behavior? Rot? Corruption?

HE CROSSES TO BRICK.

An' this I will tell you frankly. I didn't make up my mind at all on that question an' still to this day I ain't made out no will! Well, now I don't have to! The pressure is gone. I can just wait an' see if you pull yourself together or if you don't.

BRICK. That's right, Big Daddy.

BIG DADDY. You sound like you thought I was kiddin'.

BRICK RISES, CROSSES SR.

BRICK. No, sir, I know you're not kiddin'.

BIG DADDY. But you don't care---?

BRICK. No, sir, I don't care---

BIG DADDY. Wait! Wait, Brick.

BIG DADDY STEPS TOWARD BRICK.

Don't let's leave it like this, like them other talks we've had, we've always--talked around things, we've--just talked around things like some rotten reason, I don't know what, it's always like somethin' was left not spoken, somethin' avoided because neither of us was honest enough with the other---

BRICK. I never lied to you, Big Daddy.

BIG DADDY. Did I ever to you?

BRICK. No, sir.

BIG DADDY. Then there is at least two people that never lied to each other.

BRICK. Yes sir, but we've never talked to each other.

BIG DADDY. We can now.

BRICK MOVES DR TO EXIT,
THEN STOPS.

BRICK. Big Daddy, there don't seem to be anything much to say.

BIG DADDY. You say that you drink to kill your disgust with lyin'.

BRICK. You said to give you a reason.

BIG DADDY. Is liquor the only thing that'll kill this disgust?

BRICK. Now? Yes.

BIG DADDY. But not once, huh?

BRICK. Not when I was still young an' believin'. A drinkin' man's someone who wants to forget he isn't still young an' believin'.

BIG DADDY. Believin' what?

BRICK. Believin'---

BIG DADDY. Believin' what?

BRICK. Believin'

BIG DADDY. I don't know what th' hell you mean by believin' an' I don't think you know what you mean by believin', but if you still got sports in your blood, go back to sports announcin' an'----

HE SPINS TO FACE BIG DADDY.

BRICK. Sit in a glass box watchin' games I can't play. Describin' what I can't do while players do it? Sweatin' out their disgust an' confusion in contests I'm not fit for?

BRICK CROSSES US TO BAR.

Drinkin' a coke, half bourbon, so I can stand it? That's no dam' good any more--time just outran me, Big Daddy--- got there first.

BIG DADDY. I think you're passin' the buck.

BRICK. You know many drinkin' men?

BIG DADDY. I have known a fair number of that species.

BRICK. Could any of 'em tell you why they drank?

BIG DADDY CROSSES THREE STEPS
TO BRICK.

BIG DADDY. Yep, you're passin' the buck, you're passin' the buck to things like time an' disgust with mendacity, an'---crap! If you got to use that kind of language about a thing it's 90-proof bull an' I'm not buyin' any.

BRICK. I had to give you a reason to get a drink.

BIG DADDY. What did you say?

BRICK. I said: I had to give you a reason to get a drink.

BIG DADDY. You started drinkin' when your friend Skipper died!

BRICK. What are you suggestin'?

BIG DADDY SETS DOWN HIS DRINK
AND CROSSES UL.

BIG DADDY. I'm suggestin' nothin'--but Gooper an' Mae suggested that there was somethin' not right, exactly, in your---

BRICK. "Not right"---?

BIG DADDY. Not, well, exactly normal in your--friendship with---

BRICK. They suggested that, too? I thought that was Maggie's suggestion. Who else's suggestion is it, is it yours? How many others thought that Skipper and I were---?

BIG DADDY. Now hold on, hold on a minute, son. I knocked around in my time---

BRICK. What's that got to do with it?

BIG DADDY. I said "Hold on"! I bummed, I bummed this country till---

BRICK. Whose suggestion--who else's suggestion is it?

REV. TOOKER ENTERS SR ON
GALLERY, WANDERS INTO THE
UR GALLERY DOOR, AND STOPS.

FIGURE 12.

BIG DADDY. Slept in hobo jungles an' railrod Y's an' flop-houses in all cities before---

BRICK. Oh, you think so, too, you call me your son and a queer!

REV. TOOKER CLEARS HIS THROAT.
BIG DADDY SWINGS AROUND, AND
STEPS TO HIM.

BIG DADDY. Preacher! What're you lookin' for, Preacher?

REV. TOOKER STEPS TOWARD
BIG DADDY.

REV. TOOKER. The gentleman's lavatory---

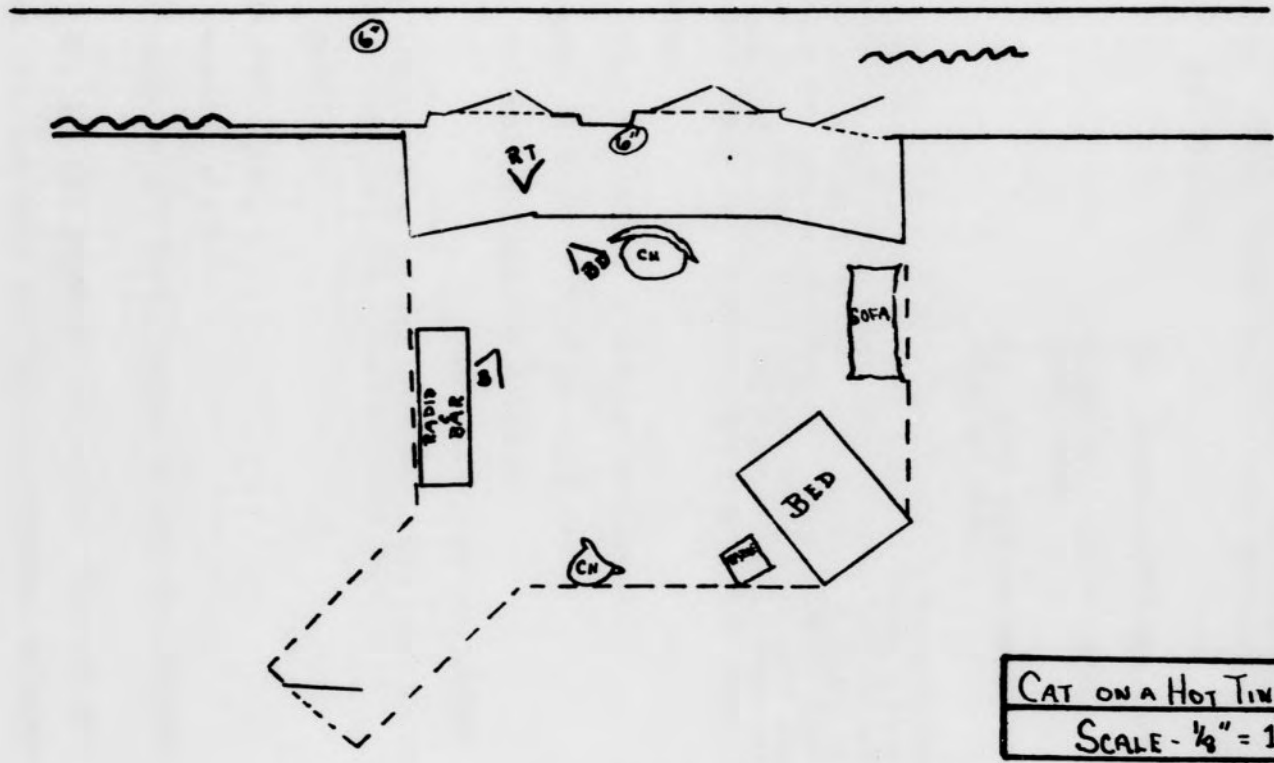


FIGURE 12

BIG DADDY. Go back out an' walk down to th' other end of th' gall'ry, Rev'rend, an' use th' bathroom connected with my bedroom, an' if you can't find it, ask 'em where it is!

REV. TOOKER. Ah--thanks---

REV. TOOKER EXITS OFF LEFT.

SOUND CUE. CLOCK CHIMES
THREE TIMES.

BIG DADDY CROSSES THREE
STEPS TO BRICK.

BIG DADDY. Look, Brick, I can understand, I can understand anything. Christ! The year I came here, in 1910, I wore my shoes through, hocked my gear, hopped off a yellow dog freight car half a mile down th' road, slep in a wagon of cotton outside th' gin--Jack Straw an' Peter Ochello took me in, hired me to manage this place, which grew into this one--when Jack Straw died, why ole Peter Ochello quit eatin' like a dog does when it's master's dead, an' died, too!

BRICK. Christ!

BIG DADDY. I'm just sayin' I understand such---

BRICK. Skipper is dead--I have not quit eatin'!

BIG DADDY. No, but you started drinkin'.

BRICK WHIRLS TO BIG DADDY.

BRICK. You think so, too! You think so, too? You think me an' Skipper did, did, did--sodomy--together?

BIG DADDY. Hold---

BRICK. That what you---?

BIG DADDY. --on--a minute!

BRICK. You think we did dirty things between us, Skipper an'---

BIG DADDY. Who are you shoutin' like that? Why are you--

BRICK. --me, is that what you think of Skipper, is that--

BIG DADDY. --so excited? I don't think nothin'. I don't know nothin'. I'm simply telling you what---

BRICK. You think Skipper an' me were a pair of dirty ole men?

BIG DADDY. Now, that's---

BRICK. Straw? Ochello? A couple of---

BIG DADDY. Now just---

BRICK. --duckin' sissies? Queers? Is that what---

BIG DADDY. Take it easy, son.

BRICK. --think?

