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THE EFFECT OF GAMMA RAYS ON MAN-IN-THE-MOON MARIGOLDS was first presented, in New York City, by Orin Lehman, at the Mercer-O’Casey Theatre on April 4, 1970. It was directed by Melvin Bernhardt; the setting was by Fred Voelpel; lighting was by Martin Aronstein; the costumes were by Sara Brook; and the music and sound by James Reichert. The associate producer was Julie Hughes, and the production stage manager was Bud Coffey. The cast, in order of appearance, was as follows:

TILLIE .................................................. Pamela Payton-Wright
BEATRICE ............................................. Sada Thompson
RUTH .................................................... Amy Levitt
NANNY .................................................. Judith Lowry
JANICE VICKERY ................................. Swoosie Kurtz

SPECIAL SOUND AND MUSIC TAPE
A tape containing the special sound and music score prepared for the New York production of THE EFFECT OF GAMMA RAYS ON MAN-IN-THE-MOON MARIGOLDS can be obtained from Mr. James Reichert, 229 East 28th Street, Apartment 4-E, New York, N.Y. 10016.
CHARACTERS

BEATRICE—"This long street with all the doors shut and everything crowded next to each other ."
"And then I start getting afraid the vegetables are going to spoil . . . and that nobody's going to buy anything . . ."

TILLIE—"In front of my eyes one part of the world was becoming another. Atoms exploding, flinging off tiny bullets that caused the fountain, atom after atom breaking down into something new."

RUTH—". . . it says that I exaggerate and tell stories and that I'm afraid of death and have nightmares . . ."
a hotplate with a pan of water, a jar of instant coffee, a jar of honey, a back scratcher, an ash tray, a cup with five spoons, two large coffee cups, and two cigarettes next to the hot plate. At the lower stage end a small sink. Under the down stage end a small refrigerator. On a shelf under the counter a real estate section from the local newspaper.

There is a heavy wood staircase which leads up to a landing with a bannister. Upstairs Beatrice sleeps in one room; Tillie and Ruth share the other. There is a shelf at the bottom of the stairs which holds the telephone.

Extreme Stage Left—a platform for the Science Fair in Act II. On the platform there is a unit which contains Tillie's experiment. As she enters for her scene she flips up the unit and there is the display; a three panel screen with "The Past," "The Present," and "The Future," and three pots of mutated marigolds (all exact copies of the props which she uses during the previous scene). When the unit is closed all we see is black. Janice Vickery uses the covered unit to set the cat skeleton on.

The Effect of Gamma Rays On Man-In-The-Moon Marigolds

ACT I

SCENE I

As the house lights fade, a music theme fades in. A light picks up Tillie sitting on the floor n. of the sofa, she is holding a small white rabbit.

TILLIES VOICE. (Recorded.) He told me to look at my hand for a part of it came from a star that exploded too long ago to imagine. This part of me was formed from a tongue of fire that screamed through the heavens until there was our sun. And this part of me—this tiny part of me—was on the sun when it itself exploded and whirled in a great storm until the planets came to be. (The lights in the room begin to fade up slowly.) And this small part of me was then a whisper of the earth. When there was life perhaps this part of me got lost in a fern that was crushed and covered until it was coal. And then it was a diamond millions of years later—it must have been a diamond as beautiful as the star from which it had first come. (The tape begins to fade and Tillie continues the speech.) Or perhaps this part of me got lost in a terrible beast, or became part of a huge bird that flew above the primeval swamps. And he said this thing was so small—this part of me was so small it couldn't be seen—but it was there from the beginning of the world. And he called this bit of me an atom. And when he wrote the word, I fell in love with it. Atom. Atom. What a beautiful word. (Pause. Telephone rings. The lights in the room fade up.) BEATRICE. (Off upstairs.) Will somebody get that please? (Phone continues to ring.) Aaaaa! (She enters, crosses downstairs.) No help! Never any help! (She answers the phone.) Hello? Yes it is. Who's this? (Pause.) I hope there hasn't been any trouble at school? Oh, she's always been like that. She hardly says a word around here either. I always say some people were born to speak
and others just to listen. (Pause.) You know I've been meaning to call you to thank you for that lovely rabbit you gave Matilda. She and I just adore it and it's gotten so big. (Pause.) Well, it certainly was thoughtful. Mr. Goodman, I don't mean to change the subject but aren't you that delightful young man Tillie said hello to a couple of months back at the A & P? You were by the lobster tank and I was by the frozen foods? That delightful and handsome young man? (Pause.) Why, I would very much indeed use the expression handsome? Yes, and . . . (Pause.) Well, I encourage her at every opportunity at home. Did she say I didn't? Both my daughters have their own desks and I put 75 watt bulbs right near them. (She crosses to the d. end of the counter, turns her back to the audience and puts instant coffee into a cup.) Yes . . . yes . . . (She turns front.) I think those tests are very much overrated, anyway, Mr. Goodman. Well believe me she's nothing like that around this house. (She crosses to the l. of the table, pulls the chair out, and sits. Pause.) Now I don't want you to think I don't appreciate what you're trying to do, Mr. Goodman, but I'm afraid it's simply useless. I'd say as long as she's doing well in your class that's all you should be concerned about. I'm sure with all those modern techniques you must have, you can bring her out—that is the phrase, isn't it?—just as well as anyone. (Pause.) I've tried just everything, but she isn't a pretty girl—I mean, let's be frank about it—she's going to have her problems. But with all your charm and patience I'm sure she'll respond and improve to your satisfaction. Are you married, Mr. Goodman? Oh, that's too bad. I don't know what's the matter with women today letting a handsome young man like you get away. (Long pause.) Well, some days she just doesn't feel like going to school. You just said how bright she is, and I'm really afraid to put too much of a strain on her after what happened to her sister. You know, too much strain is the worst thing in this modern world, Mr. Goodman, and I can't afford to have another convulsive on my hands, now can I? (She rises, and crosses to the bottom of the stairs.) I can't tell you how happy I am that you called. Why, believe it or not you're the first teacher that's ever taken the trouble to call me as a preventative measure. And I truly appreciate that, Mr. Goodman. Oh, the others call you when the damage has been done, but I doubt that Ruth would have had that breakdown, if those teachers down there had had the trouble to call me . . . Well, she never acted strange at home. But don't you worry about Matilda. There will be some place for her in this world. And, like I said, some were born to speak and others just to listen . . . and do call again, Mr. Goodman, it's been a true pleasure speaking with you. Goodbye. (She hangs up the phone, and crosses d. c. Tillie puts the rabbit in its cage.) Matilda, that wasn't very nice of you to tell them I was forcibly detaining you from school. Why the way that Mr. Goodman spoke he must think I'm running a concentration camp. Do you have any idea how embarrassing it is to be accused of running a concentration camp for your own children? Well, it isn't embarrassing at all. (She crosses u. of the kitchen table, to the counter, pours water into the cup with instant coffee, turns the hotplate off, and turns to Tillie.) That school of yours is forty years behind the times anyway, and believe me you learn more around here than that ugly Mr. Goodman can teach you! You know, I really feel sorry for him. I never saw a man with a more effeminate face in my life. When I saw you talking to him by the lobster tank I said to myself, "Good Lord, for a science teacher my poor girl's got herself a Hebrew hermaphrodite." Of course, he's not as bad as Miss Hanley. The idea of having her teach girl's gym is staggering. And you have to place me in the embarrassing position of giving them a reason to call me at eight-thirty in the morning, no less.

TILLIE. (Rising.) I didn't say anything . . .

BEATRICE. What do you tell them when they want to know why you stay home once in a while?

TILLIE. I tell them I'm sick.

BEATRICE. (Crosses u. c., gets the pillow from the window ledge, crosses to u. of the l. sofa unit, puts the pillow on the sofa, and pushes the sofa next to the other section. She sits and drinks her coffee. Tillie picks up her school book from the sofa.) Oh, you're sick all right, the exact nature of the illness is not fully realized, but you're sick all right. Any daughter that would turn her mother in as the administrator of a concentration camp has got to be suffering from something very peculiar.

TILLIE. (Pause, as she crosses u. of the sofa, to the kitchen table.) Can I go in today, mother? (She picks up a second book, and crosses to the l. of Beatrice.)

BEATRICE. You'll go in, all right . . .

TILLIE. Mr. Goodman said he was going to do an experiment . . .
BEATRICE. Why, he looks like the kind that would do his experimenting after sundown . . .
TILLIE. On radioactivity . . .
BEATRICE. On radioactivity? That's all that high school needs!
TILLIE. He's going to bring in the cloud chamber . . .
BEATRICE. Why, what an outstanding event. If you would've warned me I would've gotten dressed to kill and gone with you today. I just love seeing cloud chambers being brought in . . .
TILLIE. You can actually see . . .
BEATRICE. You're giving me a headache.
TILLIE. (Pause as she crosses to t. of the end table.) Please?
BEATRICE. No, my dear, the fortress of knowledge is not going to be blessed by your presence today. I have a good number of exciting duties for you to take care of, not the least of which is rabbit droppings.
TILLIE. Oh, mother, please . . . I'll do it after school.
BEATRICE. If we wait one minute longer this house is going to ferment. I found rabbit droppings in my bedroom even this time and if you don't start moving you're going to smell hossenpffer.
TILLIE. (Crosses to the small table t. of Nanny's door, puts her books on the table, picks up the rabbit cage, crosses to the r. of the sofa, holding the cage between herself and Beatrice.) I could do it after Mr. Goodman's class. I'll say I'm ill and ask for a sick pass.
BEATRICE. Do you want me to chloroform that thing right this minute?
TILLIE. No!
BEATRICE. Then shut up.
RUTH. (Enters from upstairs. She is dressed for school, and though her clothes are simple she gives the impression of being slightly strange. Her hair isn't quite combed, her sweater's a bit too tight, her skirt isn't quite right, etc. She crosses halfway down the upper section of stairs. Tillie crosses t. c., puts the cage on the window ledge, sits next to the cage, and takes the rabbit out.) Do you have Devil's Kiss down there?
BEATRICE. It's in the bathroom cabinet.
RUTH. (Crosses t. of the kitchen table, and exits into the bathroom. Noise of bottles, etc., as she looks through the cabinet.) There's so much junk in here it's driving me crazy.

