

The Visit

A Drama in Three Acts

by Friedrich Durrenmatt

Adapted by
Maurice Valency

A SAMUEL FRENCH ACTING EDITION



New York Hollywood London Toronto

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entitled “The Old Lady’s Visit,” adapted from “Der Besuch Der Alten
Dame” by Friedrich Durrenmatt
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THE VISIT was first produced in New York at the Lunt-Fontanne Theatre on May 5th, 1958, under the direction of Peter Brook with the following cast:

CLAIRE ZACHANASSIAN.....	<i>Lynn Fontanne</i>
BOBBY	<i>John Wyse</i>
PEDRO	<i>Myles Eason</i>
MAX	<i>Bill Thourlby</i>
MIKE	<i>Stanley Erikson</i>
FIRST BLIND MAN.....	<i>Vincent Gardenia</i>
SECOND BLIND MAN.....	<i>Alfred Hoffman</i>
ANTON SCHILL.....	<i>Alfred Lunt</i>
FRAU SCHILL.....	<i>Daphne Newton</i>
THE SON.....	<i>Ken Walker</i>
THE DAUGHTER.....	<i>Marla Adams</i>
THE BURGOMASTER.....	<i>Eric Porter</i>
THE PASTOR.....	<i>William Hansen</i>
THE TEACHER.....	<i>Peter Woodthorpe</i>
THE DOCTOR.....	<i>Howard Fischer</i>
THE POLICEMAN.....	<i>John Randolph</i>
THE PAINTER.....	<i>Clarence Nordstrom</i>
THE FIRST MAN.....	<i>Kenneth Thornett</i>
THE SECOND MAN.....	<i>David Clarke</i>
THE THIRD MAN.....	<i>Milton Selzer</i>
THE FOURTH MAN.....	<i>Harrison Dowd</i>
THE FIRST WOMAN.....	<i>Gertrude Kinnell</i>
THE SECOND WOMAN	} <i>Freda Altman</i>
THE FRAU BURGOMASTER	
THE TWO GRANDCHILDREN..	<i>Lesley Hunt, Lois McKim</i>
THE STATION MASTER.....	<i>Joe Leberman</i>
THE CONDUCTOR.....	<i>Jonathan Anderson</i>
THE REPORTER.....	<i>Edward Moor</i>
THE PHOTOGRAPHER.....	<i>Lesley Hunt</i>
THE RADIO REPORTER.....	<i>Vincent Gardenia</i>
THE CAMERAMAN.....	<i>Ed Moore</i>
THE TRUCK DRIVER.....	<i>John Kane</i>
THE ATHLETE.....	<i>James MacAaron</i>

THE DELIVERY MAN.....*Milton Selzer*
FIRST TOWNSMAN*Robert Donley*
SECOND TOWNSMAN.....*Kent Montroy*

NOTE: Offstage music and sound play an important part in the staging of THE VISIT. A complete music and sound recording, as used in the original New York production, is available on a rental basis. Interested groups should write direct to Masque Sound, 331 West 51st Street, New York, N. Y. 10019, for details.

The Visit

ACT ONE

A railway-crossing BELL starts ringing. Then is heard the distant sound of a locomotive WHISTLE. The CURTAIN rises.

The scene represents, in the simplest possible manner, a little town somewhere in Central Europe. (See Scene Design # 1.) The time is the present. The town is shabby and ruined as if the plague had passed there. Its name, Gullen, is inscribed on the shabby sign-board which adorns the façade of the railway station unit, Left. This edifice is summarily indicated by a small house and a wooden platform facing the audience, beyond which one imagines the rails to be. THE THIRD MAN leans on a baggage truck standing Down Left. In the station wall is a door with a sign: EINTRITT VERBOTEN. This leads to the station master's office. Left of the station is a little house in grey stucco, formerly whitewashed. It has a tile roof, badly in need of repair. Some shreds of travel posters still adhere to the windowless walls. A shingle hanging over the entrance Left reads: MÄNNER. On the other side the shingle reads: DAMEN. And under this a torn timetable marked FAHRPLAN hanging on two nails. Along the wall of the little house there is a wooden bench, backless, on which two MEN are lounging cheerlessly, shabbily dressed, with cracked shoes. The PAINTER is busied with paint-pot and brush Down Left. He is kneeling on the ground, painting a strip of cloth with the words, WELCOME, CLARA. THE SECOND MAN is seated on a wooden box near the station master's office. The warning SIGNAL rings