HE STRIKES OUT AT BIG DADDY,
LOSES HIS BALANCE AND
STUMBLES.

BIG DADDY. Jesus! Whew! Grab my hand!

BIG DADDY STEPS TO BRICK.

BRICK. Naw--I don't want your hand!

HE LIFTS BRICK UP BY THE
SHOULDERS.

BIG DADDY. Well, I want yours. Git up. You broken out in a sweat! You're pantin' like you run a mile---

BRICK. Big Daddy, you shock me, Big Daddy, you, you--shock me! Talkin' so--casually--about a thing--like that. Don't you know how people feel about things like that? How, how disgusted they are by things like that? Why, at Ole Miss, when it was discovered that a pledge in our fraternity, Skipper's an' mine, did a, attempted to do a--unnatural thing with--We not only dropped him like a hot rock, we told him to git off the campus, an' he did, he got! --all the way to---

BIG DADDY. Where?

BRICK. North Africa, last I heard!

BIG DADDY MOVES UL, FOCUSED
OFF LEFT.

BIG DADDY. Well, I have come back from further away than that, I just now returned from the other side of the moon, death's country, son, an' I'm not easy to shock by anything here. Always, anyhow, lived with too much space around me to be infected by th' ideas of other people. One thing you can grow on a big place more important than cotton--is tolerance! I grown it.

BRICK SITS IN CS CHAIR.

BRICK. Why can't exceptional friendship, real, real, deep, deep friendship between two men be respected as somethin' clean an' decent without bein' thought of as--fairies!

BIG DADDY CROSSES FOUR STEPS
TO BRICK.

BIG DADDY. It can, it is, for God's sake. I told Mae an' Gooper---

BRICK. To hell with Mae an' Gooper! To hell with all dirty lies an' liars! Skipper an' me had a clean, true thing between us, had a clean friendship practically all our lives, till Maggie got the idea you're talkin' about. Normal? No. It was too rare to be normal, any true thing between two people is too rare to be normal. Oh, once in a while he put his hand on my shoulder or I'd put mine on his, oh, maybe even when we were tourin' the country in pro football an' sharin' hotel rooms, we'd reach across the space between th' two beds an' shake hands to say good night, yeah, one or two times we---

BIG DADDY. Brick, nobody thinks that's not normal!

BRICK. Well, they're mistaken! It was! It was a pure an' true thing an' that's not normal!

SOUND CUE. A BURST OF
FIREWORKS.

MAE AND CHILDREN APPEAR SL
ON GALLERY. THEY MOVE SR
ACROSS THE GALLERY. MAE
STOPS AND STICKS HER HEAD
IN THE UR GALLERY DOOR.

MAE. Big Daddy, they're startin' the fireworks!

BIG DADDY. Yeah--it's hard t'--talk.

BIG DADDY CROSSES UR AND
CLOSES THE DOOR.

BRICK. All right, then--let's let it go.

BIG DADDY. No, sir! Why did Skipper crack up? Why have you?

BRICK. All right. You're askin' for it, Big Daddy. We're finally goin' to have that real, true talk you wanted. It's too late to stop it now, we got to carry it through an' cover ev'ry subject.

BRICK RISES, CROSSES TO BAR.

Maggie declares that Skipper an' I went into pro football after we left Ole Miss because we were scared to grow up, wanted to keep on tossin' those long, long, high, high passes that couldn't be intercepted except by time, th' aerial attack that made us famous! An' so we did, we did, we kept it up for one season, that aerial attack, we held it high!

BRICK MOVES DL INTO AREA OF
NIGHTSTAND.

Yeah, but--that summer Maggie, she laid down the law to me--said now or never, and so I married Maggie.

BIG DADDY CROSSES FIVE
STEPS TO BRICK.

BIG DADDY. How was Maggie in bed?

BRICK. Great! She went on the road that Fall with th' Dixie Stars. Oh, she made a great show of bein' the world's best sport. She wore a tall bearskin cap! A shake, they call it, a dyed moleskin coat, a moleskin coat dyed red. Cut up crazy! Rented hotel ball rooms for victory celebrations, wouldn't cancel 'em when it turned out--defeat. Maggie th' Cat! But Skipper, he had some fever which came back on him which the doctors couldn't explain, an' I got that injury--bursitis. I lay in a hospital bed, watched our games on TV, saw Maggie on the bench next to Skipper when he was hauled out of the game for stumbles, fumbles!

BRICK SETS HIS DRINK ON THE
NIGHTSTAND.

--burned me up the way she hung on his arm! Y' know I think Maggie had always felt sort of left out, so she took this time to work on poor dumb Skipper! Poured in his mind the dirty, false idea that what we were, him an' me was a frustrated case of that ole pair of sisters that lived in this room, Jack Straw an' Peter Ochello!

BIG DADDY CROSSES TO UC
CHAIR AND SITS.

He, poor Skipper, went to bed with Maggie to prove it wasn't true, an' when it didn't work out, he thought it was true! Skipper broke in two like a rotten stick--nobody ever turned so fast into a lush--or died of it so quick. Now--are you satisfied?

BIG DADDY. Are you satisfied?

BRICK. With what?

BIG DADDY. That story.

BRICK. What's wrong with it?

SOUND CUE. PHONE RINGS.

BIG DADDY. Not completed. Something's left out--What did you leave out?

GOOPER ANSWERS PHONE IN DR
HALL.

GOOPER. Hello--

BRICK CIRCLE CROSSES UL OF
BED.

BRICK. Yes, I left out a long distance phone call which I had from Skipper--

GOOPER. Speaking. Go ahead--

BRICK. --in which he made a drunken confession to me an' on which I hung up.

GOOPER. No.

BRICK. Last time we spoke to each other in our lives.

GOOPER. No, Sir.

BIG DADDY. You musta said somethin' to him before you hung up.

BRICK. What could I say to him?

BIG DADDY. Anything! --something!

BRICK. Nothing.

BIG DADDY. You just hung up?

BRICK. Just hung up.

BIG DADDY. Uh-huh. Anyhow now we have have tracked down the lie with which you are drinkin' to kill your digust with. It wasn't Maggie. Maggie, nothin'! It was you!

BIG DADDY RISES.

You been passin' the buck. This disgust with mendacity is disgust with yourself! You dug the grave of your friend an' kicked him in it!--before you'd face truth with him!

BRICK TURNS TO BIG DADDY.

BRICK. His truth, not mine!

BIG DADDY. His truth, okay, but you wouldn't face it with him!

BRICK. Who can face truth? Can you?

BIG DADDY MOVES TWO STEPS
TO BRICK.

BIG DADDY. Now don't start passin' th' rotten buck again, boy!

BRICK CIRCLE CROSSES UR.

BRICK. How about these birthday congratulations, these many, many happy returns of th' day, when ev'rybody but you knows there won't be any!

PAUSE

Let's--let's go out now, let's go out now, let's go out now an' watch the fireworks. Come on, Big Daddy---

BIG DADDY. Oh, no! No one's goin' out! What did you start to say?

BRICK. I don't remember---

BIG DADDY. Many happy returns---

BRICK. Aw, hell, Big Daddy---

BIG DADDY. When there won't be any----?

BRICK. Forget it. Come on out on the gall'ry an' look at th' fireworks they're shootin' off for your birthday.

BIG DADDY. First, you finish that remark you were makin'.

BRICK. Look now, Big Daddy---

BIG DADDY. Finish! Finish what you was sayin'!

BRICK. Leave th' place to Gooper an' Mae an' their five little same monkeys. All I want is---

BIG DADDY. Leave th' place--did you say?

BRICK. All 28,000 acres of th' richest land this side of th' Valley Nile.

BIG DADDY. Who said I was leavin' the place to Gooper or anybody? This is my sixty-fifth birthday. I got fifteen, twenty years left in me! I'll outlive you! I'll bury you! I'll buy your coffin!

BRICK. Sure. Many happy returns. Now let's go watch the fireworks, come on, let's---

BIG DADDY CROSSES TO BRICK.

BIG DADDY. Brick, have they been lyin'? About the report from th' clinic? Did they--did they find--somethin'? Cancer--maybe?

BRICK. Mendacity is a system that we live in.

BRICK CROSSES DR SIX STEPS.

BRICK. I'm sorry, Big Daddy. My head don't work any more. Maybe it's bein' alive that makes people lie, an' bein' almost not alive makes me sort of accidentally

truthful. I don't know, but anyway, we've been friends--
an' being friends is tellin' each other th' truth. You
told me! I told you!

BIG DADDY SUDDENLY SHOUTS.

BIG DADDY. Christ--Damn---

GOOPER. Let--'er--go--!

SOUND CUE. BURST OF FIRE-
WORKS.

BIG DADDY STAGGERS UL AND
EXITS OFF LEFT.

BIG DADDY. --Damn all-lyin' sons of--lyin' bitches! Yes---
all liars, all liars, all lyin', dyin' liars! Lyin'--dyin'--
liars! Liars! Liars!

LIGHT CUE. SIX COUNT FADE TO
BLACK.

HOUSE LIGHTS UP.

Act III

LIGHTS.

BIG DADDY IS SEEN LEAVING
AS AT THE END OF ACT TWO.

BIG DADDY. All--lyin'--dyin'--liars! Liars! Liars!

BRICK CROSSES SL. MAGGIE
ENTERS DR, PAUSES, AND
CROSSES TO BRICK.

MARGARET. Brick, what in the name of God was goin' on in
this room?