BEATRICE. Maybe it's in my purse. (Ruth re-enters.) If you don't hurry up you'll be late for school.
RUTH. (She crosses to the kitchen table, to the r. of the chairs. Beatrice's purse hangs on the newel post at the bottom. Ruth rummages through the purse until she finds the lipstick.) Well, I couldn't very well go in without Devil's Kiss now could I?
BEATRICE. Doesn't anyone go to school these days without that all over their lips? (Tillie gathers up paper from the bottom of the rabbit cage, crosses r., and throws paper in the wastebasket.)
RUTH. (Crosses to the sink. From the shelf above the sink she gets: a mirror, bobby pins, and a small hair brush.) Nobody I know, except Tillie, that is. And if she had a little on yesterday I bet they wouldn't have laughed so much at her.
BEATRICE. Why were they laughing?
RUTH. The assembly. Didn't she tell you about the assembly? (Tillie slowly crosses to the r. of the sofa, still holding the rabbit.)
BEATRICE. Ruth, you didn't tell me she was in an assembly.
RUTH. Well, I just thought of it right now. How could I tell you anything until I think of it, did you ever stop to consider that? Some crumbly science assembly. (She sits r. of the kitchen table, and begins to put on her lipstick.)
BEATRICE. (To Tillie.) What is she talking about?
RUTH. I thought she would have told the whole world. Imagine, right in front of the assembly with everybody laughing at her.
BEATRICE. Will you be quiet, Ruth? Why were they laughing at you?
TILLIE. I don't know . . .
RUTH. You don't know? My heavens, she was a sight. She had that old jumper on—the faded one with that low collar—and a raggedy slip that showed all over and her hair looked like old spaghetti.
BEATRICE. You're exaggerating . . .
RUTH. And she was cranking this model of something . . .
TILLIE. The atom . . .
RUTH. This model of the atom . . . you know, it had this crank and a long tower so that when you turned it these little colored balls went spinning around like crazy. And there was Tillie, crankin' away, lookin' weird as a coot . . . that old jumper with the raggedy slip and the spaghetti hair . . . crankin away while some boy with glasses was reading this stupid speech . . . and
everybody burst into laughter until the teachers yelled at them. And all day long, the kids kept comin' up to me saying, "Is that really your sister? How can you bear it?" And you know, Chris Burns says to me—"She looks like the one that went to the looney doctors." I could have kissed him there and then.

BEATRICE. (Rising.) Matilda, if you can't get yourself dressed properly to go to school you're never going to go again. I don't like the idea of everybody laughing at you because when they laugh at you they're laughing at me. (She crosses u. of the kitchen table, puts her cup on the table, and gets the back scratcher from the counter. She sits u. at the table, takes out her cigarettes and lighter.) And I don't want you cranking any more... atoms.

RUTH. You're almost out of Devil's Kiss.

BEATRICE. If you didn't put so much on it would last longer. (Fillie crosses to the small table u. of Nanny's door, gets pieces of paper towel, crosses u. c. and sits on the window ledge. She puts the paper towel and rabbit in the cage.)

RUTH. Who was that callin'?

BEATRICE. Matilda turned me in to the Gestapo.

RUTH. Can I earn a cigarette this morning?

BEATRICE. O.K. (She lights two cigarettes simultaneously.)

RUTH. (Returns the mirror and brush to the shelf, crosses to the u. r. of the stairs, returns the lipstick to the purse, shuts the purse, crosses to u. r. of Beatrice, picking up the back scratcher as she crosses above her mother.) Was it Mr. Goodman?

BEATRICE. Who?

RUTH. The call this morning. Was it Mr. Goodman?

BEATRICE. Yes... (She gives Ruth a lit cigarette.)

RUTH. (Begins to scratch Beatrice's back. Beatrice squirms with ecstasy.) I figured it would be.

BEATRICE. A little higher, please.

RUTH. There?

BEATRICE. Yes, there. How did you figure it would be Mr. Goodman?

RUTH. Well, he called me out of sewing class yesterday, I remember because my blouse wasn't all buttoned, and he wanted to know why Tillie's out of school so much.

BEATRICE. A little lower please. (Ruth drags on the cigarette.)

And what did you tell him? (Tillie rises and crosses to u. of the sofa.)
RUTH. Oh, it says you're divorced and that I went crazy... and my father took a heart attack at Star Lake... and now you're a widow—
BEATRICE. (Referring to the backscratching.) That's it! Hold it right there!
RUTH. And it says that I exaggerate and tell stories and that I'm afraid of death and have nightmares... and all that stuff...
BEATRICE. And what else does it say?
RUTH. I can't remember everything, you know.
BEATRICE. (Takes the back scratcher from Ruth and scratches her own back.) If you don't hurry up you're going to be late for school.
RUTH. (Rises, crosses u. of Beatrice. Puts her cigarette out in the ash tray on the counter as the lights fade.) Remember this, remember that, this, that...

SCENE 2

Tillie's music theme fades in. A light picks up Tillie kneeling on the floor U. R. She has 2 wooden planting flats filled with dirt, a notebook, and 3 coin envelopes with marigold seeds inside the front of the notebook. She will carefully spread the dirt evenly in both boxes, preparing them for planting.