uninterruptedly while the sound of the approaching TRAIN comes closer and closer (SOUND CUE # 1). The STATION MASTER issues from his office, advances to the Center of the platform and salutes. The TRAIN thunders past in a direction parallel to the footlights, between them and the audience, and is lost in the distance. The MEN on the bench follow its passing with a slow movement of their heads, from Left to Right.

FIRST MAN. The "Emperor." Hamburg-Naples.

SECOND MAN. Then comes the "Diplomat."

THIRD MAN. Then the "Banker."

FOURTH MAN. And at 11:27 the "Flying Dutchman."
Venice-Stockholm.

FIRST MAN. Our only pleasure—watching trains.

(The station BELL rings. [SOUND CUE # 2.] The STATION MASTER comes out of his office and salutes the train. The MEN follow its course, Right to Left.)

FOURTH MAN. Once upon a time the "Emperor" and the "Flying Dutchman" used to stop here in Güllen. So did the "Diplomat," the "Banker" and the "Silver Comet."

SECOND MAN. Now it's only the local from Kaffigen and the 12:40 from Kalberstadt.

THIRD MAN. The fact is, we're ruined.

FIRST MAN. What with the Wagonworks shut down.

SECOND MAN. The Foundry finished.

FOURTH MAN. The Golden Eagle Pencil Factory all washed up—

FIRST MAN. It's life on the dole.

SECOND MAN. Did you say life?

THIRD MAN. We're rotting.

FIRST MAN. Starving.

SECOND MAN. Crumbling.

FOURTH MAN. The whole damn town—

THIRD MAN. Once we were a centre of industry.

THE PAINTER. A cradle of culture.

FOURTH MAN. One of the best little towns in the country.

FIRST MAN. In the world.

SECOND MAN. Here Goethe slept.

FOURTH MAN. Brahms composed a quartet.

THIRD MAN. Here Berthold Schwarz invented gun-powder.

THE PAINTER. (*Rises, moves to FIRST MAN.*) And I who once got first prize at the Dresden Exhibition of Contemporary Art— What am I doing now? (*Station BELL rings. [SOUND CUE # 2A.] Painting signs!*)

(*STATION MASTER comes out, throws away cigarette. All rush; THIRD MAN gets cigarette and sits Center smoking. FIRST MAN moves back to bench, stands, others remain standing around THIRD MAN.*)

FIRST MAN. Well, anyway, Madame Zachanassian will help us.

FOURTH MAN. (*Moves back to bench.*) If she comes.

THIRD MAN. (*Moving toward trolley.*) If she comes.

SECOND MAN. Last week she was in France. She gave them a hospital.

FIRST MAN. (*Sits on bench.*) In Rome she founded a free public nursery.

THIRD MAN. In Leuthenau, a bird sanctuary.

THE PAINTER. (*Crosses Center.*) They say she got Picasso to design her car.

FIRST MAN. Where does she get all that money?

SECOND MAN. An oil company, a shipping line, three banks and five railways—

FOURTH MAN. And the biggest string of geisha houses in Japan. (*Laugh.*)

(*From the direction of the town come the BURGOMASTER, the PASTOR, the TEACHER and ANTON SCHILL. They enter Fourth Bay, Left. The BURGOMASTER, the*

TEACHER and SCHILL are men in their fifties. The PASTOR is ten years younger. All four are dressed shabbily and are sad-looking. The BURGOMASTER looks official. SCHILL is tall and handsome, but gray-ing and worn; nevertheless a man of considerable charm and presence. He walks directly to the little house and disappears into it. BURGOMASTER comes Down Center.)