DIXIE, TRIXIE, AND BUSTER
RUN IN UR, BRANDISHING CAP
PISTOLS WHICH THEY FIRE
REPEATEDLY, AS THEY SHOUT
"BANG, BANG, BANG". MAE
ENTERS DR AND CROSSES TO
THE CHILDREN.

MAE. Dixie! You quit that! Gooper, will y' please git
these kiddies t' baid? Right now?

REV. TOOKER, GOOPER, AND DR.
BAUGH ENTER UR. GOOPER
CROSSES TWO STEPS DR TOWARD
THE CHILDREN. HE PAUSES,
THEN TURNS TO MAE.

GOOPER. Mae--you seen Big Mama?

GOOPER ROUNDS UP THE CHILDREN
SL, AND EXITS DR.

MAE. Not yet.

REV. TOOKER CROSSES DS TO
MAE.

REV. TOOKER. Those kiddies are so full of vitality. I
think I'll have to be startin' back to town.

MAE. Not yet, Preacher. You know we regard you as a
member of this fam'ly, one of our closest an' dearest,
so you just got t' be with us when Doc Baugh gives Big

Mama th' actual truth about th' report from th' clinic.
Has Big Daddy gone to bed, Brick?

MAGGIE CROSSES TO BRICK.

GOOPER. Mae!

MAE EXITS DR.

BRICK. I didn't lie to Big Daddy. I've lied to nobody,
nobody but myself, just lied to myself. The time has
come to put me in Silver Hill, put me in Silver Hill,
Maggie, I ought to go there.

BRICK CROSSES THREE STEPS
US.

MARGARET. Over my dead body! Where do you think you're
goin'?

MAGGIE CROSSES TO BRICK,
GRABS HIS ARM, AND STOPS
HIM.

BRICK. Out for some air, I want air---

MAE ENTERS DR AND CROSSES
TO DR. BAUGH AND REV.
TOOKER.

GOOPER. Now, where is that old lady?

BRICK EXITS UL AS GOOPER
ENTERS DR, AND CROSSES
THREE STEPS TO MAE.

MAE. Can'tcha find her, Gooper?

GOOPER. She's avoidin' this talk.

MAE. I think she senses somethin'.

GOOPER. Go find Big Mama an' tell her Doc Baugh an' you've
got to go soon.

GOOPER CROSSES TO REV.
TOOKER, AND SENDS HIM
OFF, UR.

MAE. Don't let Big Daddy hear yuh!

REV. TOOKER. Big Mama!

MAGGIE CROSSES TO UL
ENTRANCE.

MARGARET. Brick, they're going to tell Big Mama the truth now, an' she needs you!

DR. BAUGH CROSSES DS TO MAE.

DR. BAUGH. This is going to be painful.

MAE. Painful things can't always be avoided.

DR. BAUGH. That's what I've noticed about 'em, Sister Woman.

REV. TOOKER ENTERS UL AND
CROSSES DR TWO STEPS.

REV. TOOKER. I see Big Mama!

GOOPER. She's gone round the gall'ry to Big Daddy's room. Hey, Mama! Hey, Big Mama! Come here!

MAE. Hush, Gooper! Don't holler, go to her!

BIG MAMA ENTERS DR, CARRYING
A GLASS OF MILK. GOOPER
CROSSES TO HER AND TAKES
HER BY THE ARM.

BIG MAMA. Here I am! What d' you all want with me?

GOOPER. Big Mama, I told you we got to have this talk.

BIG MAMA. What talk you talkin' about? I saw the light on in Big Daddy's bedroom an' took him his glass of milk, an' he just shut the shutters right in my face. When old couples have been together as long as me an' Big Daddy they, they get irritable with each other just from too much--devotion! Isn't that so?

MAGGIE CROSSES DR TO BIG
MAMA.

MARGARET. Yes, of course it's so.

BIG MAMA. I think Big Daddy was just worn out. He loves his fam'ly. He loves to have 'em around him, but it's a

strain on his nerves. He wasn't himself tonight, Brick-- Big Daddy wasn't himself, I could tell he was all worked up.

REV. TOOKER. I think he's remarkable.

BIG MAMA. Yaiss! Just remarkable. Did you notice all the food he ate at that table? Why, he ate like a hawss!

GOOPER. I hope he don't regret it.

BIG MAMA. What! Why, that man ate a huge piece of cawn bread with molasses on it! Helped himself twice to hoppin' john!

MARGARET. Big Daddy loves hoppin' john. We had a real country dinner.

BIG MAMA. Yais, he simply adores it! An' candied yams. Son---That man put away enough food at that table to stuff a field hand.

GOOPER. I hope he don't have to pay for it later on.

BIG MAMA TURNS TO GOOPER.

BIG MAMA. What's that, Gooper?

MAE CROSSES DS AND PUTS HERSELF BETWEEN GOOPER AND BIG MAMA.

MAE. Gooper says he hopes Big Daddy doesn't suffer tonight.

BIG MAMA. Oh, shoot, Gooper says, Gooper says!

DR. BAUGH CROSSES TO THE BAR AND FIXES A DRINK.

Why should Big Daddy suffer for satisfyin' a nawmal appetite? There's nothin' wrong with that man but nerves, he's sound as a dollar! An' now he knows he is, an' that's why he ate such a supper. He had a big load off his mind, knowin' he wasn't doomed to--what--he thought he was--doomed t'--

MAGGIE CROSSES TO BIG MAMA AND PUTS HER ARM AROUND HER.

GOOPER. Mae!

MAE RUSHES FORWARD TO MEET
BIG MAMA AS SHE MOVES UC
TO THE LARGE WICKER CHAIR
AND SITS.

MARGARET. Bless his ole sweet soul.

BIG MAMA. Yes--bless his heart.

BRICK. Hello, moon, I envy you, you cool son of a bitch.

BIG MAMA. I want Brick!

MARGARET. He just stepped out for some fresh air.

BIG MAMA. Honey! I want Brick!

MAE. Bring li'l Brother in here so we kin talk.

MARGARET CROSSES TO UL
PATIO DOOR.

BRICK. I envy you--you cool son of a bitch.

MARGARET. Brick, what're you doin' out here on the gall'ry,
baby?

BRICK. Admirin' an' complimentin' th' man in the moon.

MARGARET. Come in, baby. They're gettin' ready to tell
Big Mama the truth.

BRICK. I can't witness that thing in there.

MAE CROSSES SR TO DR. BAUGH.

MAE. Doc Baugh, d' you think those vitamin B12 injections
are all they're cracked up t' be?

GOOPER CROSSES DR, CLOSSES
THE DOOR AND RE-ENTERS.

DR. BAUGH. Well, I guess they're as good t' be stuck with
as anything else.

MARGARET. Big Mama needs you!

BRICK. I can't witness that thing in there!

BIG MAMA. What's wrong here? You all have such long faces, you sit here waitin' for somethin' like a bomb--to go off.

GOOPER. We're waitin' for Brick an' Maggie to come in for this talk.

MARGARET. Brother man an' Mae have got a trick up their sleeves, an' if you don't go in there t' help Big Mama, y' know what I'm goin' to do--? Comin', Big Mama! I'm goin' to take every dam' bottle on this place an' pitch it off th' levee into th' river!

BIG MAMA. Talk. Whispers! Whispers! Brick!
Never had this sort of atmosphere here before.

MAE CROSSES TO BIG MAMA AND
SITS ON THE ARM OF THE
WICKER CHAIR.

MAE. Before what, Big Mama?

BIG MAMA. This occasion. What's Brick an' Maggie doin' out there now?

GOOPER. They seem to be havin' some little altercation.

BIG MAMA TAKES A PILL FROM
HER PILL BOX.

BIG MAMA. Give me a little somethin' to wash this tablet down with. Smell of burnt fireworks always makes me sick.

GOOPER CROSSES TO THE BAR,
POURS A GLASS OF WATER,
AND RETURNS TO BIG MAMA.

BRICK. You're a live cat, aren't you?

MARGARET. You're dam' right I am!

BIG MAMA. Gooper, will y' please open that hall door-- an' let some air circulate in this stiflin' room?

MAE. Big Mama, I think we ought to keep that door closed till after we talk.

BIG MAMA. I swan!

SHE DRINKS THE WATER AND
WASHES DOWN THE PILL.

MAE. I just don't think we ought to take any chance of Big Daddy hearin' a word of this discussion.

BIG MAMA. What discussion of what?

BIG MAMA HANDS THE EMPTY
GLASS TO MAE.

Maggie! Brick! Nothin' is goin' to be said in th' house of Big Daddy Pollitt that he can't hear if he wants to!

BRICK. How long are you goin' to stand behind me, Maggie?

MARGARET. Forever, if necessary.

BIG MAMA. Brick!

FIGURE 13.

GOOPER. That boy's gone t' pieces--he's just gone t' pieces.

DR. BAUGH CROSSES SL TO
REV. TOOKER.

DR. BAUGH. Y' know, in my day they used to have somethin' they called the Keeley Cure for drinkers.

BIG MAMA. Shoot!

DR. BAUGH. But nowadays, I understand they take some kind of tablets that kill their taste for the stuff.

GOOPER. Call 'em anti-bust tablets.

GOOPER CROSSES TO MAE, TAKES
THE GLASS, AND MOVES TO THE
BAR.

BIG MAMA. Brick don't need to take nothin'. That boy is just broken up over Skipper's death. You know how poor Skipper died. They gave him a big, big dose of that sodium amyntal stuff at his home, an' then they called the ambulance an' give him another big, big dose of it at th' hospital an' that an' all the alcohol in his system fo' months an' months just proved too much for his heart an' his heart quit beatin'. I'm scared of needles! I'm more scared of a needle than th' knife---

BRICK CROSSES SR, AND ENTERS
UR ENTRANCE, FOLLOWED BY
MAGGIE.