TILLIE'S VOICE. (Recorded.) Today I saw it. Behind the glass a white cloud began to form. He placed a small piece of metal in the center of the chamber and we waited until I saw the first one—a trace of smoke that came from nowhere and then disappeared. And then another... and another, until I knew it was coming from the metal. They looked like water sprays from a park fountain, and they went on and on for as long as I watched. And he told me the fountain of smoke would come forth for a long time, and if I wanted to, I could have stayed there all my life and it would never have ended, that fountain so close I could have touched it. In front of my eyes one part of the world was becoming another. Atoms exploding, flinging off tiny bullets that caused the fountain, atom after atom breaking down into something new. And no one could stop the fountain. It would go on for millions of years—on and on this fountain from eternity. (The lights in the room fade up. Beatrice is sitting u. s. of the kitchen table with her coffee cup, a real estate section of newspaper, and a pencil. She drinks from the cup as the lights fade up. Tillie finishes preparing the dirt.)
BEATRICE. (To Tillie.) I thought we had everything but leave it to you to think of the one thing we're missing. (Reading.) Twenty-two acres in Prince's Bay. Small pond. $6,000. That's cheap. I'd take a look at it if I had any money. (Tillie takes the seed envelopes from inside the notebook.) What kind of seeds are they?
TILLIE. Marigolds. They've been exposed to cobalt-60.
BEATRICE. If there's one thing I've always wanted it's been a living room planted with marigolds that have been exposed to cobalt-60. While you're at it why don't you throw in a tomato patch in the bathroom?
TILLIE. Just let me keep them here for a week or so until they get started and then I'll transplant them to the backyard. (Pause, no reaction from Beatrice. Tillie puts the seed packages on the floor. She takes her pencil and begins to poke holes in the dirt row by row in the first box.)
BEATRICE. (Returns to her newspaper.) Four family house. Six and a half and six and a half over five and five. Eight garages. I could really do something with that. A nursing home. (Pause.) Don't think I'm not kicking myself that I didn't finish that real estate course. I should have finished beauty school, too. (Pause.) God, what I could do with eight garages. (There is a sound from behind the curtained door, R.) You know, I'm thinking of getting rid of that and making this place into something.
TILLIE. Yes...
BEATRICE. I've been thinking about a tea shop. Have you noticed there aren't too many of them around anymore?
TILLIE. Yes...
BEATRICE. And this is just the type of neighborhood where a good tea shop would really make a go of it. I'd have a good cheesecake. You got a have a good cheesecake. (There is a rustling at the curtains. Two thin and wrinkled hands push the curtains apart slowly and then the ancient face of Nanny appears. She negotiates her way through the curtains. She is utterly wrinkled and dried, perhaps a century old. Time has left her with a whisper of a smile—a smile from a soul half departed. If one looked closely, great cataracts could be seen on each eye, and it is certain that all
that can pierce her soundless prison are mere shadows from the outside world. She peruses the room with age. She supports herself by a four-legged tubular frame which she pushes along in front of her with a shuffling motion that reminds one of a ticking clock. Inch by inch she advances, crossing U. of the sofa, toward the kitchen table. Tillie and Beatrice continue speaking knowing that it will be minutes before she is close enough to know they are there.) Eight times ten—well, eight times eight, if they're falling down—that's sixty-four dollars a month from the garages alone. I swear money makes money. (Pause.) What is cobalt-60?
TILLIE. (She finishes the last row in the first box.) It's something that causes . . . changes in seeds. (She rises, crosses to the r. of Beatrice.) Oh, mother—he set the cloud chamber up just for me and he told me about radioactivity and half-life and he got the seeds for me.
BEATRICE. What does half-life mean?
TILLIE. (She crosses to the r. of the sofa, kneels, reading from her notebook, reciting from memory as much as possible.) The half-life of polonium-210 is one hundred and forty days. The half-life of radium-226 is one thousand five hundred and ninety years. The half-life of uranium-238 is four and one half billion years . . .
BEATRICE. Do you know you're giving me a headache? (She returns to her newspaper. The only sound is the shuffling of Nanny. As Nanny gets closer to the kitchen table, Beatrice finally rises, and puts the newspaper on the chair l. of the table. She addresses Nanny in a loud, horribly saccharine voice.) LOOK WHO'S THERE! IT'S NANNY! NANNY CAME ALL THE WAY OUT HERE BY HERSELF! I'm going to need a cigarette for this. (She lights a cigarette, crosses to the r. of Nanny, and helps her to position herself at the U. chair. Tillie begins poking rows of holes in the second box.) HI NANNY! YOU COME SIT DOWN AND WE'LL BE RIGHT WITH HER! (To Tillie.) You know, sometimes I've got to laugh. I've got this on my hands and all you're worried about is planting marigolds. (She helps Nanny to slowly sit.) ALLEY ULP! HAPPY LANDINGS. (Nanny is settled at the table, smiling but as oblivious to her environment as if it wasn't there.) I'VE GOT HOTSY WATER FOR YOU, NANNY. WOULD YOU LIKE SOME HOTSY WATER AND HONEY? (She gets a towel from the sink, and puts it around Nanny's neck.) I've never seen it to fail. Every time I decide to have a cup of coffee I see this face at the curtains. (She goes to the hot plate, gets the pan of water and a cup, crosses to the l. of Nanny, puts the cup on the table, and holds the pan over Nanny's head.) I wonder what she'd do if I just poured this right over her head. I'll bet she wouldn't even notice it. (Tillie notices this and is horrified. Beatrice pours the water into the cup.) NANNY'S GOING TO GET JUST WHAT SHE NEEDS! (She returns the pan to the hot plate, gets a jar of honey, and puts it l. of Nanny on the table.) You know if someone told me when I was young that I'd end up feeding honey to a zombie I'd tell them they were crazy. (Nanny's hand searches the table. Tillie returns to her planting preparations.) SOMETHING WRONG, NANNY? OH, DID I FORGET NANNY'S SPOON? MERCY, MERCY, I FORGOT NANNY'S SPOON. (Beatrice turns to the counter to look for a spoon.) I'll get you a spoon, Nanny, I'll get you a spoon. (She finds a spoon, turns to Nanny and makes a motion behind her back as if she's going to smack her on the head with the spoon.) Matilda! Watch me give Nanny her spoon. (It manages to be slightly funny. Tillie looks up and yields to a small laugh. Beatrice puts the spoon at Nanny's left hand.) A SPOON FOR NANNY! (Beatrice gets the small hair brush from the shelf over the counter, crosses to U. of Nanny, and brushes Nanny's hair. Tillie returns to her planting.) Fifty dollars a week. Fifty dollars. I look at you, Nanny, and I wonder if it's worth it. I think I'd be better off driving a cab. (She puts the brush back, crosses to the l. of Nanny, and pushes the honey jar toward Nanny. Tillie finishes preparing the dirt, kneels r. of the sofa, gets the seed envelopes, and begins writing in her notebook.) TAKE HONEY NANNY. HONEY WITH HOTSY WATER! (Nanny spoons honey into her cup. Beatrice crosses to U. of Nanny to the l. of the sofa. To Tillie.) You should have seen her daughter bring her here last week . . . I could have used you that day . . . and she came in here pretending she was Miss Career Woman Of The Year. She said she was in real estate and such a busy little woman, such a busy little woman. She just couldn't give all the love and care and affection her little monkeys needed anymore. (She crosses to the r. of the walker. To Nanny.) NANNY'S QUITE SOME LITTLE CROSS TO BEAR, AREN'T YOU, NANNY? (Nanny looks to Beatrice, then returns to her cup.) But you're a little better than Mr. Mayo was—with the tumor on his brain—or Miss Marion.
Minto with her cancer, or Mr. Brougham . . . what was his first name?

TILLIE. Alexander . . .

BEATRICE. Mr. Alexander Brougham with the worms in his legs. (To Nanny.) WHY, NANNY'S QUITE SOME LITTLE GIRL, AREN'T YOU, NANNY? A GIRL DRINKING HER HOTSY AND HONEY! (She crosses to u. of the sofa. Tillie finishes writing in her notebook, and opens a seed envelope. Pause. To Tillie.) Cobalt-60. You take me for a fool, don't you?

TILLIE. No, mother . . .

BEATRICE. Science, science, science! Don't they teach our misfits anything anymore? Anything decent, meaningful, sensitive? Do you know what I'd be now if it wasn't for this mud pool I got sucked into? (She crosses c.) I'd probably be a dancer, (She twirls around.) . . . Miss Betty Frank. The Best Dancer Of The Class Of Nineteen— (She does a simple waltz step. Tillie begins planting seeds in the first box.) One minute I'm the best dancer in school—smart as a whip—the head of the whole crowd! And the next minute . . . (She stops and throws her arms open to the room.) TA DAA! (She crosses to the l. of the sofa, and sits on the arm of the sofa.) One mistake. That's how it starts. Marry the wrong man and before you know it he's got you tied down with two stones around your neck for the rest of your life. When I was going to that lousy high school I was the most respected kid you ever saw. I used to wonder why people always said, "Why, just yesterday . . . why, just yesterday . . . why, just yesterday . . ." Before I knew it I lost my dancing legs and got varicose legs. Beautiful varicose legs. (Rises. Tillie covers the seeds with dirt.) Cha cha cha. Do you know everything I ever thought I'd be has exploded! (Nanny stirring the water hits the side of the cup.) HURRY UP WITH THAT HONEY NANNY! Exploded! You know, I almost forgot everything I was supposed to be. (Nanny drops the spoon on the table. Beatrice crosses to the r. of Nanny. Tillie looks to Beatrice.) NANNY'S ALMOST FINISHED, ISN'T THAT WONDERFUL? She's almost finished all right. (Beatrice crosses to the l. of Nanny. Nanny looks to Beatrice. Tillie puts the unfinished box on top of the other box, puts the notebook on the floor, and writes in the notebook.) NANNY'S DAUGHTER IS COMING TO SEE HER SOON. WILL THAT MAKE NANNY HAPPY? (Nanny looks front, and returns to her cup.) The day Miss Career Woman Of

The Year comes to visit again I think I'll drop dead. Nobody's too busy for anything they want to do, don't you tell me. What kind of an idiot do people take me for? Don't they know I can see right through them? Miss Career Ostrich Of The Year. (Nanny drinks and spills some water.) NANNY, YOU'RE SPILLING YOUR HOTSY! Judas Priest! (Beatrice gets a dish rag from the sink, She wipes the table, picks up the honey jar, cup, and spoon. She returns them all to the counter.) You know, I ought to kick you right out and open that tea shop tomorrow. Oh, it's coming. I can feel it. And the first thing I'll do is get rid of that rabbit.

TILLIE. (Hardly listening.) Yes, mother.

BEATRICE. You think I'm kidding?

TILLIE. No, I don't . . .

BEATRICE. (Removes the towel from around Nanny's neck. She crosses to u. of the end table, throws the towel u. r. toward the dirty clothes box.) You bet I'm not! I was going to do this a month ago. (She finds a bottle in the end table.) Here it is. Here's a new word for you. (Reading.) Tri . . . trichloro . . . methane (Tillie looks to Beatrice.) Do you know what that is, Matilda? Well, it's chloroform! I'm saving it for that Angorra manure machine of yours. (She returns the bottle to the end table.) And speaking of manure machines, IS NANNY READY TO GO MAKE DUTY? (Beatrice crosses to the r. of Nanny, helps her to get up and into her walker. Tillie begins to put seeds in the last box.) NANNY'S ALWAYS READY FOR DUTY, AREN'T YOU, NANNY? BECAUSE NANNY'S A GOOD GOODY GIRL, AND GOOD GOODY GIRLS GET GOOD GOODY THINGS. GOD LOOKS OUT FOR GOOD GOODY GIRLS AND GIVES THEM HOTSY AND HONEY, RIGHT, NANNY? (Beatrice crosses to u. of Nanny to allow her a clear exit to the bathroom. Nanny slowly exits. Beatrice picks up the real estate section, crosses to the stairs, sits and reads the paper. The shuffling of Nanny finally gets on her nerves and she flings the paper down. Tillie looks up from her work.) Half-life! If you want to know what a half-life is just ask me. You are looking at the original half-life! I got one daughter with half a mind; another one who's half a test tube; half a husband—a house half full of rabbit crap; and half a corpse! That's what I call a half-life, Matilda! Me and cobalt-60! Two of the biggest half-lifes you ever saw! (Lights fast fade to black.)
SCENE 3

Beatrice is standing at the telephone, waiting for her party to answer. At r. there are three small flower pots, with the beginnings of marigolds.