PAINTER. (*Crosses to BURGOMASTER.*) Any news, Burgomaster? Is she coming?

ALL. (*They move forward.*) Is she coming?

BURGOMASTER. She's coming. The telegram has been confirmed. Our distinguished guest will arrive on the 12:40 from Kalberstadt. Everyone must be ready.

(MEN get brooms and start sweeping toward Upper Right.)

TEACHER. (*To Left of BURGOMASTER.*) The Mixed Choir is ready. So is the Children's Chorus.

BURGOMASTER. And the church bell, Pastor?

PASTOR. The church bell will ring. As soon as the new bell-ropes are fitted. The man is working on them now. (*Speaks to FIRST MAN.*)

BURGOMASTER. The town band will be drawn up in the market place and the Turnverein will form a human pyramid in her honor—the top man will hold the wreath with her initials. Then lunch at the Golden Apostle. I shall say a few words.

TEACHER. Of course.

BURGOMASTER. I had thought of illuminating the town hall and the cathedral, but we can't afford the lamps.

PAINTER. Burgomaster—what do you think of this? (*Shows banner.*)

BURGOMASTER. (*Calls.*) Schill! Schill!

TEACHER. Schill!

SCHILL. (*Enters, stepping over brooms, to Right of BURGOMASTER.*) Yes, right away. Right away.

BURGOMASTER. This is more in your line. What do you think of this?

SCHILL. (*Looks at the sign.*) No, no, no. That certainly won't do, Burgomaster. It's much too intimate. It shouldn't read: "Welcome, Clara." It should read "Welcome, Madame"— (*He hesitates.*)

TEACHER. Zachanassian.

BURGOMASTER. Zachanassian.

SCHILL. Zachanassian.

PAINTER. But she's Clara to us.

FIRST MAN. Clara Wäscher.

SECOND MAN. Born here.

THIRD MAN. Her father was a carpenter. He built the— (*ALL turn and stare at the little house.*)

SCHILL. All the same—

PAINTER. If I—

BURGOMASTER. No-no-no. He's right. You'll have to change it.

PAINTER. Oh well, I'll tell you what I'll do. I'll leave this and I'll put "Welcome, Madame Zachanassian" on the other side. Then if things go well, we can always turn it around.

BURGOMASTER. Good idea. (*To SCHILL.*) Yes?

SCHILL. Anyway it's safer. Everything depends on the first impression. (*Crosses, sits on bench and takes off shoe. The PAINTER turns the banner over and goes to work. A TRAIN BELL is heard.*)

FIRST MAN. Hear that? The "Flying Dutchman" has just passed through Leuthenau. (*He and THIRD MAN get ladders and start to decorate station.*)

BURGOMASTER. Gentlemen, you know that the millionairess is our only hope.

PASTOR. (*Right of bench.*) Under God.

BURGOMASTER. Under God. Naturally. Schill, we depend entirely on you.

SCHILL. Yes, I know. You keep telling me.

BURGOMASTER. After all, you're the only one who really knew her.

SCHILL. Yes, I knew her.

PASTOR. You were really quite close to one another in those days?

SCHILL. Close? Yes, we were close, there's no denying it. We were in love. I was young—good looking, so they said, and Clara—I can still see her in the great barn coming towards me—like a light out of the darkness. And in the Konradswiel Forest, she'd come running to meet me—barefooted—her beautiful red hair streaming behind her. Like a witch. Oh, I was in love with her all right. But you know how it is when you're twenty—

PASTOR. What happened?

SCHILL. (*Shrugs.*) Life came between us.

BURGOMASTER. (*Gets box and sits Left of bench.*) You must give me some points for my speech. (*He takes out his notebook.*)

SCHILL. Yes, I think I can help you there.