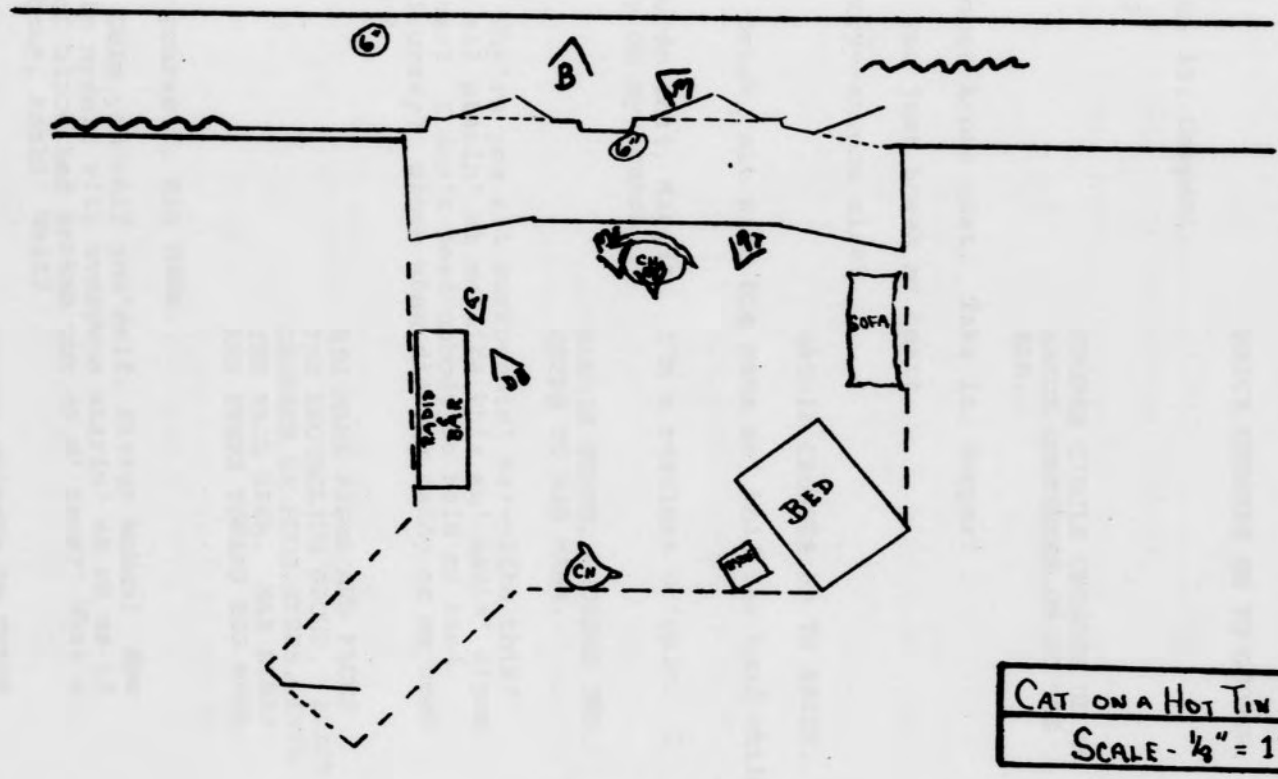


FIGURE 13

Oh! Here's Brick! My precious baby!

BRICK CROSSES DS TO GOOPER.

BRICK. Take it, Gooper!

MAE. What?

GOOPER CIRCLE CROSSES UL AS
BRICK CONTINUES ON TO THE
BAR.

BRICK. Gooper knows what. Take it, Gooper!

BIG MAMA. You just break my heart.

BRICK. Sorry--anyone else?

MAGGIE CROSSES DR TO BRICK.

MARGARET. Brick, sit with Big Mama an' hold her hand while we talk.

BRICK. You do that, Maggie. I'm a restless cripple. I got to stay on my crutch.

MAGGIE TURNS, CROSSES TWO
STEPS TO BIG MAMA.

BIG MAMA. Why're you all surroundin' me?--like this? Why're you all starin' at me like this an' makin' signs at each other? I don't need nobody to hold my hand. Are you all crazy? Since when did Big Daddy or me need anybody----?

BIG MAMA RISES AND FACES
THE ENCIRCLING GROUP. BRICK
CROSSES DR FOUR STEPS, INTO
THE HALL AREA. MAE RISES
AND STEPS TOWARD BIG MAMA.

MAE. Calm yourself, Big Mama.

BIG MAMA. Calm you'self you'self, Sister Woman! How could I calm myself with everyone starin' at me as if big drops of blood had broken out on m' face? What's this all about, Annh! What?

GOOPER CROSSES DR THREE
STEPS TO DR. BAUGH.

GOOPER. Doc Baugh---Sit down, Mae---

MAE SITS.

Big Mama wants to know the complete truth about th' report we got today from the Ochsner Clinic!

BIG MAMA. Is there somethin'--somethin' that I don't know?

DR. BAUGH CROSSES DS FOUR STEPS.

DR. BAUGH. Yes--well . . .

BIG MAMA. I--want to--knowwww! Somebody must be lyin'! I want to know!

MAE. Sit down, Big Mama, sit down on this sofa!

MARGARET. Brick! Brick!

BIG MAMA CROSSES DS TO DR. BAUGH.

BIG MAMA. What is it, what is it?

DR. BAUGH. I never have seen a more thorough examination than Big Daddy Pollitt was given in all my experience at the Ochsner Clinic.

GOOPER. It's one of th' best in th' country.

MAE. It's the best in the country--bar none!

DR. BAUGH. Of course they were ninety-nine and nine-tenths percent certain before they even started.

BIG MAMA. Sure of what, sure of what, sure of what--what!?

MAE RISES, CROSSES DSL TO BIG MAMA'S SIDE.

MAE. Now, Mommy, be a brave girl!

BRICK. "By the light, by the light of the silvery moon!"

GOOPER. Shut up, Brick!

BRICK. Sorry

DR. BAUGH. But now, you see, Big Mama, they cut a piece off this growth, a specimen of the tissue, an'--

FIGURE 14.

BIG MAMA. Growth? You told Big Daddy---

DR. BAUGH. Now, wait---

BIG MAMA. You told me an' Big Daddy there wasn't a thing wrong with him but---

MAE. Big Mama, they always---

GOOPER. Let Doc Baugh talk, will yuh?

BIG MAMA. --little spastic condition of--

REV. TOOKER. Shh! Shh! Shh!

DR. BAUGH CIRCLE CROSSES DR,
ENDING UP IN FRONT OF THE
BAR.

DR. BAUGH. Yes, that's what we told Big Daddy. But we had this bit of tissue run through the laboratory an' I'm sorry t' say the test was positive on it. It's malignant.

DR. BAUGH STOPS, AND FACES
BIG MAMA.

BIG MAMA. Cancer! Cancer!

MAE. Now, now Mommy--

REV. TOOKER RUSHES TO THE
SIDE OF BIG MAMA.

GOOPER. You had to know, Big Mama.

BIG MAMA. Why didn't they cut it out of him? Hanh? Hannh?

DR. BAUGH. Involved too much, Big Mama, too many organs affected.

MAE. Big Mama, the liver's affected an' so's the kidneys, both. It's gone way past what they call a--

GOOPER. --a surgical risk.



FIGURE 14

REV. TOOKER. Tch, tch, tch.

DR. BAUGH. Yes, it's gone past the knife.

MAE. That's why he's turned yellow!

BIG MAMA. Git away from me, git away from me, Mae!

BIG MAMA CROSSES FIVE STEPS
UR.

I want Brick! Where's Brick! Where's my only son?

MAE. Mama! Did she say "only" son?

GOOPER. What does that make me?

MAE CROSSES US THREE STEPS,
AS GOOPER STARTS A CIRCLE
CROSS UR TO BIG MAMA.

MAE. A sober responsible man with five precious children--
six!

BIG MAMA. I want Brick! Brick! Brick!

MAGGIE CROSSES TO BIG MAMA.

MARGARET. Mama, let me tell you.

BIG MAMA. No, no, leave me alone, you're not my blood!

GOOPER. Mama! I'm your son! Listen to me!

MAE. Gooper's your son, Mama, he's your first born!

BIG MAMA. Gooper never liked Daddy!

MAE. That's not true!

REV. TOOKER TAKES ONE STEP
TO MAE, THEN EXITS DR.

REV. TOOKER. I think I'd better slip away at this point.
Good night, good night, everybody, and God bless you all--
on this place.

DR. BAUGH CROSSES UL TO
BIG MAMA.

DR. BAUGH. Well, Big Mama---

BIG MAMA. It's all a mistake, I know it's just a bad dream.

DR. BAUGH. We're gonna keep Big Daddy as comfortable as we can.

BIG MAMA. Yes, it's just a bad dream, that's all it is, it's just an awful dream.

GOOPER. In my opinion Big Daddy is havin' some pain but won't admit that he has it.

BIG MAMA. Just a dream, a bad dream.

DR. BAUGH. That's what lots of 'em do, they think if they don't admit they're havin' the pain they can sort of escape th' fact of it.

GOOPER. Yes, they get sly about it, get real sly about it.

MAE. Gooper an' I think---

GOOPER. Shut up, Mae!---Big Mama, I really do think Big Daddy should be started on morphine.