BEATRICE. Mr. Goodman please. (Pause) How would I know if he's got a class? (She finds a cigarette next to the hot plate.) Hello, Mr. Goodman? Are you Mr. Goodman? Oh, I beg your pardon, Miss Torgersen. Yes, I'll wait. (She lights her cigarette.) Couldn't you find him, Miss Torgersen? (Pause.) Oh! Excuse me, Mr. Goodman, how are you? I'll bet you'll never guess who this is ... It's Mrs. Hunsdorfer—remember the frozen foods? You know, Ruth tells me she's your new secretary and I certainly think that's a delight. (She picks up the phone, crosses to U. of the kitchen table, puts the phone on the table, and sits.) You were paying so much attention to Matilda that I'll bet Ruth just got jealous. She does things like that, you know. I hope she works hard for you, although I can't imagine what kind of work Ruth could be doing in that great big science office. She's a terrible snoop ... (Pause.) The attendance? Isn't that charming. And the cut cards! Imagine. You trust her with ... Why I didn't know she could type at all ... imagine. (Pause.) Of course, too much work isn't good for anybody, either. No wonder she's failing everything. I mean, I never heard of a girl who failed absolutely everything regardless of what she was suffering from. I suppose I should say recovering from ... (Pause.) Oh, I'll tell you why I'm calling. It's about those seeds you gave Matilda. She's had them in the house for a while now and they're starting to grow. Now she tells me they had been exposed to radioactivity and I hear such terrible things about radioactivity that I naturally associate radioactivity with sterility, and it positively horrifies me to have those seeds in my living room. Couldn't she just grow plain marigolds like everyone else? (Pause.) Oh ... (Pause.) It does sound like an interesting project ... (Pause.) No, I'm afraid that at this very moment I don't know what a mutation is. (Pause.) Mr. Goodman ... Mr. Goodman! I don't want you to think I'm not interested but please spare me definitions over the phone. I'll go down to the library next week and pick me out some little book on science and then I'll know all about mutations ... (Pause.)

No, you didn't insult me, but I just want you to know I'm not stupid ... I just thought prevention was better than a tragedy, Mr. Goodman. I mean, Matilda has enough to worry about without sterility. (She rises, picks up the phone, crosses to the r. of the stairs, and puts the phone to its shelf.) Well, I was just concerned, but you've put my poor mother's heart at ease. You know, really, our high schools need more exciting young men like you, I really mean that. Really, I do. Goodbye, Mr. Goodman. (She hangs up the phone, and then turns front. Lights just fade out.)

SCENE 4

A music theme fades in. The stage is dim. Lightning, thunder.

RUTH. (Screaming off u. stairs.) Aaagh!
TILLIE. (Off u. stairs.) Mother! She's going to take one!
RUTH. Aaagh!
TILLIE. No, Ruth!
BEATRICE. Ruth! Stop it! (Ruth and Tillie enter from u. stairs. Tillie is trying to stop Ruth's attack. They cross one half way down the upper section stairs. The light over the stair landing is turned on by Beatrice from off stage. Beatrice enters, crosses to the girls, pulls Ruth away. Ruth runs to the bottom landing of the stairs. Ruth screams again.)
TILLIE. She's going to go!
BEATRICE. Shut up and get back to your room! (She crosses to u. of Ruth on the landing. Lightning, thunder. To Ruth.) You were dreaming, do you hear me? Nobody's after you! Nobody! TILLIE. I saw her eyes start to go back ...
BEATRICE. Get back in your room. (Ruth crosses one half way down the lower section of stairs, Beatrice follows and tries to comfort her. Tillie exits up stairs.) There, now, nobody's after you. Nobody. Nobody, Ruth. Nice and easy. Breathe deeply ... breathe ... (Ruth slowly begins to hear her mother. Beatrice helps her to sit on the stairs, and she sits next to her.) Did the big bad man come after my little girl? The big bad boogy man? (She puts both hands up to her own face and pulls her features into a comic mask. Ruth is still not aware of her mother. Beatrice makes
another face, and then Ruth begins to laugh.) Now that wasn’t so bad, was it?
RUTH. It was the dream with Mr. Mayo again.
BEATRICE. (Rising.) Oh, Ruth! We’ll just get you a little hot milk. . . .
(Lightning, thunder, blackout. Dim light from the window spills across the floor.) Why the electricity’s gone off. Do you remember what happened to those candles? (She crosses to the shelves, looking for a flashlight.)
RUTH. What candles?
BEATRICE. The little white ones that were on my birthday cake last year.
RUTH. Tillie melted them down for school a long time ago.
BEATRICE. She had no right doing that . . . (She finds a wicker basket, takes it off the shelf, rummages through it until she finds the flashlight.)
RUTH. She asked you. She used them to attach some kind of paper straw to a milk bottle with a balloon over it. It was supposed to tell if it was going to rain.
BEATRICE. (Turns the flashlight on.) There! It works. (She returns the basket to the shelf, crosses to the 1. of Beatrice.) Why, Ruth. Your skin just turned ice cold. Sit down. I’ll get you a blanket. (Ruth crosses to the 1. sofa unit, and sits. Beatrice crosses to the 2. of the sofa to the dresser, finds a small blanket in a drawer, crosses to 2. of Ruth, and hands her the flashlight.) Take this. (Ruth takes the flashlight and looks at it. Beatrice covers Ruth’s shoulders with the blanket.) This will warm you up.
(Pause.) What’s the matter?
RUTH. The flashlight . . .
BEATRICE. What’s wrong with it?
RUTH. It’s the one I used to check on Mr. Mayo with.
BEATRICE. So it is. We don’t need it. (She reaches for the flashlight.)
RUTH. No, let me keep it. Do you want to hear how they have it in the history?
BEATRICE. No, I don’t . . .
RUTH. Well, they say I came out of my room . . . (She shines the light on the stairs.) And I started down the stairs, step by step . . . And I heard the choking and banging (She shines the light on Nanny’s room) on the bed, and . . .
BEATRICE. I’m going back to bed. (She starts to move, Ruth stops her.)
RUTH. No!
BEATRICE. Well, talk about something nice then.
RUTH. Oh, Mama, tell me about the wagon.
BEATRICE. You change so fast I can’t keep up with you.
RUTH. Mama, please . . . (She moves to the r. sofa unit, and pulls Beatrice to sit 2. of her.) The story about the wagon.
BEATRICE. I don’t know anything about telling stories. Get those great big smart teachers of yours to do that sort of stuff. (She lights a cigarette.)
RUTH. Tell me about the horses again, and how you stole the wagon.
BEATRICE. Don’t get me started on that . . .
RUTH. Mama, please . . .
BEATRICE. Do you want a cigarette? (Ruth takes the cigarette. Beatrice lights another one for herself.)
RUTH. Leave out the part where they shoot the horses, though.
BEATRICE. Honey, you know the whole story . . .
RUTH. “Apples! Pears! Cucumber . . . bers!”
BEATRICE. No. It’s “Apples! Pears! Cucumber . . . bers!”
BOTH. (Together.) “Apples! Pears! Cucumber . . . bers!” (They laugh.)
RUTH. How did you get the wagon out without him seeing you?
BEATRICE. That was easy. Every time he got home for the day he’d make us both some sandwiches— (Ruth shines the flashlight on the kitchen table.) —my mama had been dead for years—and then he’d take a nap on the old sofa that used to be . . . (Beatrice points to the sofa, Ruth shines the flashlight where she points . . . there! (Ruth returns the flashlight shining on her and Beatrice’s faces.) And while he was sleeping I hitched up the horses and went riding around the block waving to everyone.
RUTH. Oh, Mama, you didn’t!
BEATRICE. Of course, I did. I had more nerve than a bear when I was a kid. Let me tell you it takes nerve to sit up on that wagon every day yelling “Apples! . . .
BOTH. (Together.) “Pears! Cucumber . . . bers!” (They laugh.)
RUTH. Did he find out you took the wagon?
BEATRICE. Did he find out? He came running down the block after me and started spanking me right on top of the wagon—not hard—but it was so embarrassing—and I had one of those penny marshmallow ships in the back pocket of my overalls, and it got all squashed. And you better believe I never did it again. (Pause.) You would have loved him, Ruth, and gone out with him on the wagon...all over Stapleton yelling as loud as you wanted.

RUTH. Apples! Pears! Cucumbers!

BEATRICE. No!

RUTH. Cucumbers! (Sinks down.)

BEATRICE. My father made up for all the other men in this whole world, Ruth. If only you two could have met. He'd only be about sixty-five now, do you realize that? And I'll bet he'd still be selling vegetables around town. All that fun and then I don't think I ever really knew what hit me.

RUTH. Don't tell about...

BEATRICE. Don't worry about the horses!

RUTH. What hit you?

BEATRICE. Well it was just me and Papa...and your father hanging around. And then Papa got sick...and I drove with him up to the sanatorium. And then I came home and there were the horses...

RUTH. Mother!

BEATRICE. And I had the horses...taken care of. And then Papa got terribly sick and he begged me to marry so that he'd be sure I'd be taken care of. (She laughs.) If he knew how I was taken care of he'd turn over in his grave. AND NIGHTMARES! DO YOU WANT TO KNOW THE NIGHTMARE I USED TO HAVE? I never had nightmares over the fights with your father or the divorce or his thrombosis—he deserved it—I never had nightmares over any of that. (She puts her cigarette out.) Let me tell you about my nightmare that used to come back and back. Well, I'm on Papa's wagon, but it's newer and shinier, and it's being pulled by beautiful white horses, not dirty work horses—these are like—circus horses with long manes and tinsel—and the wagon is blue, shiny blue. (The rain has stopped, and outside lightens slightly.) And it's full—filled with yellow apples, grapes, and green squash. You're going to laugh when you hear this. I'm wearing a lovely gown all covered with jewels...and my hair is piled up on top of my head with a long feather in it... (Ruth shines the flashlight down over Beatrice's head.) and bells are ringing, huge bells swinging on a gold braid strung across the back of the wagon, and they're going DONG DONG, DONG DONG, DONG DONG. (Ruth slowly swings the flashlight as if it were the bells.)

BEATRICE and RUTH. DONG DONG, DONG DONG, DONG DONG. (Ruth continues.)