TEACHER. (*Gets box and sits Left of BURGOMASTER.*) Well, I've gone through the school records. And the young lady's marks were, I'm afraid to say, absolutely dreadful. Even in deportment. The only subject in which she was even remotely passable was natural history.

BURGOMASTER. Good in natural history. That's fine. (*He makes a note.*)

SCHILL. She was an outdoor girl. Wild. Once, I remember, they arrested a tramp, and she threw stones at the policeman. She hated injustice passionately.

BURGOMASTER. Strong sense of justice. Excellent.

SCHILL. And generous—

ALL. Generous?

SCHILL. Generous to a fault. Whatever little she had, she shared—so goodhearted. She once stole a bag of potatoes to help a poor widow.

BURGOMASTER. (*Writing in notebook.*) Wonderful generosity—

(FIRST and THIRD MEN move ladders, continue with decorations.)

TEACHER. Generosity.

BURGOMASTER. That, gentlemen, is something I must not fail to make a point of.

SCHILL. And such a sense of humor! I remember once when the oldest man in town fell and broke his leg, she said, oh dear, now they'll have to shoot him.

BURGOMASTER. Well, I've got enough. The rest, my friend, is up to you. (*He puts the notebook away.*)

SCHILL. (*Rises and crosses to Left station house.*) Yes, I know, but it's not so easy. After all, to part a woman like that from her millions—

BURGOMASTER. Exactly. Millions. We have to think in big terms here.

TEACHER. (*Rises, moves to Left of SCHILL.*) If she's thinking of buying us off with a nursery school—

ALL. Nursery school!

PASTOR. Don't accept.

TEACHER. Hold out.

SCHILL. I'm not so sure that I can swing it. You know, she may have forgotten me completely.

BURGOMASTER. (*He exchanges a look with the TEACHER and the PASTOR, rises and crosses to SCHILL.*) Schill, for many years you have been our most popular citizen. The most respected and the best loved.

SCHILL. (*Steps forward.*) Why, thank you—

BURGOMASTER. And therefore I must tell you—last week I sounded out the political opposition, and they agreed. In the spring you will be elected to succeed me as Burgomaster. By unanimous vote. (*The OTHERS clap their hands in approval.*)

SCHILL. But, my dear Burgomaster—!

BURGOMASTER. It's true.

TEACHER. (*Shakes hands with SCHILL.*) I'm a witness. I was at the meeting.

SCHILL. (*Shakes hands with FOURTH MAN and PAINTER.*) This is—naturally, I'm terribly flattered—It's a completely unexpected honor.

BURGOMASTER. You deserve it.

SCHILL. Burgomaster! Well, well—! (*Briskly, at box Center, puts foot on box and arm around TEACHER'S*

shoulder.) Gentlemen, let's get down to business. The first chance I get, of course, I shall discuss our miserable position with Clara . . .

TEACHER. But tactfully, tactfully—

SCHILL. What do you take me for? We must feel our way. Everything must be correct. Psychologically correct. For example, here at the railway station, a single blunder, one false note, could prove disastrous.

BURGOMASTER. He's absolutely right. The first impression colors all the rest. Madame Zachanassian sets foot on her native soil for the first time in many years. She sees our love and she sees our misery. She remembers her youth, her friends. The tears well up into her eyes. Her childhood companions throng about her. I will naturally not present myself like this, but in my black coat with my top hat. Next to me, my wife. Before me, my two grandchildren, all in white, with roses. My God, if it only comes off as I see it! If only it comes off. (*The station BELL begins ringing.*) Oh, my God! Quick, we must get dressed.

FIRST MAN. (*Comes down ladder, crosses Down Right.*) It's not her train. It's the "Flying Dutchman."

PASTOR. (*Calmly.*) We have still two hours before she arrives.

SCHILL. (*Takes box and sits near Left station house.*) For God's sake, don't let's lose our heads. We still have a full two hours.