BIG MAMA. Nobody's goin' t' give Big Daddy morphine!

DR. BAUGH. Now, Big Mama, when that pain strikes it's goin' to strike mighty hard an' Big Daddy's goin' t' need the needle to bear it.

BIG MAMA. I tell you, nobody's goin' to give him morphine!

MAE. Big Mama, you don't want to see Big Daddy suffer, y' know y'---

DR. BAUGH CROSSES SR TO BAR,
AND LEAVES PACKET OF MORPHINE,
ETC., ON THE BAR.

DR. BAUGH. Well, I'm leavin' this stuff here so if there's a sudden attack you won't have to send out for it.

MAE. I know how to give a hypo.

BIG MAMA. Nobody's goin' to give Big Daddy morphine!

GOOPER CROSSES TO MAE.

GOOPER. Mae took a course in nursin' durin' the war.

MARGARET. Somehow I don't think Big Daddy would want Mae t' give him a hypo.

MAE. You think he'd want you to do it?

DR. BAUGH. Well---

GOOPER. Well, Dr. Baugh is goin'---

DR. BAUGH TAKES TWO STEPS
TO BIG MAMA.

DR. BAUGH. Yes, I got to be goin'. Well, keep your chin up, Big Mama.

GOOPER. She's goin' to keep her ole chin up, aren't you, Big Mama?

MAE AND GOOPER CROSSES TO DR.
BAUGH AND EXIT UR WITH HIM.

Well, Doc, we sure do appreciate all you've done. I'm telling you, we're obligated---

BRICK ENTERS FROM THE DR
HALL, CROSSES TO THE BAR
AND FIXES A DRINK. HE
THEN EXITS UR AND STANDS
UC ON THE PATIO.

BIG MAMA. Margaret!

MARGARET. I'm right here, Big Mama.

BIG MAMA CROSSES TO MAGGIE.

BIG MAMA. Margaret, you've got to cooperate with me an' Big Daddy to straighten Brick out now---

MAE AND GOOPER ENTER UR AND
MEET BRICK. ALL PAUSE AND
THEN CONTINUE ON.

GOOPER. I guess that doctor has got a lot on his mind, but it wouldn't hurt him to act a little more human---

BIG MAMA. --because it'll break Big Daddy's heart if Brick don't pull himself together an' take hold of things here.

MAE. Take hold of what things, Big Mama?

BIG MAMA. The place.

GOOPER CROSSES FIVE STEPS
DL, AS MAE CROSSES TO BIG
MAMA. MAGGIE MOVES AWAY
TO UL DOOR.

GOOPER. Big Mama, you've had a shock.

MAE. Yais, we've all had a shock, but--

GOOPER. Let's be realistic--

MAE. Big Daddy would not, would never, be foolish enough to--

GOOPER. --put this place in irresponsible hands!

BIG MAMA TURNS TO FACE
MAE AND GOOPER.

BIG MAMA. Big Daddy ain't goin' t' put th' place in anybody's hands, Big Daddy is not goin' t' die! I want you to git that into your haid, all of you!

MAE. Mommy, Mommy, Big Mama, we're just as hopeful an' optimistic as you are about Big Daddy's prospects, we have faith in prayer--but nevertheless there are certain matters that have to be discussed an' dealt with because otherwise---

GOOPER. Mae, will y' please get my brief case out of our room?

MAE. Yes, honey.

MAE EXITS DR.

MARGARET. Hear them in there?

GOOPER. Big Mama, what you said just now was not at all true, an' you know it. I've always loved Big Daddy in my own quiet way. I never made a show of it. I know that Big Daddy has always been fond of me in a quiet way, too.

MAE RETURNS WITH GOOPER'S
BRIEFCASE.

MAE. Here's your briefcase, Gooper, honey.

GOOPER. Thank you.

GOOPER MOTIONS FOR MAE TO
PUT THE BRIEFCASE ON THE
BED. MAE DOES SO AND RE-
MAINS AT THE UR CORNER OF
THE BED.

Of cou'se my relationship with Big Daddy is different
from Brick's.

GOOPER CROSSES DR FIVE
STEPS.

MAE. You're eight years older'n Brick an' always had t'
carry a bigger load of th' responsibilities than Brick
ever had t' carry, he never carried a thing in his life
but a football or a highball.

GOOPER. Mae, will y' let me talk, please?

MAE. Yes, honey.

MAE SITS ON THE BED AND
OPENS THE BRIEFCASE.

GOOPER. Now, a 28,000 acre plantation's a mighty big
thing t' run.

MAE. Almost single-handed!

BIG MAMA CROSSES TO
GOOPER.

BIG MAMA. You never had t' run this place, Brother Man,
what're you talkin' about, as if Big Daddy was dead an'
in his grave, you had to run it? Why, you just had t'
help him out with a few business details an' had your
law practice at the same time in Memphis.

MAE. Oh, Mommy, Mommy, Mommy! Let's be fair! Why,
Gooper had given himself body an' soul t' keepin' this
place up fo' the past five years since Big Daddy's health
started failin'. Gooper won't say it, Gooper never thought

of it as a duty, he just did it. An' what did Brick do? Brick kep' livin' in his past glory at college!

MAGGIE ENTERS AND CROSSES DR
TWO STEPS.

GOOPER. Still a football player at 27!

MARGARET. Who are you talkin' about now? Brick? A football player? He isn't a football player an' you know it! Brick is a sports announcer on TV an' one of the best known ones in the country!

MAE. I'm talkin' about what he was!

MARGARET. Well, I wish you would just stop talkin' about my husband!

GOOPER CROSSES TO MAGGIE,
POKING A FINGER AT HER
WHICH SHE SLAPS AWAY.

GOOPER. Listen, Margaret, I've got a right to discuss my own brother, with other members of my own fam'ly, which don't include you! Now why don't you go on out there an' drink with Brick?

MARGARET. I've never seen such malice toward a brother.

GOOPER. How about his for me? Why, he can't stand to be in the same room with me!

BRICK. That's the truth!

MARGARET. This is a deliberate campaign of vilification for the most disgusting and sordid reason on earth, and I know what it is! It's avarice, avarice, greed, greed!

BIG MAMA. Oh, I'll scream, I will scream in a moment unless this stops! Margaret, child, come here, sit next to Big Mama.

BIG MAMA TAKES ONE STEP TO
MAGGIE AND MOTIONS FOR HER
TO SIT ON THE ARM. BOTH
MAGGIE AND BIG MAMA SIT.

MARGARET. Precious Mommy.

MAE. How beautiful, how touchin' this display of devotion! Do you know why she's childless? She's childless because that big, beautiful athlete husband of hers won't go to bed with her, that's why!

GOOPER. You jest won't let me do this the nice way, will yuh? Aw right---

FIGURE 15.

I don't give a goddam if Big Daddy likes me or don't like me or did or never did or will or will never! I'm just appealin' to a sense of common decency an' fair play! I'm tellin' you th' truth---

GOOPER CROSSES SL.

I've resented Big Daddy's partiality to Brick ever since th' goddam day you were born, son an' th' way I've been treated, like I was just barely good enough to spit on, an' sometimes not even good enough for that. Big Daddy is dyin' of cancer an' it's spread all through him an' it's attacked all his vital organs includin' the kidneys an' right now he is, sinkin' into uremia, an' you all know what uremia is, it's poisonin' of the whole system due to th' failure of th' body to eliminate its poisons.

SOUND CUE. THE RUMBLE OF
DISTANT THUNDER.

MARGARET. Poisons, poisons, venomous thoughts and words! In hearts and minds! That's poisons!

GOOPER. I'm askin' for a square deal an' by God, I expect to get one. But if I don't get one, if there's any peculiar shenanigans goin' on around here behind my back, well, I'm not a corporation lawyer for nothin'! I know how to protect my own interests.

SOUND CUE. A SECOND CRASH
OF THUNDER.

BRICK ENTERS FROM UR EN-
TRANCE.

BRICK. Storm comin' up.

GOOPER. Oh, a late arrival!

MAE. Behold, the conquerin' hero comes!



FIGURE 15

GOOPER. The fabulous Brick Pollitt! Remember him? Who could forget him?

MAE. He looks like he's been injured in a game!

GOOPER. Yep, I'm afraid you'll have to warm th' bench at the Sugar Bowl this year, Brick! Or was it the Rose Bowl that he made his famous run in.

MAE. The punch bowl, honey, it was the punch bowl, the cut-glass punch bowl!

GOOPER. That's right! I'm always gettin' the boy's bowls mixed up!

MARGARET. Stop that! You stop that!

MAGGIE RISES AND CROSSES TO GOOPER, STRIKING HIM. MAE STEPS IN AS THE TWO FLAIL AT EACH OTHER. GOOPER MOVES TO SEPARATE THEM.

SOUND CUE. A LOUD BOOM OF THUNDER.

GOOPER. Is the top up on the Cadillac?

MAE. Yes!

GOOPER CROSSES THREE STEPS TO BIG MAMA.

GOOPER. Big Mama, you know it's goin' to be necessary for me t' go back to Memphis in th' mornin' t' represent the Parker estate in a lawsuit.

BIG MAMA. Is it, Gooper?

MAE. Yaiss.

GOOPER. That's why I'm forced to--to bring up a problem that--

MAE. Somethin' that's too important t' be put off!

GOOPER. If Brick was sober, he ought to be in on this. I think he ought to be present when I present this plan.

MARGARET. Brick is present, we're present!

GOOPER. Well, good. I will now give you this outline my partner Tom Bullit an' me have drawn up--a sort of dummy-trusteeship!