BEATRICE. And I'm yelling APPLES! PEARLS! CUCUMBERS! (Sinks down.)

RUTH. (She returns the flashlight to her lap, it shines on both of their faces.) That doesn't sound like a nightmare to me.

BEATRICE. And then I turn down our street and all the noise stops. This long street with all the doors shut tight and everything crowded next to each other and there's not a soul around. And then I start getting afraid that the vegetables are going to spoil...and that nobody's going to buy anything, and I feel as though I shouldn't be on the wagon, and I keep trying to call out. There's not a sound. Not a single sound. Then I turn my head and I look at this house across the street...I see an upstairs window...the curtains slowly part...and I see the face of my father. (Pause. Ruth shines the flashlight into Beatrice's eyes.)

Ruth...take that out of my eyes.

RUTH. (Takes the flashlight out of her mother's eyes, turns it off. Looks towards Nanny's room, and lies on Beatrice's lap. Pause.) Is Nanny going to die here?

BEATRICE. No...

RUTH. What are you going to do with her?

BEATRICE. Get rid of her... (Pause.) Oh...God...

RUTH. Are you crying?

BEATRICE. (Pause.) What's left for me, Ruth?

RUTH. (Sitting up.) What, Mama?

BEATRICE. What's left for me? (A low far away thunder roll as the lights fade.)

SCENE 5

Thistle's music theme fades in. The lights fade up.

Nanny is sitting u. s. of the kitchen table. A bottle of beer and a glass are on the table in front of her. She drinks as the lights fade up.
Tillie enters the front door. She is carrying two paper bags of marigolds, and two school books under her arm. She shuts the door, crosses c., drops the books (by accident), crosses to the r. of the sofa units, puts the bags down on the floor, and un-packs them. She finishes, crosses u. r., hides the bags behind some boxes, crosses c., removing her coat, picks up the books, crosses u. c., puts her coat on the window ledge, picks up the rabbit cage, crosses to d. of the kitchen table, puts the cage on the floor, gets lettuce from the refrigerator, sits l. of the table, and takes the rabbit out of the cage. She pets the rabbit, looks to Nanny, waves to Nanny, holds the rabbit close to Nanny’s face, returns the rabbit to her lap, and begins to feed the rabbit lettuce.

Then Beatrice enters from up stairs. She throws a large stack of newspapers over the railing, exits and returns with a stack of clothes, shoe boxes, tissue paper, etc., and throws them over the railing, and exits.

TILLIE. (Rises.) What are you doing?

BEATRICE. A little housecleaning. (Re-enters with a glass of whiskey, the bottle in the pocket of her robe. She crosses half way down the upper section of stairs. She speaks over the railing.) And you’re going to help. You can start in by getting rid of that rabbit or I’ll suffocate the bastard. You don’t think I will, do you? You wait and see. Where’s Ruth? She’s probably running around the school yard in her brassiere.

TILLIE. Mother, they want me to do something at school.

BEATRICE. NANNY! DID YOU HEAR THAT? THEY WANT HER TO DO SOMETHING AT SCHOOL! ISN'T THAT MOMENTOUS, NANNY? (She crosses down the stairs to the landing.) Well I want you to do something around here. Like get rid of that rabbit. I’m being generous! I’ll let you give it away. Far away. Give it to Mr. Goodman. I’d chloroform the thing myself but that crazy sister of yours would throw convulsions fifty years . . . and I hate a house that vibrates. (Tillie sits l. of the table. Beatrice crosses u. of the table and to the r. of Nanny.) And get rid of those sterile marigolds. They stink! Hi NANNY, HOW ARE YOU HONEY? HOW WOULD YOU LIKE TO GO ON A LONG TRIP? (Nanny looks at Beatrice. Beatrice pours the last of the beer into Nanny’s glass. She crosses to u. of the sofa units, pours a drink from her whiskey bottle, and puts the bottle on the end table.) You see, everybody, I spent today taking stock of my life and I’ve come up with zero. I added up all the separate departments and the result is zero . . . zero zero zero zero zero zero zero zero . . . and do you know how you pronounce that, with all your grammatical schoolin’ and foolin’? You pronounce it ooooo-OOOOOO. Like a moan! oooooo. (She crosses to c.) Right, Nanny? RIGHT,NANNY? So, by the end of the week, I want you to get rid of that cottontail compost heap and we’ll get you a job down at the five and ten cent store. And if you don’t do so well with the public we’ll fix you up with some kind of machine. Wouldn’t that be nice?

RUTH. (Enters the front door at a gallop. Beatrice sits on the l. sofa unit. Ruth shuts the door, throws her books on the table in front of the window, crosses to the r. of the walker [at the sink], takes her coat off, and throws it over the walker.) Can you believe it? I didn’t until Chris Burns came up and told me about it in geography and then Mr. Goodman told me himself during the eighth period in the office when I was eavesdropping. (To Beatrice.) Aren’t you so happy you could bust? (Tillie crosses to u. of Nanny. Ruth crosses to the r. of Tillie.) Tillie? I’m so proud I can’t believe it, Mama. (She crosses c. to Beatrice.) Everybody was talking about it and nobody . . . well, it was the first time they all came up screaming about her and I said, (She crosses to the r. of Tillie, and embraces her.) “Yes, she’s my sister!” I said it, “She’s my sister! My sister! My sister!” (She crosses to above and u. of Beatrice, reaches into Beatrice’s pocket for a cigarette.) Give me a cigarette.

BEATRICE. Get your hands off my personal property.

RUTH. I’ll scratch your back later.

BEATRICE. I don’t want you to touch me!

RUTH. All right. (She crosses to r. of Tillie.) Did he call yet? My God, I can’t believe it, I just can’t!

BEATRICE. Did who call yet?
RUTH. (To Beatrice.) I'm not supposed to tell you as Mr. Goodman's private secretary but you're going to get a call from school. BEATRICE. (To Tillie.) What is she talking about? TILLIE. (Crosses to u. and to the l. of Beatrice.) I was in the science fair at ... RUTH. Didn't she tell you yet? (She crosses to between Beatrice and Tillie, kneels l. of the sofa, to Beatrice.) Oh, Tillie, how could you? She's fantastic, Mama! She's a finalist in the science fair. There were only five of them out of hundreds and hundreds. She won with all those plants over there. They're freaks! Isn't that a scream? Dr. Berg picked her himself. The principal! And I heard Mr. Goodman say she was going to be like another Madame Pasteur (pasture), and he never saw a girl do anything like that before and ... (She rises:) So I told everybody "Yes, she's my sister!" I said, "You're my sister!" Mr. Goodman called the Advance (Add-stance) and they're coming to take your picture. (To Beatrice.) Oh, Mama, isn't it crazy? And nobody laughed at her, Mama. She beat out practically everybody and nobody laughed at her. "She's my sister," I said. "She's my sister!" (Telephone rings.) Oh, my God, that must be him! Mama, answer it, I'm afraid. (Pause.) Answer it before he hangs up! (Pause.) Mama! (Pause.) He's gonna hang up! (She runs u. of the kitchen table to the phone, and answers it.) Hello? (Pause.) Yes. (Takes the receiver away, and covers the mouthpiece. Aside to Beatrice.) It's him! (Returning to the phone.) Just a minute please. (Again takes receiver away, covers mouthpiece. Aside to Beatrice.) He wants to talk to you. BEATRICE. Who? RUTH. The principal! BEATRICE. Hang up. RUTH. I told him you were here! Mama! BEATRICE. (She rises, crosses d. of the kitchen table, puts her glass of whiskey on the table, crosses to d. of Ruth and takes the phone from her. Ruth slowly eases to the u. end of the counter. Tillie eases to d. of the sofa unit.) Yes? (Pause.) I know who you are, Dr. Berg. (Pause.) I see. (Pause, Beatrice turns to Tillie.) Couldn't you get someone else? There's an awfully lot of work that has to be done around here, because she's not as good about her home duties as she is about Man-In-The-Moon-Marigolds. (Tillie sits on the sofa unit. Pause.) Me? What would you want with me up on that stage? (Pause.) The other mothers can do as they please. (Pause.) I would have thought you had enough in your history without ... (Pause.) I'll think about it. (Pause.) Good night, Dr. Berg. I said I'll think about it. (She hangs up the phone, crosses d. of the kitchen table to the r. of the table.) RUTH. What did he say? BEATRICE. (To Tillie.) How could you do this to me? How could you let that man call this house? I have no clothes to wear, do you hear me? I'd look just like you up on that stage, ugly little you! DO YOU WANT THEM TO LAUGH AT US? LAUGH AT THE TWO OF US? RUTH. Mother ... aren't you proud of her? (Beatrice turns to Ruth.) Mother ... it's an honor. TILLIE. (She rises, crosses d. Pause. She turns to Beatrice.) But nobody laughed at me. BEATRICE. (Softly.) Oh, my God ... (They both move slowly towards each other. The music theme fades in, the lights fade out as they embrace.) Oh, my God ... my God ... my God ... CURTAIN
ACT II

THE SETTING

The room looks somewhat cheery and there is excitement in the air. It is early evening and preparations are being made for Tillie to bring her project to the final judging of the science fair.

The furniture has been rearranged. A card table, chair, and the wooden stool have replaced the sofa units.

One of the sofa units has been moved u. l. facing the shelves and bins. The other unit has been moved u. c. in front of the small table in front of the window.

The kitchen table has been moved u. approximately two feet, and cleared of the ash tray, matches, pencil, etc. Only a cardboard box sits on the table. The six potted marigolds will fit into the box.