BURGOMASTER. Who's losing their heads? (*To FOURTH and SECOND MEN.*) When her train comes, you two, Helmsberger and Vogel, will hold up the banner with "Welcome Madame Zachanassian." The rest will applaud. (*FOURTH and SECOND MEN take position on ladders.*)

THIRD MAN. Bravo! (*He applauds.*)

BURGOMASTER. (*Looks at THIRD MAN.*) But, please, one thing—no wild cheering like last year with the government relief committee. It made no impression at all and we still haven't received any loan. What we need

here is a feeling of genuine sincerity. That's how we greet with full hearts our beloved sister who has been away from us so long. Be sincerely moved, my friends, that's the secret; be sincere. Remember you're not dealing with a child. Next a few brief words from me. Then the church bell will start pealing—

(He is interrupted by the thunder of the approaching TRAIN. [SOUND CUE # 3.] The MEN crane their heads to see it pass. The STATION MASTER advances to the platform and salutes.)

PASTOR. If he can fix the ropes in time.

(The station BELL starts to ring.)

BURGOMASTER. Then the Mixed Choir moves in. And then—

TEACHER. We'll form a line down here.

BURGOMASTER. Then the rest of us will form in two lines leading from the station—

(There is a screech of brakes. [SOUND CUE # 3A.] The FOUR MEN jump up in consternation. ALL move Downstage except SCHILL, who rises from box.)

PAINTER. But the "Flying Dutchman" never stops!

FIRST MAN. It's stopping.

SECOND MAN. In Gullen!

THIRD MAN. In the poorest—

FIRST MAN. The dreariest—

SECOND MAN. The lousiest—

FOURTH MAN. The most God-forsaken hole between Venice and Stockholm.

STATION MASTER. It cannot stop!

(The train noises stop. There is only the panting of the ENGINE. The STATION MASTER runs off.)

PAINTER. It's stopped!

OFFSTAGE VOICES. What's happened? Is there an accident? (*A hubbub of offstage VOICES, as if the passengers on the invisible train were alighting.*)

CLAIRE. (*Offstage.*) Is this Güllen? (*ALL move Up-stage, opposite first Bay Left for CLAIRE's entrance.*)

CONDUCTOR. (*Offstage.*) Here, here, what's going on?

CLAIRE. (*Offstage.*) Who the hell are you?

CONDUCTOR. (*Offstage.*) But you pulled the emergency cord, Madame!

CLAIRE. (*Offstage.*) I always pull the emergency cord.

STATION MASTER. (*Offstage.*) I ask you what's going on here?

CLAIRE. (*Offstage.*) And who the hell are you?

STATION MASTER. (*Offstage.*) I'm the Station Master, Madame, and I must ask you—

CLAIRE. (*Enters.*) No!

(*From First Bay Left appears CLAIRE ZACHANASSIAN.*

She is an extraordinary woman. She is in her fifties, red-haired, remarkably dressed, with a face as impassive as that of an ancient idol, beautiful still, and with a singular grace of movement and manner. She is simple and unaffected, yet she has the haughtiness of a world power. The entire effect is striking to the point of the unbelievable. Behind her comes her FIANCÉ, tall, young, very handsome, and completely equipped for fishing, with creel and net, and with a rod-case in his hand. An excited CONDUCTOR follows.)

CONDUCTOR. But, Madame, I must insist! You have stopped "The Flying Dutchman." I must have an explanation.

CLAIRE. Nonsense. Pedro—

PEDRO. Yes, my love?

CLAIRE. This is Güllen. Nothing has changed. I recognize it all. There's the forest of Konradswil. There's a brook in it full of trout where you can fish. And there's the roof of the great barn. Ha! God! What a miserable

blot on the map! (*She crosses the stage and goes off First Bay Right with PEDRO. CONDUCTOR and STATION MASTER cross Down Left to first bay.*)

SCHILL. (*Crosses Down Right.*) My God! Clara!