MAE CROSSES TO THE BED AND
RETRIEVES THE LEGAL DOCU-
MENTS FROM THE BRIEFCASE,
HANDING THEM TO GOOPER.

MARGARET. Oh, that's it. You'll be in charge an' dole out remittances, will you?

GOOPER. This we did as soon as we got the report on Big Daddy from th' Ochsner Laboratories.

GOOPER MAKES A LARGE CIRCLE
CROSS TO UR OF BIG MAMA.

We did this thing, I mean we drew up this dummy outline with the advice and assistance of the Chairman of the Boa'd of Directors of th' Southern Plantuhs Bank & Trust Company in Memphis, C. C. Bellows, a man who handles estates for all th' prominent fam'lies in West Tennessee and th' Delta!

BIG MAMA. Gooper?

GOOPER. Now this is not--not final, or anything like it, this is just a preliminary outline. But it does provide a--basis--a design--a--possible, feasible--plan!

MARGARET. Yes, I'll bet it's a plan!

MAE. It's a plan to protect the biggest estate in the Delta from irresponsibility an'---

BIG MAMA. Now you listen to me, all of you, you listen here! They's not goin' to be no more catty talk in my house! And, Gooper, you put that away before I grab it out of your hand and tear it right up!

BIG MAMA RISES, CROSSES DR
SIX STEPS, STOPS, AND TURNS
TO FACE GOOPER.

I don't know what the hell's in it, and I don't want to know what the hell's in it: I'm talkin' in Big Daddy's language now, I'm his wife, not his widow, I'm still his wife! And I'm talking to you in his language an'--

GOOPER. Big Mama, what I have here is---

MAE. Gooper explained that it's just a plan . . .

BIG MAMA. I don't care what you got there, just put it back where it come from an' don't let me see it again, not even the outside of the envelope of it! Is that understood? Basis! Plan! Preliminary! Design!--I say--what is it that Big Daddy always says when he's disgusted?

BRICK. Big Daddy says "crap" when he is disgusted.

BIG MAMA. That's right--CRAPPP! I say CRAP too, like Big Daddy!

MAE. Coarse language don't seem called for in this---

GOOPER TAKES TWO STEPS TO
BIG MAMA.

GOOPER. Somethin' in me is deeply outraged by this. Nobody's goin' to do nothin'! till Big Daddy lets go of it, and maybe just possibly not--not even then! No, not even then!

SOUND CUE. ANOTHER RUMBLE
OF THUNDER AND THE SOUND
OF RISING WIND.

GOOPER. I've gotta put mah car away! Who's got the keys? Where th' keys to th' car, honey?

MAE. You got'em in your pocket!

TRIXIE, DIXIE, AND BUSTER
RUSH IN FROM DR, WHERE MAE
CROSSES TO MEET THEM. THEY
CRY AND SCREAM, UPSET BY
THE STORM. GOOPER JOINS
THEM AS THEY EXIT UR.

BIG MAMA. BRICK! Come here, Brick, I need you.

BRICK CROSSES THREE STEPS
TO BIG MAMA.

Tonight Brick looks like he used to look when he was a little boy just like he did when he played wild games in the orchard back of the house and used to come home

when I hollared myself hoarse for him! all--sweaty--and pink-cheeked--an' sleepy with his curls shinin'--Time goes by so fast. Nothin' can outrun it. Death commences too early--almost before you're half-acquainted with life--you meet with the other. Oh, you know we just got to love each other, an' stay together all of us just as close as we can, specially now that such a black thing has come and moved into this place without invitation.

BIG MAMA HUGS BRICK.

Oh, Brick, son of Big Daddy, Big Daddy does so love you. Y' know what would be his fondest dream come true? If before he passed on, if Big Daddy has to pass on . . . You give him a child of yours, a grandson as much like his son as his son is like Big Daddy

MARGARET. I know that's Big Daddy's dream.

BIG MAMA. That's his dream.

BIG DADDY ENTERS ON THE GALLERY.

BIG DADDY. Looks like the wind was takin' liberties with this place.

MARGARET. Big Daddy's on the gall'ry.

BIG DADDY. Stawm crossed th' river. Gone to Arkansas.

BIG MAMA. I can't stay here. He'll see somethin' in my eyes.

BIG MAMA CROSSES DL TO THE MIRROR.

BIG DADDY. Stawm done some damage around here. Took the po'ch off ole Aunt Crawley's house. She should of been sittin' on it. It's time fo' th' wind to blow that ole girl away! Can I come in?

BIG DADDY TURNS, TAKES ONE STEP INTO THE ROOM.

MARGARET. Did the storm wake you up, Big Daddy?

BIG DADDY CROSSES DR FIVE STEPS.

BIG DADDY. Which stawm are you talkin' about--th' one outside or th' hulla-balloo in here?

GOOPER AND MAE ENTER THROUGH THE UL DOORS, AND CROSS DL TO THE BED.

GOOPER. 'Scuse me, sir . . .

BIG DADDY. I heard some mighty loud talk, sounded like somethin' important was bein' discussed. What was the pow-wow about?

MAE. Why--nothin', Big Daddy

BIG DADDY CROSSES DL TO GOOPER, WHO IS CAUGHT IN THE ACT OF STUFFING HIS LEGAL DOCUMENTS BACK INTO THE BRIEFCASE.

BIG DADDY. What is that pregnant-lookin' envelope you're putting back in your briefcase, Gooper?

GOOPER. That? Nothin', suh--nothin' much of anything at all

BIG DADDY. Nothin', huh? Looks like a whole lot of nuthin', don't it? Well, I just got one more question to ask.

BIG DADDY SNIFFS.

What is the smell in this room? Don't you notice it, Brick? Don't you notice a powerful and obnoxious odor of mendacity in this room?

BRICK. Yes, sir, I think I do, sir.

GOOPER. Mae, Mae.

BIG DADDY. There is nothing more powerful. Is there, Brick?

BRICK. No, sir. No, sir, there isn't, an' nothin' more obnoxious.

BIG DADDY. Brick agrees with me--The odor of mendacity is a powerful and obnoxious odor an' the stawm hasn't blown it away from this room yet.

BIG DADDY TURNS AND STEPS
TO GOOPER.

You notice it, Gooper?

GOOPER. What--sir?

HE PIVOTS AND STEPS TO MAE.

BIG DADDY. How about you, Sister Woman? You notice the unpleasant odor of mendacity in this room?

MAE. Why, Big Daddy, I don't even know what that is.

BIG DADDY. You can smell it. Hell! It smells like death. What's wrong with that long thin woman over there, loaded with diamonds? Hey, what's-your-name, what's the matter with you?

MAGGIE CROSSES TO BIG MAMA,
AND HELPS HER SIT IN THE
DC CHAIR.

MARGARET. She had a slight dizzy spell, Big Daddy.

BIG DADDY. You better watch that, Big Mama. A stroke is a bad way to go.

MAGGIE CROSSES TO BIG DADDY.

MARGARET. Oh, Brick, Big Daddy has on your birthday present to him. Brick, he has on your cashmere robe, the softest material I have ever felt.

BIG DADDY. Yeah, this is my soft birthday, Maggie Not my gold or my silver birthday, but my soft birthday, everything's got to be soft for Big Daddy on this soft birthday.

MAGGIE KNEELS BEFORE BIG
DADDY.

FIGURE 16.

GOOPER. Maggie, I hate to make such a crude observation, but there is somethin' a little indecent about your---

MAE. Like a slow-motion football tackle---

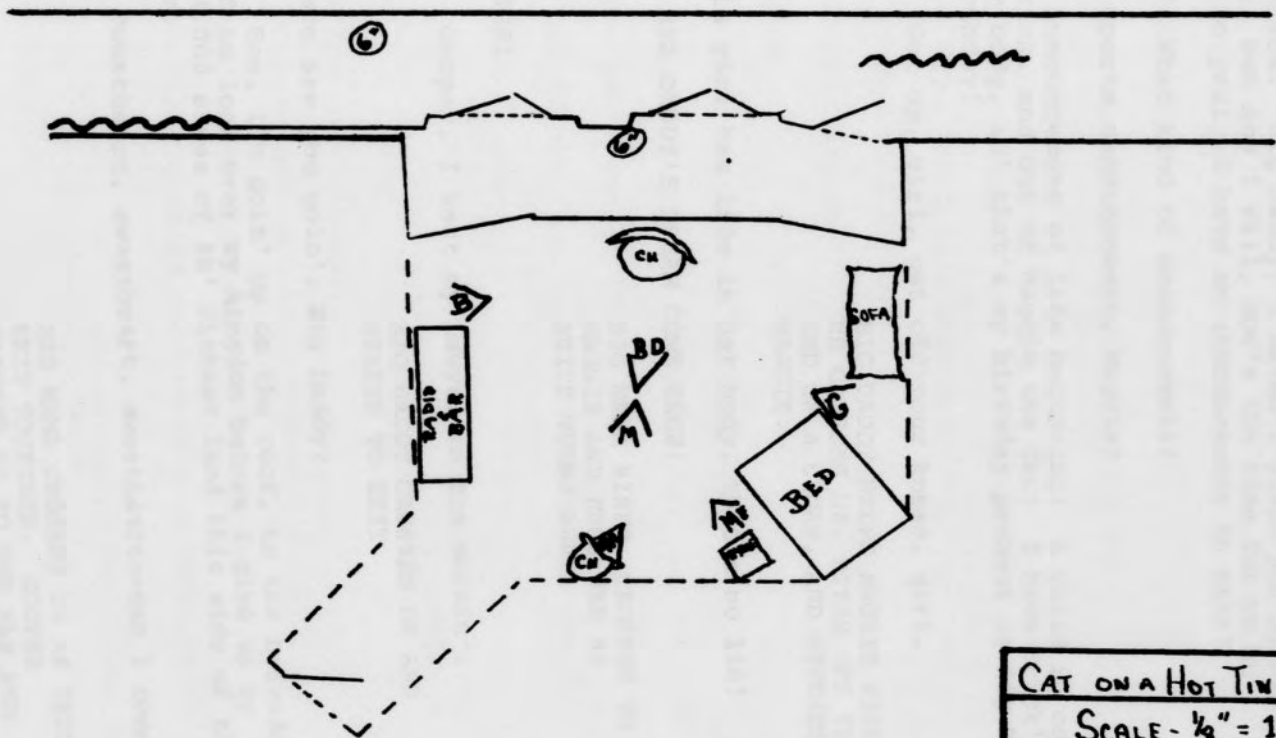


FIGURE 16

CAT ON A HOT TIN ROOF
SCALE - $\frac{1}{8}'' = 1'0''$

MARGARET. Big Daddy's got on his Chinese slippers that I gave him, Brick. Big Daddy, I haven't given you my big present yet, but now I will, now's the time for me to present it to you! I have an announcement to make!