On the card table there is a three-panel cardboard screen lying open and face up. THE EFFECT OF GAMMA RAYS ON MANGON THE-MOON MARIGOLDS has been hand printed, by Beatrice, running across the top of the three panels. Below this on each panel there is a sub-topic: THE PAST: THE PRESENT: THE FUTURE. Additional charts and data appear below the titles. Also on the table there is colored construction paper, a water color paint box, a ruler, and three 3 x 5 cards with Tillie's typed speech.

The rabbit and cage are on the floor n. of the card table.

A full shopping bag is on the floor n. of the sink.

On the end table n. of the card table there are: an ash tray, a metal lid with push pins, and six sticks with labels for the marigolds.

The light fixture over the stair landing and the one over the kitchen sink are on.

Tillie has been dressed by her mother in clothes which are clean but too girlish for her awkwardness. She sports a large bow.

Ruth has dressed herself up as well. She has put too much make-up on. She is wearing a very tight sweater, and a straight skirt.

ACT II

SCENE 1

As the house lights fade a music theme fades in.

When the lights in the room fade up, Tillie is standing n. of the card table putting the finishing touches on the three-panel screen. Ruth is standing n. of the sink, brushing her hair.

RUTH. The only competition you have to worry about is Janice Vickery. (She puts the brush back on the shelf and crosses to the n. of the table. Tillie stands the three panel screen up on the card table.) They say she caught it near Princess Bay Boulevard and it was still alive when she took the skin off it. (She picks up a potted marigold.)

TILLIE. (Sees Ruth and crosses to the n. of her.) Let me do this, please, Ruth. (She takes the plant from Ruth, crosses to the n. of the kitchen table, and puts it carefully in the box.)

RUTH. I'm sorry I touched it, really.

TILLIE. Why don't you feed Peter?

RUTH. Because I don't feel like feeding Peter. (Tillie crosses n. of the table, to the refrigerator, takes out a piece of lettuce from the refrigerator, and Ruth grabs it out of her hand.) Now I feel like feeding him. (She crosses to the cage, picks it up, sets it on the chair n. of the card table, folds the three-panel screen with THE PAST on top, puts the cage on the card table, covering the 3 x 5 cards, sits n. of the table, and begins to feed the rabbit.) I heard it screamed for three minutes after she put it in because the water wasn't boiling yet. How much talent does it take to boil the skin off a cat and then stick the bones together again, that's what I want to know? (Tillie crosses to the n. of the kitchen table, picks up each plant and carefully puts them in the cardboard box.) Ugh! I had a dream about that too. I figure she did it in less than a day and she ends up as one of the top five winners . . . and you spend months growing atomic flowers.
TILLIE. (Crosses to u. of the end table, picks up six small sticks with labels.) Don't you think you should finish getting ready?
RUTH. (Rising.) Finish? This is it! Ta da!
TILLIE. Are you going to wear that sweater?
RUTH. (She crosses u. of the card table, to the r. of T illie.) Look, don't worry about me. I'm not getting up on any stage and if I did I wouldn't be caught dead with a horrible bow like that. (She reaches for the bow and T illie protects it.)
TILLIE. Mother put it . . . (T illie crosses to d. of the card table, Ruth follows.)
RUTH. They're going to laugh you right off that stage again like when you cranked that atom in assembly. (Pause.) I didn't mean that. (T illie crosses d. of Ruth, to the r. of the kitchen table.) The one they're going to laugh at is Mama.
TILLIE. What?
RUTH. I said the one they're going to laugh at is Mama. (She crosses to the r. of T illie.) Oh, let me take that bow off.
TILLIE. It's all right. . . .
RUTH. (Pushing T illie into the chair r. of the table.) Look, just sit still. I don't want everybody laughing at you. (She crosses to u. of T illie, takes the bow out of her hair and puts it on the table. She fixes T illie's hair.)
TILLIE. (Pause.) What made you say that about Mama?
RUTH. Oh, I heard them talking in the Science Office yesterday. Mr. Goodman and Miss Hanley. She's getting twelve sixty-three to chaperone the thing tonight.
TILLIE. What were they saying?
RUTH. Miss Hanley was telling Mr. Goodman about Mama . . . when she found out you were one of the top five winners. And he wanted to know if there was something wrong with Mama because she sounded crazy over the phone. And Miss Hanley said she was crazy and she always has been crazy and he can't wait to see what she looks like after all these years. Miss Hanley said her nickname used to be Betty the Loon.
TILLIE. (As Ruth brushes her hair, brusquely.) Ruth, you're hurting me.
RUTH. She was just like you and everybody thought she was a big weirdo. (She finishes the hair, steps to the l. of T illie, turns T illie's head and inspects the job.) There! You look much better! (She crosses to u. of the card table, to the rabbit.) If anybody stuck you in a pot of boiling water I'd kill them, do you know that? (To T illie. T illie sticks a label onto each pot.) What do they call boiling the skin off a cat? I call it murder, that's what I call it. They say it was hit by a car and Janice just scooped it up and before you could say bingo it was screaming in a pot of boiling water. (She crosses to the r. of T illie.) Do you know what they're all waiting to see? Mama's feathers! (T illie looks to Ruth.) That's what Miss Hanley said. She said Mama blabs as though she was the Queen of England and just as proper as can be and that her idea of getting dressed up is to put on all the feathers in the world and go as a bird. (She crosses to the bottom of the stairs.) Always trying to get somewhere like a great big bird.
TILLIE. (Rises.) Don't tell Mama, please. It doesn't matter.
RUTH. I was up there watching her getting ready and sure enough she's got the feathers out.
TILLIE. (She crosses to d. of the kitchen table.) You didn't tell her what Miss Hanley said?
RUTH. Are you kidding? I just told her I really didn't like the feathers and I didn't think she should wear any. But I'll bet she doesn't listen to me.
TILLIE. It doesn't matter.
RUTH. It doesn't matter? Do you think I want to be laughed right out of the school tonight with Chris Burns there and all? (She crosses to the r. of the card table.) Laughed right out of the school with your spaghetti hair and her feathers on that stage, and Miss Hanley just splitting her sides.
TILLIE. (She crosses to the l. of the card table.) Promise me you won't say anything.
RUTH. On one condition.
TILLIE. What?
RUTH. Give Peter to me.
TILLIE. (Pause, and then she crosses to the sink, picks up the shopping bag, puts it on the chair r. of the kitchen table.) The taxi will be here any minute and I won't have all this stuff ready. (She crosses u. c., pushes the sofa unit from in front of the small table to match the unit facing the shelves and bins. She looks in the drawer of the small table.) Did you see my speech?
RUTH. (She crosses to the r. of T illie.) I mean it. Give Peter to me.
TILLIE. He belongs to all of us. (She crosses d. r. to the table u.)
of Nanny's door, looks through books on top of the table. Ruth follows after her.)

RUTH. For me. All for me. What do you care? He doesn't mean anything to you anymore now that you've got all those crazy plants.

TILLIE. (She crosses to D. of the card table. Ruth follows and grabs Tillie's arm.) Will you stop?

RUTH. If you don't give him to me I'm going to tell Mama that everybody's waiting to laugh at her.

TILLIE. (Crosses to U. of the card table, looks under the colored paper, picks up the cage, looking for her speech.) Where are those typewritten cards?

RUTH. (Holding on to the cage with Tillie.) I MEAN IT! Give him to me!

TILLIE. Does he mean that much to you?

RUTH. Yes!

TILLIE. All right. . . . (Releases the cage to Ruth. Tillie picks up the speech which was under the cage, crosses to the L. of the card table, sits R. of the table and takes the rabbit out.)

RUTH. (She laughs.) Betty the Loon . . . (She laughs again.) That's what they used to call her, you know. Betty the Loon!

TILLIE. I don't think that's very nice.

RUTH. First they had Betty the Loon and now they've got Tillie the Loon. (Tillie rises, crosses U. C. to the window ledge. To the rabbit.) You don't have to worry about me turning you in for any old plants. (Pause.) How much does a taxi cost from here to the school?

TILLIE. Not much. . . . (She puts her coat on, crosses to the door, looks through the glass for the taxi.)

RUTH. (Rises, crosses U. of the card table to U. of the chair, R. of the kitchen table.) I wish she'd give me the money it cost for a taxi and all that cardboard and paint and flower pots and stuff. (She crosses to the sofa units, leans against the back of the D. unit, still holding the rabbit.) The only time she ever made a fuss over me was when she drove me nuts.

TILLIE. (She crosses to the chair R. of the kitchen table, gets the shopping bag, crosses to the front door, and leaves the bag, L. of the door.) Tell her to hurry, please.

RUTH. By the way, I went over to see Janice Vickery's pot that she did you know what in and I started telling her and her mother about the worms in Mr. Alexander Brougham's legs and I got thrown out because it was too near dinnertime. That Mrs. Vickery kills me. She can't stand worms in somebody else's legs but she lets her daughter cook a cat.

TILLIE. (She crosses to D. of the kitchen table, calling up stairs.) Mother! The taxi will be here any minute.

BEATRICE. (Off up stairs.) You're lucky I'm coming without all this rushing me. (Beatrice comes to the top of the stairs. Her outfit is strange, but not that strange by any means. There is a hint of feathers around her. She is an example of those women who idolize a fashion style when they're too young to assume it, and only after decades find themselves able to buy and effect the style on their own person, though now it be a thing of the past. She is wearing high heels, and a turban on her head. She is smoking a cigarette. She is even a little attractive tonight, and though her words say she is greatly annoyed with having to attend the night's function, her tone and direction show she is proud. Ruth crosses to the R. of the card table, and sits.)