TEACHER. (*Moves Upstage.*) Claire Zachanassian!

ALL. Claire Zachanassian!

BURGOMASTER. And the town band? The town band! Where is it?

TEACHER. The mixed choir! The mixed choir!

PASTOR. The church bell! The church bell!

BURGOMASTER. (*To the FIRST MAN.*) Quick! My dress coat! My top hat! My grandchildren! Run! Run! (*FIRST MAN runs off Up Right. BURGOMASTER shouts after him:*) And don't forget my wife!

(*General panic. The SECOND MAN and FOURTH MAN hold up the banner on which only part of the name has been painted: WELCOME MA—.* CLAIRE and PEDRO re-enter, *Right*. CONDUCTOR and STATION MASTER cross to meet them *Down Left Center.*)

CONDUCTOR. (*Mastering himself with an effort.*) Madame. The train is waiting. The entire international railway schedule has been disrupted. I await your explanation.

CLAIRE. You're a very foolish man. I wish to visit this town. Did you expect me to jump off a moving train?

CONDUCTOR. (*Stupefied.*) You stopped the "Flying Dutchman" because you wished to visit the town?

CLAIRE. Naturally.

CONDUCTOR. (*Inarticulate.*) Madame!

STATION MASTER. Madame, if you wished to visit the town, the twelve-forty from Kalberstadt was entirely at your service. Arrival in Gullen, one-seventeen.

CLAIRE. The local that stops at Loken, Beisenbach and Leuthenau? Do you expect me to waste three-quarters of an hour chugging dismally through this wilderness?

CONDUCTOR. Madame, you shall pay for this!

CLAIRE. Bobby, give him a thousand marks.

(*Her BUTLER, a man in his seventies, wearing dark glasses, steps forward from Down Left and opens his wallet. The TOWNSPEOPLE gasp.*)

CONDUCTOR. (*Taking the money in amazement.*) But Madame!

CLAIRE. And three thousand for the Railway Widows Relief Fund.

CONDUCTOR. (*With the money in his hands.*) But we have no such fund, Madame.

CLAIRE. (*Moving Up Center with PEDRO.*) Now you have.

BURGOMASTER. (*Pushes his way forward. He whispers to the CONDUCTOR.*) The lady is Madame Claire Zachanassian!

CONDUCTOR. Claire Zachanassian? Oh, my God! (*To CLAIRE.*) But that's naturally quite different. Needless to say, we would have stopped the train at once if we'd had the slightest idea. (*He hands the money back to BOBBY.*) Here, please. I couldn't dream of it. Four thousand. My God!

CLAIRE. Keep it. Don't fuss.

CONDUCTOR. Would you like the train to wait, Madame, while you visit the town? The Administration will be delighted. The cathedral porch. The town hall—

CLAIRE. You may take your train away now. I don't need it any more.

STATION MASTER. All aboard! (*He puts his whistle to his lips.*)

PEDRO. (*Stops him.*) But the Press, my angel. They don't know anything about this. They're still in the dining car.

CLAIRE. Let them stay there. I don't want the Press in Gullen at the moment. Later they will come by themselves. (*To STATION MASTER.*) And now what are you waiting for?

STATION MASTER. All aboard! (*The STATION MASTER blows a long blast on his whistle. The TRAIN leaves. [SOUND CUE # 4.] Meanwhile the FIRST MAN has brought the BURGOMASTER'S dress coat. He puts it on, then advances slowly and solemnly.*)

CONDUCTOR. I trust Madame will not speak of this to the Administration. It was a pure misunderstanding. (*He salutes and runs for the train as it starts moving.*)

BURGOMASTER. (*Bows.*) Gracious lady, as Burgomaster of the town of Güllen, I have the honor— (*The rest of the speech is lost in the roar of the departing TRAIN. He continues speaking and gesturing, and at last bows amid applause as the TRAIN noises end.*)

CLAIRE. Thank you, Mr. Burgomaster. (*She glances at the beaming faces of the MEN, who bow in turn, and lastly at SCHILL, whom she does not recognize. She turns Unstage.*)

SCHILL. Clara!