MAE. What? What kind of announcement?

GOOPER. A sports announcement, Maggie?

MARGARET. Announcement of life beginning! A child is coming, sired by Brick, and out of Maggie the Cat! I have Brick's child in my body, an' that's my birthday present to Big Daddy on this birthday!

BIG DADDY. Get up, girl, get off your knees, girl.

BIG DADDY HELPS MAGGIE RISE.
HE CROSSES UR, BITES OFF THE
END OF A CIGAR, AND STUDIES
MAGGIE.

Uh-huh, this girl has life in her body, that's no lie!

BIG MAMA. BIG DADDY'S DREAM COME TRUE!

BIG MAMA RISES, CROSSES TO
MAGGIE AND HUGS HER AS
BRICK TURNS AWAY.

BRICK. JESUS!

BIG DADDY. Gooper, I want my lawyer in the mornin'.

BIG DADDY CROSSES DR AND
STARTS TO EXIT.

BRICK. Where are you goin', Big Daddy?

BIG DADDY. Son, I'm goin' up on the roof, to the belvedere on th' roof to look over my kingdom before I give up my kingdom--28,000 acres of th' richest land this side of the Valley Nile!

BIG MAMA. Sweetheart, sweetheart, sweetheart--can I come with you?

BIG MAMA CROSSES DR AS THEY
EXIT TOGETHER. GOOPER
CROSSES SR TO THE BAR AND
FIXES A DRINK.

GOOPER. Brick, could you possibly spare me one small shot of that liquor?

BRICK. Why, help yourself, Gooper boy.

GOOPER. I will.

MAE. Of course we all know that this is a lie!

GOOPER. Be still, Mae!

MAE. I won't be still! I know she's made this up!

GOOPER. God damn it, I said shut up!

MAE. This woman isn't pregnant!

GOOPER. Who said she was?

MAE. She did!

GOOPER. The doctor didn't. Doc Baugh didn't.

MARGARET. I haven't gone to Doc Baugh.

GOOPER. Then who'd you go to, Maggie?

MARGARET. One of the best gynecologists in the South.

GOOPER. Uh-huh, I see---

GOOPER TAKES TWO STEPS TO
MAGGIE, AS MAGGIE TAKES A
GRUDGING STEP BACK.

May we have his name please?

MARGARET. No, you may not, Mr. --Prosecutin' Attorney!

MAE. He doesn't have any name, he doesn't exist!

MARGARET. He does so exist, and so does my baby, Brick's baby!

MAE CLOSES IN TWO STEPS
ON MAGGIE.

MAE. You can't conceive a child by a man that won't sleep with you unless you think you're--- He drinks all the time to be able to tolerate you! Sleeps on the sofa to keep out of contact with you!

GOOPER. Don't try to kid us, Margaret---

MAE. How can you conceive a child by a man that won't sleep with you? How can you conceive? How can you? How can you!

USING THE POINT OF HER FINGER,
MAE TURNS MAGGIE AND BACKS
HER UP TO THE BED. MAGGIE
SITS, HALF PUSHED, HALF FALLING.

GOOPER. MAE!

BRICK CROSSES DL SIX STEPS.

BRICK. Mae, Sister Woman, how'd you know that I don't sleep with Maggie?

MAE. We occupy the next room an' the wall between isn't sound proof.

BRICK. Oh.

MAE. We hear the nightly pleadin' and the nightly refusal. So don't imagine you're goin' to put a trick over on us, to fool a dyin' man with -- a --

BRICK. Mae, Sister Woman, not everybody makes much noise about love. Oh, I know some people are huffers an' puffers, but other are silent lovers.

GOOPER CROSSES TO THE BAR
AND SETS DOWN HIS DRINK.

GOOPER. This talk is pointless, completely.

BRICK. How d' y' know that we're not silent lovers? Even if you got a peep-hole drilled in the wall, how can y' tell if sometimes when Gooper's got business in Memphis an' you're playin' scrabble at the country club with other ex-queens of cotton, Maggie and I don't come to some temporary agreement? How do you know that---?

MAE. Brick, I never thought that you would stoop to her level, I just never dreamed that you would stoop to her level.

GOOPER. I don't think Brick will stoop to her level.

BRICK CIRCLE CROSSES TO
THE SL SIDE OF THE BED.

BRICK. What is your level? Tell me your level so I can sink or rise to it. You heard what Big Daddy said. This girl has life in her body.

MAE. That's a lie!

BRICK. No, truth is something desperate, an' she's got it. Believe me, it's somethin' desperate, an' she's got it. An' now if you will stop actin' as if Brick Pollitt was dead an' buried, invisible, not heard, an' go back to your peep-hole in the wall--I'm drunk, and sleepy--not as alive as Maggie, but still alive

GOOPER. Come on, Mae. We'll leave these love birds together in their nest.

GOOPER AND MAE START TO
EXIT UR, THEN PAUSE.

MAE. Yeah, nest of lice! Liars!

GOOPER. Mae--Mae, you jes' go on back to our room---

MAE CROSSES DL TO THE BED
AND GETS THE BRIEFCASE.
SHE STARTS TO LEAVE BUT
PAUSES BETWEEN MAGGIE AND
BRICK.

MAE. Liars!

GOOPER. We're jest goin' to wait an' see. Time will tell. Yes, sir, little brother, we're jest goin' to wait an' see!

MAE THEN EXITS UR WITH
GOOPER.

MARGARET. The click?

BRICK CROSSES DL TO THE BED,
PICK UP A PILLOW AND STARTS
FOR THE SOFA. MAGGIE RISES
AND CROSSES TO BRICK, TAKING

THE PILLOW AWAY FROM HIM,
AND THROWING IT ON THE BED.
SHE THEN CROSSES TO THE BAR,
GATHERS UP THE LIQUOR BOTTLES,
MOVES US ONTO THE GALLERY AND
THROWS THE BOTTLES OFF RIGHT.

Echo Spring has gone dry, and no one but me could drive you to town for more.

BRICK. I could drive---

MARGARET. And you lost your driver's license! I'd phone ahead and have you stopped on the highway before you got half way to Ruby Lightfoot's gin mill.

MAGGIE CROSSES DOWN TO CS.

I told a lie to Big Daddy, but we can make that lie come true. And then I'll bring you liquor, and we'll get drunk together, here, tonight, in this place that death has come into! What do you say? What do you say, baby?

BRICK CROSSES, SITS ON THE
SL EDGE OF THE BED.

BRICK. I admire you, Maggie.

MAGGIE CROSSES DL TO THE
CORNER OF THE BED AND ENDS
UP FACING BRICK, WITH A
CIRCLE CROSS DURING HER
SPEECH.

MARGARET. Oh, you weak, beautiful people who give up with such grace. What you need is someone to take hold of you-- gently, with love, and hand your life back to you, like something gold you let go of-- and I can! I'm determined to do it-- and nothing's more determined than a cat on a hot tin roof-- is there? Is there, baby?

LIGHT CUE. STAGE LIGHTS
FADE TO BLACK. HOUSE
LIGHTS UP FULL.

PART THREE
CRITICAL EVALUATION

The third and final section is concerned with a critical evaluation of the production aspects of Cat on a Hot Tin Roof. The evaluation will include (1) the achievement of the director's interpretation in regard to style, mood, tempo, and additions and deletions in the script (2) the actor-director relationships during rehearsal and performance (3) the audience reaction to the production and (4) personal observations.

Achievement of Interpretation

Working within the realm of realism, this director felt the production would be most effective confined to a more subtle acting style. Because of the intimate staging situation and the often melodramatic nature of the script "underplaying" was stressed early in rehearsals. Actors soon began to drop the usual "playing at" attitude often seen and realized that this production was to be far more realistic than the majority of plays they had appeared in before. Exercises will be discussed later in Part III that aided this transition of acting styles.

The mood of the production was created by several factors, some obvious, others more subtle. The heat, emphasized by warm light gels, created an atmosphere of stifling heat and short tempers. Stage business included rubbing pieces of ice on foreheads and arms, fanning, and brow mopping. This, combined with the ever-present element of pain portrayed by the actors, and the encompassing heat, the mood became one of constant irritation and emotional instability.