TILLIE. Mama, you look beautiful.

BEATRICE. (Crosses to the bottom of the stairs.) Don't put it on too thick. I said I'd go and I guess there's no way to get out of it. Do you mind telling me how I'm supposed to get up on the stage? Do they call my name or what? And where are you going to be? If you ask me they should've sent all the parents a mimeographed sheet of instructions. If this is supposed to be such a great event why don't they do it right?

TILLIE. You just sit on the stage before it begins, with the other parents.

BEATRICE. How long is this thing going to last? And listen, I don't care even if you do win the whole damn thing I'm not making any speech. (She crosses around and R. of the kitchen table to the counter, and puts out her cigarette.) I can hold my own anywhere but I hated that school when I went there and I hate it now . . . and the only thing I'd have to say is what a pack of stupid teachers and vicious children they have. Imagine someone tearing the skin off a cat.

RUTH. She didn't tear it off. She boiled it off.

BEATRICE. You just told me upstairs that girl tore the skin off with an orange knife . . . Do you know sometimes you exas-
perate me? (She crosses to u. of the card table and looks at the three-panel screen.) If you've got all the plants in that cardboard box I can manage the folding thing. Do you know I've got a headache from doing all these titles? And you probably don't even like them.

TILLIE. I like them very much.

BEATRICE. (Crossing to c.) Look, if you don't want me to go tonight I don't have to. You're about as enthusiastic as a dummy about this whole thing.

TILLIE. I'm sorry. . . .

BEATRICE. And I refuse to let you get nervous. Put that bow back in your hair.

RUTH. (Rises.) I took it out.

BEATRICE. What did you do that for?

RUTH. Because it made her look crazy.

BEATRICE. How would you know what's crazy or not? (She crosses to u. of the chair r. of the kitchen table, and Tillie sits in the chair. To Ruth.) If that sweater of yours was any tighter it'd cut off the circulation in your chest. (Ruth crosses u. c., still holding the rabbit, puts her coat on and sits on the window ledge. Beatrice fixes Tillie's hair.) The bow looks very nice in your hair. There's nothing wrong with looking proper, Matilda, and if you don't have enough money to look expensive and perfect, people like you for trying to look nice. (She finishes fixing Tillie's hair by putting the bow back. She steps to the r. of Tillie, inspecting the job.) You know, one day maybe you will be pretty. You have some nice features, when that hair perks up and you learn some tricks with make-up. (She crosses to u. of the kitchen table and looks at the plants in the cardboard box.) I hope you didn't crowd the plants too close together. Did you find your speech?

TILLIE. Yes, Mother. . . .

BEATRICE. (CROSSES to the dresser, opens the top drawer and brings out a pair of black gloves wrapped in tissue paper.) You know, Matilda, I was wondering about something. Do you think you're really going to win, I mean not that you won't be the best, but there's so much politics in school? (CROSSES to the n. of the card table, unwrapping the gloves, and leaves the paper on the table.) Don't laugh, but if there's anyone who's an expert on that, it's me, and someday I'm going to write a book and blast that school to pieces. (Ruth crosses to d. of the card table.) If you're just a little bit different in this world they try to kill you off.

RUTH. (Putting the rabbit in its cage.) Tillie gave Peter to me.

BEATRICE. (Face to face with Ruth.) Oh? Then you inherited the rabbit droppings I found upstairs. What are you doing with your coat on?

RUTH. I'm going out to wait for the taxi.

BEATRICE. Oh, no, you're not. You start in on the rabbit droppings or you won't get another cigarette if you scratch my back with an orange knife.

RUTH. I'm going down to the school with you.

BEATRICE. Oh, no, you're not! You're going to keep company with that corpse in there. If she wakes up and starts gagging just slip her a shot of whiskey. (Taxi horn. Beatrice crosses to d. of Tillie, helps her pick up the box. Tillie crosses u. to the door. Beatrice crosses to u. of the card table.) Quick! Grab the plants, Matilda—I'll get the big thing.

RUTH. (CROSSES d. c., to Beatrice.) I want to go! I promised Chris Burns I'd meet him.

BEATRICE. Can't you understand English?

RUTH. I've got to go!

BEATRICE. Shut up!

RUTH. I don't care. I'm going anyway. (She crosses toward Beatrice.)

BEATRICE. (Grabs Ruth and pushes her to r. of the kitchen table.) WHAT DID YOU SAY? HA!

TILLIE. MOTHER! (Taxi horn. Pause.)

BEATRICE. (CROSSES u. r., opens the front door for Tillie.) Hurry up with that box, Matilda, and tell him to stop blowing that horn. HURRY UP! (Tillie picks up the shopping bag r. of the door and exits. Beatrice crosses to c., to Ruth.) I don't know where you ever got the idea you were going tonight. Did you think nobody was going to hold down the fort? (Ruth removes her coat and turns away l. from Beatrice.) Now you know how I felt all those years ago and everybody else was running out—because there was always me to watch over the fifty-dollar-a-week corps. (Ruth crosses to the stairs. Beatrice stops her.) Where are you going? If there's one thing I demand it's respect. I don't ask for anything from you but respect.

RUTH. (Turns to Beatrice.) Why are you ashamed of me?
BEATRICE. I've been seen with a lot worse than you. (Crosses to u. of the card table.) I don't even know why I'm going tonight, do you know that? Do you think I give one goddamn about the whole thing? (Pause.) Do you really want to know why I'm going? Do you really want to know why this once somebody else has to look out for that dried prune for a few minutes? Because this is the first time in my life I've felt just a little bit proud over something. Isn't that silly? Somewhere in the back of this turtle-sized brain of mine I feel just a little proud! Jesus Christ! And you begrudge me even that, you little bastard. (Taxi born.)

RUTH. Hurry up. They're waiting for you. They're all waiting for you.

BEATRICE. (Picks up the three-panel screen, and her gloves.) I hope the paint is dry. (She crosses l. to the bottom of the stairs to get her purse.) Who's waiting for me?

RUTH. Everybody... including Miss Hanley. She told all the teachers about you... and they're all waiting.

BEATRICE. (Picking up her purse.) You're such a little liar, Ruth, do you know that? When you can't have what you want you try to ruin it for everybody else. (She turns, and starts to cross u. r. to exit.)

RUTH. Good night, Betty the Loon. (Beatrice stops as if she's been stabbed. After a moment she drops the three-panel screen, and then turns u. Taxi born.)

BEATRICE. (She removes the turban. She throws the turban, purse, and gloves u. c.) Put your coat on.

RUTH. What for?

BEATRICE. Take this thing and go with Matilda.

RUTH. I don't want to go now.

BEATRICE. GET OUT OF HERE!

RUTH. (Pause. She crosses to the screen and picks it u.) Now she's going to blame it on me you're not going—and take the rabbit back. (Taxi born. She crosses to u. and l. of Beatrice.) I can't help it what people call you. (Pause.) I'll tell Tillie you'll be down later, all right? (Pause.) Don't answer me. What do I care! (She exits and slams the door. Beatrice stands alone. She begins to sob quietly, and slowly starts to remove her dress as a music theme fades in and the lights fade out.)
A music theme fades in (overlapping the distant applause from the previous scene). As the lights fade up, Beatrice enters from up stairs. She is wearing a robe, open down the front. She has obviously been drinking and she is carrying a glass half full of whiskey. She comes down the stairs, crosses to C. of the kitchen table, puts the glass on the table, picks up the phone book from under the telephone ledge, puts the book on the table, and looks for a number. She finds the number, crosses to the phone, and dials.

BEATRICE. (Into the phone.) I want to speak to the principal, please. (Pause.) Well, you'll just have to get him down off the stage. (Pause.) It's none of your goddamn business who I am! (Pause.) Oh, I see. (Pause.) Yes. I have a message for him and Mr. Goodman, and for you too. And this is for Miss Hanley, too... Tell them Mrs. Hunsdorfer called to thank them for making her wish she was dead... Would you give them that message, please? (Pause.) Thank you very much. (She hangs the phone up. Pause.) She takes a drink from the glass, looks to C. to the window and decides to make the room ready to open a tea shop. She crosses to C. of the card table, leaves her glass on the end table, crosses to C. to the small table in front of the window, moves the table out of her way, crosses to the window and begins to tear the paper off the window. Telephone rings. She ignores the telephone. When she is finished removing the paper she crosses to the L. of the kitchen table, moves the chair and the table approximately two feet. Telephone stops ringing. She crosses to the L. of the card table, sweeps the colored paper, paint box, and ruler off on to the floor. She crosses to C. of the card table to the small table at the C. of Nanny's door, moves the table to the R. of the chair at the card table. She crosses to the dresser and searches through the drawers. She finds tablecloths and napkins in the bottom drawer. She crosses to the small table C. of the card table and throws a cloth over it. She crosses C. and throws another cloth on the small table. She crosses to C. of the card table and throws another cloth on the card table. She crosses to the chair R. of the kitchen table. Telephone rings. She puts the remaining of the tablecloths on the chair, crosses U. of the kitchen table, picks up the phone, places it on the table, gets a jar full of slips of paper with telephone numbers, dumps them all on the table, and looks for the right number. The telephone continues to ring. She finds the number, and picks up the phone to disconnect. Telephone stops ringing. She hands up immediately. Waits, then dials a number. Into the phone.) This is Mrs. Hunsdorfer. (Pause.) I'm sorry if I frightened you. I wouldn't want you to think that Nanny had deceased or anything like that—I can imagine how terrible you'd feel if anything like that ever happened... Terrible tragedy that would be, Miss Career Woman of the Year. (Pause.) Yes, I'll tell you why I'm calling. I want her out of here by tomorrow. I told you when you rolled her in here I was going to try her out for a while and if I didn't like her she was to get the hell out. Well, I don't like her so get her the hell out. (Pause.) It's like this. I don't like the way she cheats at solitaire. Is that a good enough reason? (Pause.) Fine. And if she's not out of here by noon I'll send her collect in an ambulance, you son of a bitch! (She slams down the phone and laughs quietly. She crosses U. of the kitchen table and the card table, gets her glass from the end table, and sits R. of the card table and drinks. She looks at the rabbit in its cage at her feet. She kicks the cage, and then again with violence. Pause. She rises, crosses U. R., looks in a cardboard box, finds a towel, throws it over her shoulder, crosses to U. of the end table, gets the chloroform, crosses D. R., puts the bottle in the pocket of her robe, crosses to the R. of the rabbit cage, and picks it up. Pause. She crosses L. and exits up stairs. As she begins her cross to the stairs a music theme fades in and the lights start to dim slowly. The stage is black by the time she is at the top of the stairs.)