CLAIRE. (*Turns and stares.*) Anton?

SCHILL. (*Moves toward her.*) Yes. It's good that you've come back, Clara—

CLAIRE. Yes. I've waited for this moment. All my life. Ever since I left Güllen.

SCHILL. (*A little embarrassed.*) That is very kind of you to say, Clara.

CLAIRE. And have you thought about me?

SCHILL. Naturally. Always. You know that.

CLAIRE. Those were happy times we spent together.

SCHILL. Unforgettable. (*He smiles reassuringly at the BURGOMASTER.*)

CLAIRE. Call me by the name you used to call me.

SCHILL. (*Whispers; he is close to her.*) My kitten.

CLAIRE. (*Backs off a step.*) What?

SCHILL. (*Louder.*) My kitten.

CLAIRE. And what else?

SCHILL. Little witch.

CLAIRE. I used to call you my black panther. You're grey now, and soft.

SCHILL. But you are still the same, little witch.

CLAIRE. I am the same? (*She laughs.*) Oh no, my black panther. I am not at all the same.

SCHILL. (*Gallantly.*) In my eyes you are. I see no difference.

CLAIRE. Would you like to meet my fiancé? Pedro Cabral. He owns an enormous plantation in Brazil.

SCHILL. A pleasure.

CLAIRE. We're to be married soon.

SCHILL. Congratulations.

CLAIRE. He will be my eighth husband. (*PEDRO stands by himself, Down Right.*) Pedro, come here and show your face. Come along, darling—come here! Don't sulk. Say hello. (*PEDRO crosses to her.*)

PEDRO. Hello.

CLAIRE. A man of few words. Isn't he charming? A diplomat. He's interested only in fishing. Isn't he handsome in his Latin way? You'd swear he was a Brazilian. But he's not—he's a Greek. His father was a white Russian. We were betrothed by a Bulgarian priest. We plan to be married in a few days here in the cathedral.

BURGOMASTER. Here in the cathedral? What an honor for us!

CLAIRE. No, it was my dream, when I was seventeen, to be married in Güllen cathedral. The dreams of youth are sacred, don't you think so, Anton?

SCHILL. Yes, of course.

CLAIRE. Yes, of course. I think so, too. Now I would like to look at the town. (*The MIXED CHOIR arrives from Up Left, breathless, in ordinary clothes with green sashes.*) What's all this? Go away— What's the matter with them? (*She laughs.*) Ha! Ha! Ha!

TEACHER. Dear lady— (*He steps forward, having put on a sash also.*) Dear lady, as Rector of the High School and a devotee of that noble muse—Music, I take pleasure in presenting the Güllen Mixed Choir.

CLAIRE. How do you do?

TEACHER. Who will sing for you an ancient folk song

of the region with specially amended words—if you would deign to listen.

CLAIRE. (*Sits.*) Very well. Fire away.

(*The TEACHER blows a "D" on his pitchpipe. The MIXED CHOIR begins to sing the ancient folk song with the amended words. [Words to this song will be found in back of book.] Just then the station BELL starts ringing. The song is drowned in the roar of the passing EXPRESS. [SOUND CUE # 5.] The STATION MASTER salutes. When the train has passed, there is applause.*)

BURGOMASTER. The church bell! The church bell! Where's the church bell? (*The PASTOR shrugs helplessly.*)

CLAIRE. Thank you, Professor. They sang beautifully. The little blonde bass—no, not that one—the one with the big Adam's apple—was most impressive. (*The TEACHER bows. The POLICEMAN pushes his way professionally through the MIXED CHOIR and comes to attention in front of CLAIRE.* Now who are you?