This director also chose to emphasize an aspect of dramatic irony inherent in the script. The surface paraphernalia of a birthday party (paper hats, noise makers, toy drums) provides excellent contrast to the gravity of the situation. Though the occasion was gay and festive, the mood was somber and heavy with death. The director felt that unless this mood of obvious opposites successfully enveloped the audience, the play would seem irrelevant and dull. In retrospect, the mood established went far beyond this director's earliest expectations.

The most obvious and tangible aspect of setting was the set itself. The set finally decided upon evolved as a synthesis of several theatrical styles. Consistent with the realistic vein of the play, the set paraphernalia and furniture selected were historically accurate. Yet, because of the invisible walls, the imaginary mirror, and

a black back-drop on the upstage wall suggesting a void, the set was also very theatricalistic. A secondary stage level and the suggestion of an upstage wall added visual variety to the production. Using a large wicker chair center stage as the hub of the blocking pattern, the bed-sofa area and the radio-bar area segmented the set to provide equally good viewing for all sections of the audience. A major problem arose when it was realized that the acting area was larger than anticipated by either director or designer. To compensate, a rug was added and several set pieces were moved toward the center to diminish the length of several long stage crosses.

The tempo of the production was dictated by the script. Each character in the play had to contribute his own individual tempo, as no two were the same. Maggie's was stacatto and sharp, while Brick's was fluid and slow. The rage and aggressiveness of Big Daddy contrasted with the soothing and consoling pace of Big Mama. The actors became aware of these contrasts without mention from the director, thus tempo evolved rather than being consciously forced.

The rhythm of the production needed to be as varied as the characters themselves. This director soon realized that the playwright used comic relief as a means of transition from one rhythm to the next. Before a crucial scene

the rustic humor of Big Daddy or the razor-sharp wit of Maggie would emerge to provide a momentary pause, preparing the audience for the next emotional build. This director, pleased with the final pace and tempo of the production, feels very strongly that the energy of the actors to assimilate frustration supplied the brisk tempo and moved the production rapidly from climax to climax.

Deletions and additions to the script were necessary due to a directorial decision to eliminate the servants Lacey, Sookey, Daisey, Brighty and Small. Only two scenes were affected to any degree. The first was the birthday scene at the beginning of Act II. The original script called for the servants to bring in the cake and several presents. This was changed, allowing the children to bring in the cake just prior to their song. The second change occurred in Act III, when, during the storm, Gooper orders the servants to put his car away. By changing the line and directing it to Mae, Gooper had an excellent laugh line, asking, "Is the top up on the Cadillac?". Other minor changes involved Mae answering the telephone instead of Sookey and the deletion of any number of, "Hello Cap'n" and "Evenin' Cap'n" lines. Thus line changes were made out of necessity and in no way damaged the flow of the action.

Actor-Director Relationships

For several reasons a good working relationship was established between this director and the cast. A very strong spirit of ensemble emerged thus avoiding a multi-factioned cast as is often the case. Production problems became a company matter. Everyone in the cast was kept abreast of this director's ideas as well as problems. A second factor in actor-director relationships was an instilled concept of theatre discipline.

From the inception, the actors were made aware of a strict theatrical discipline, and with the exception of the children, all responded to it. Exact starting times, research and character preparation, learning lines, and warm-up exercises before rehearsal, became standard procedure. Several actors quit smoking at the request of the director and all observed a temporary ban on cast parties, until the end of the production.

A third and final reason for excellent actor-director relations was the maturity of the cast. The average age of the cast was a good deal older than a typical academic production, and coupled with extensive stage experience, created an atmosphere conducive to work, development and growth. Admittedly, age was factor when casting.

The presence of a faculty member in the cast made a marked impact. Though a potentially awkward situation, it

was soon apparent that the advantages far outweighed any theoretical disadvantages. The faculty member was perceptive and entered the production as a professional should, eager to take direction with no mention of his position as a faculty member. His ready acceptance of the imposed discipline served as an example and other cast members were quick to follow.

The relationship between director and cast was not, however, totally harmonious. Noise created by the children in the production became a severe distraction to others in the play, breaking concentration and disrupting rehearsals. It was necessary to delegate a crew member to continually restrain the children, both in rehearsal and in performance, as any backstage noise would have been audible in the intimate stage arrangement.

During the run of performances, a serious problem developed with an actress which caused much concern to this director. Unknown to anyone on the production staff, she had taken heavy medication on the day of a performance, resulting in a missed entrance and the omission of an entire French scene in the middle of Act II. The missed entrance and subsequent lines were covered exceptionally well, to the point that none of the audience was aware of even so much as a dropped line. This may only be attributed to the talent and poise of the actors on the

stage at the time. In retrospect, the director now realizes that the stage manager should have been controlling the play from the stage floor instead of in the light booth. This, along with prior knowledge of such medication, would have prevented such an occurrence.

Due to a rapid pace and fruitful rehearsal sessions, this director found himself well ahead of schedule, which allowed time for some experimentation with the cast. During the latter part of the rehearsal schedule the production bordered on being over-rehearsed and sorely needed an audience. For this reason and because additional time was available, an excellent opportunity was seen for character exercises and improvisations that might better help the actors with their respective roles.

Exercises relating directly to character expansion were the first methods employed. One particular exercise was developed to focus solely on the physicalizations of each character. While walking around the stage space in character, the actor was directed to "freeze" and remain "frozen" in that exact position. With his eyes closed, he was asked to describe aspects of his physical characterization, i.e., "Why are your hands like that?" or "Where is your body weight at this time and why?". Specifically, the actor portraying the role of Gooper was asked to explain why the character of Gooper would walk

around with his hands in his back pockets. This exercise was soon responsible for the creation of what Michael Chekhov refers to as a psychological gesture, as each person in the cast had soon developed some physical trait for their character. This exercise may also be credited with being most beneficial in giving depth to those physical aspects of acting so often neglected in rehearsal: the walk, gestures, and posture of a character.

Another exercise was devised to deal specifically with inter-character relationships. After several weeks of rehearsal it became apparent that there were alliances and subdivisions among the characters in the script that were not being exposed by the actors. In an effort to make the cast aware of this aspect of the script this director devised an exercise whereby the actors would literally see how they fit into the structure of the play. The actors would be asked to get into character (this done by the use of a methodical one to ten count, at the end of which "character" was achieved) and while standing in a straight line facing the director, asked to rearrange themselves as to how they thought they aligned themselves in the play. When this was done they were required to vocalize their feelings about those standing to either side, all done while still in character. After each had voiced his feelings, the actors were asked to rearrange

again, this time taking into consideration all of the comments that had been made about them by the others. The vocalization step was then repeated in this new character structure. The process was repeated until every character was aware of the feelings of everyone else in the play. With this knowledge the actor could then decide on the alliance and friendships of his character, and execute his exact purpose for being in the script.

The above exercise, though somewhat unusual, made a major contribution to the production, one that was essential to this director's concept of an ensemble. It allowed the people with seemingly minor roles in the play to realize how important they were to the overall achievement of the production. Specifically, this may be noted in the case of those actors in the roles of Dr. Baugh and Reverend Tooker. By being able to hear how the other characters felt about their character, they soon realized that they were an integral part in the power-play of Gooper to insure his inheritance, while at the same time working on their own characterization.

Audience Reaction

The reaction of the local audience to the production was excellent. Due to the limited seating and fine reviews,

the run of the show was extended for three additional performances, the majority of which were sold out. Most of those who saw the production were pleased with the three-sided staging and felt the intimacy of the arrangement was an asset.

The newspaper reviewers were pleased to a point of praise. Joe Knox of the Greensboro Daily News wrote:

It's very fine, one of the best the university drama group has ever produced.

He continued:

This is really saying quite a lot, because I don't believe there is a theatre anywhere in the state, on campus or off campus, to match the high degree of professionalism and consistency in excellence of the Herman Middleton-David Batcheller-Kathryn England entourage.

Doug Waller, proclaiming "superb", writing for the Greensboro Record, was equally impressed. He stated:

. . . "Cat on a Hot Tin Roof" showed fresh directing and sensitive treatment in the lead characters of demanding roles. It was one of the best productions on a college level of probably one of the greatest plays Williams wrote.

Both were also equally pleased with performances turned in by individual cast members. Though no one took the reviewer's words as final, their praise gave confidence to an eager cast.

The response of the audience was what this director had hoped for. It was best summed up by Joe Knox in his review. He concluded by saying:

There was not in fact, a weak performance in the show. It was especially attractive in that none of the players tried to pattern a role after types in the movie established by Elizabeth Taylor and company. These were original people.

This director had originally hoped for a group effort, an ensemble pulling together to make the production work. That was apparent in performance. The director consciously worked against types, both in casting and in characterizations. That, too, was apparent. By keeping the show realistic in style, it became believable to the audience. In this regard, the original concepts of the director were brought to fruition.

Personal Observations

Superficially it would appear that there were no problems of any consequence encountered in the production. Such was not the case. It was only by pre-planning, pre-blocking and close cooperation with the designer-technical director that the problems were minimized. Problems were solved on the spot, as a company, thus avoiding rumors and misconceptions. One aspect in particular made this director exceptionally proud. So often a play will reach its peak on opening night and fluctuate throughout the run. This director witnessed an excellent production opening night and saw the performances get successively better each

night of the run, without the usual post-opening recession. Because of this, it must be said that the imposed theatrical discipline proved its value. In the end, everyone involved grew effectively not only from the multitude of mistakes, but also from those moments that made one realize why the theater exists.

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