SCENE 4

The lights come up on the platform L. Tillie is standing to the R. of her display. The display consists of the three-panel screen and three pots of the various mutations of marigolds. She is holding the $3 \times 5$ cards. She is very nervous, and refers to the cards.
TILLIE. The Past: The seeds were exposed to various degrees... of gamma rays from radiation sources in Oak Ridge. (Pause.) Mr. Goodman helped me pay for the seeds. (Pause.) Their growth was plotted against... time. (The first gong rings. She crosses to the l. of the display.) The Present: The seeds which received little radiation have grown to plants which are normal in appearance. The seeds which received moderate radiation gave rise to mutations such as double blooms, giant stems, and variegated leaves. The seeds closest to the gamma source killed or yielded dwarf plants. (Gong.) The Future: After radiation is better understood a day will come when the power from exploding atoms will change the world we know. (With inspiration.) Some of the mutations will be good ones—wonderful things beyond our dreams—and I believe, I believe this with all my heart, THE DAY WILL COME WHEN MANKIND WILL THANK GOD FOR THE STRANGE AND BEAUTIFUL ENERGY FROM THE ATOM. (Distant applause is heard. The lights fade to a single soft light on TILLIE's face. Distant electronic sounds are heard. With a soft cry.) Mama! (Again with a soft cry.) Mama! (The light fades out.)

SCENE 5

In the darkness we hear Ruth from off stage, picking up TILLIE's last word "Mama."

The lights fade slowly up on the room. Nothing has changed.

RUTH. (From off stage.) MAMA! (She enters the front door at a gallop, with the three-panel screen and the shopping bag, crosses to u. of the card table, puts the screen and the shopping bag on the floor.) MAMA! SHE WON! WHERE ARE YOU? SHE WON! (She crosses to the front door. TILLIE enters with the cardboard box and trophy under her arm. To TILLIE.) Hurry up! Hurry up! Oh, my God, I can't believe it! (She shuts the door, removes her jacket, and throws it over the small table u. c. TILLIE crosses d. r. and puts the box on the floor.) Mama! Come on down! Hurry. (She crosses r. of the card table to TILLIE and takes the trophy.) Give me that! (She runs to the stairs.) Mama! Wait till you see this. (Beatrice enters from up stairs. Ruth stops on the landing. Beatrice has been drinking a great deal, and clings hastily to a piece of brightly colored material. As Beatrice passes by Ruth.) Mama! She won... (Beatrice does not stop or acknowledge the two girls. She crosses u. to the window and begins to tack up the material on the window. Ruth crosses to b. of the kitchen table.) Didn't you hear me? TILLIE won the whole thing! (She puts the trophy on the table.) Mama? (She crosses to b. of the sofas, which are facing the shelves.) What's the matter with you? What did you rip the paper off the windows for?

TILLIE. (Crosses u. r.) Mama? Are you going to open a tea shop?

RUTH. What's the matter with you? Can't you even answer?

BEATRICE. (Over her shoulder to TILLIE.) Hand me some of those tacks. (TILLIE crosses to u. of the end table, gets the metal lid of tacks, crosses to r. of Beatrice. Beatrice takes the lid and puts it on the window ledge.)

RUTH. I SAID SHE WON! ARE YOU DEAF?

BEATRICE. (Turns and faces Ruth.) Ruth, if you don't shut up I'm going to have you put away.

RUTH. They ought to put you away, BETTY THE LOON!

BEATRICE. (Pause.) The rabbit's in your bedroom. I want you to bury it in the morning. (Pause.)

RUTH. (She runs to the stairs.) If you did anything... I'll kill you. (She exits up stairs. Beatrice continues tacking up the material on the window.)

TILLIE. Mama?

BEATRICE. (Softly.) Yeh.

TILLIE. You didn't kill it, did you?

BEATRICE. Nanny goes tomorrow. First thing tomorrow. (There is a moan from Ruth up stairs.)

TILLIE. (Crossing to the bottom of the stairs.) Ruth? Are you all right? (Ruth enters from up stairs. She is carrying the dead rabbit, wrapped in the blue towel. She comes slowly down the stairs.)

BEATRICE. (Continues to talk, unaware of Ruth coming down the stairs.) I don't know what it's going to be. Maybe a tea shop. Maybe not. After school you're going to have regular hours. You'll work in the kitchen, you'll learn how to cook, and you're going to earn your keep, just like any other business. (Ruth is at the bottom of the stairs. Her eyes roll back and her body begins to tremble.)

TILLIE. Mama... I think she's going to go. (Ruth drops the
towel and rabbit on the floor at Tillie's feet. She crosses to c., the
trembling getting worse and worse. Tillie follows her, trying to
stop the oncoming attack. Softly.) Don't go ... don't go,
Ruth ... don't go. ... (Tillie holding onto Ruth, the trembling
at its worst.) Mama! Help me!
BEATRICE. (She turns, crosses to the girls.) Get the wooden
spoon! (She takes Ruth from Tillie and helps her onto the sofa.
Beatrice holds Ruth's feet. Tillie runs to the counter, gets a wooden
spoon, crosses to the sofa, puts the spoon under Ruth's tongue
and holds her shoulders down. We hear the thrashing and beating
of the attack. The back of the sofa units conceals much of the
attack. Finally, the convulsion passes. The room is silent. Beatrice
crosses to the r. of the sink. The light fixture over the sink lights
her face. Tillie crosses to u. of the sofas, finds a blanket in one of
the bins, and covers Ruth. Pause. Beatrice crosses to the chair r.
of the kitchen table, picks up the remainder of the tablecloths and
napkins, crosses to the l. of the card table, sits on the wooden
stool, and puts the cloth and napkins on the table. She inspects
each napkin, folds it once, making a triangle, and piles them on the
D. end of the table. [The point of the triangle should face the audi-
ence.] If a napkin does not pass the inspection, she drops it to the
floor. By this time the stage is littered with torn paper from the
window, furniture rearranged, tablecloths thrown hastily over
the tables, colored paper on the floor.)
TILLIE. (Crosses to u. of the card table.) Shall I call the doctor?
(No reply.) Shall I call the doctor?
BEATRICE. No. She'll be all right.
TILLIE. I think I'd better call the doctor.
BEATRICE. I didn't ask you what you thought! We're going to need
every penny to get this place open.
TILLIE. (Silence as Tillie crosses to check on Ruth, then crosses
d. l., kneels, picks up the dead rabbit wrapped in the towel, and
holds the body close to her. After a few moments, she rises and
crosses to the front door.) I'd better bury him in the back yard.
BEATRICE. Don't bury the towel.
TILLIE. (Tillie stops before she gets to the door, she turns front.)
I'll do it in the morning. (She crosses u. c., puts the rabbit on the
window ledge, crosses to u. of the sofa, sits on the arm of the sofa,
and comforts Ruth. Then there is the sound of Nanny and her
walker from r. Beatrice stops her folding and looks up. Nanny
enters as before, slowly unaware, desiccated, in some other land.
She shuffles to u. of the card table.)
BEATRICE. (Not looking to Tillie.) Matilda?
TILLIE. Yes, Mama?
BEATRICE. I hate the world, Matilda. Do you know that?
TILLIE. Yes, Mama.
BEATRICE. I hate the world. (A music theme fades in, and the
lights begin to very slowly dim. Beatrice staring r., not moving.
Nanny, u. of the card table, facing l., not moving.)
TILLIE'S VOICE. (Recorded.) THE CONCLUSION: My experi-
ment has shown some of the strange effects radiation can pro-
duce . . . (She rises, and crosses to the r. of the sink.) and how
dangerous it can be if not handled correctly. Mr. Goodman said
I should tell in this conclusion what my future plans are and how
this experiment has helped me make them. (She crosses d. of the
kitchen table to the foot of the stairs.) For one thing, the Effect
of Gamma Rays On Man-In-The-Moon Marigolds has made me
curious about the sun and the stars, for the universe itself must be
like a world of great atoms—and I want to know more about it.
(The room is dark now except for a light on Beatrice and Nanny
and Tillie.) But most important, I suppose . . . (She moves to the
railing r. of the stairs, and faces r.) my experiment has made me
feel important— (The light on Beatrice and Nanny begins to
slowly fade.) every atom in me, in everybody, has come from the
sun— (She slowly faces front.) from places beyond our dreams.
The atoms of our hands, the atoms of our hearts . . . (The stage
is completely dark except for the light on Tillie. The tape fades
out.)
TILLIE. Atom. Atom. What a beautiful word. (The light fades to
black.)
CURTAIN