POLICEMAN. (*Clicks heels and salutes.*) Police Chief Schultz. At your service.

CLAIRE. (*She looks him up and down.*) I have no need of you at the moment. But I think there may be work for you by and by. Tell me, do you know how to close an eye?

POLICEMAN. How else could I get along in my profession?

CLAIRE. You might practise closing both. (*POLICEMAN bows and moves Down Left.*)

SCHILL. (*Laughs.*) What a sense of humor, eh?

BURGOMASTER. (*Puts on the top hat.*) Permit me to present my grandchildren, gracious lady. Hermine and Adolphine. There's only my wife still to come. (*He wipes the perspiration from his brow, and replaces the hat.*

The LITTLE GIRLS present the roses with elaborate curtseys.)

CLAIRE. Thank you, my dears. Congratulations, Burgomaster. Extraordinary children. *(She plants the roses in PEDRO's arms. The BURGOMASTER secretly passes his top hat to the PASTOR, who puts it on.)*

BURGOMASTER. Our pastor, Madame. *(The PASTOR takes off the hat and bows. Moves to bench, takes CLAIRE's hand and kisses it.)*

CLAIRE. Ah. The Pastor. How do you do? Is it you that gives consolation to the dying?

PASTOR. *(A bit puzzled.)* That is part of my ministry, yes.

CLAIRE. And to those who are condemned to death?

PASTOR. Capital punishment has been abolished in this country, Madame.

CLAIRE. I see. Well, it could be restored, I suppose. *(The PASTOR hands back the hat. He shrugs his shoulders in confusion.)*

SCHILL. *(Laughs.)* What an original sense of humor!

(ALL laugh, a little blankly.)

CLAIRE. *(Rising.)* Well, I can't sit here all day—I would like to see the town.

BURGOMASTER. *(Offers his arm.)* May I have the honor, gracious lady?

CLAIRE. Thank you, but these legs are not what they were. This one was broken in five places.

SCHILL. *(Full of concern.)* My kitten!

CLAIRE. When my airplane bumped into a mountain in Afghanistan. All the others were killed. Even the pilot. As you see, I survived. But I don't fly any more.

SCHILL. But you're as strong as ever now.

CLAIRE. Stronger.

BURGOMASTER. Never fear, gracious lady. The town doctor has a car.

CLAIRE. I never ride in motors.

BURGOMASTER. You never ride in motors?

CLAIRE. Not since my Ferrari crashed in Hong Kong.

SCHILL. But how do you travel, then, little witch? On a broom?

CLAIRE. Mike— Max. (*She claps her hands. Two huge BODYGUARDS come in, first bay Left, carrying a sedan chair. She sits in it.*) I travel this way—a bit antiquated of course. But perfectly safe. (*BODYGUARDS pick up chair.*) Ha! Ha! Aren't they magnificent? Mike and Max. I bought them in America. They were in jail, condemned to the chair. I had them pardoned. Now they're condemned to my chair. I paid fifty thousand dollars apiece for them. You couldn't get them now for twice the sum. The sedan chair comes from the Louvre. I fancied it so much that the President of France gave it to me. The French are so impulsive, don't you think so, Anton? Go! (*MIKE and MAX start to carry her off.*)

BURGOMASTER. (*Crosses in front of chair.*) You wish to visit the cathedral? And the old town hall?

CLAIRE. No. The great barn. And the forest of Konradswail. I wish to go with Anton and visit our old haunts once again. (*SCHILL crosses to chair and takes her hand.*)

THE PASTOR. Very touching.

CLAIRE. (*To the BUTLER.*) Will you send the luggage and the coffin to The Golden Apostle.

BURGOMASTER. (*Peering around SCHILL.*) The coffin?

CLAIRE. Yes. I brought one with me. Go.

TEACHER. Hip-Hip—Hurrah!!

ALL. Hurrah! Hip-Hip, Hurrah! Hurrah!

(*THEY bear her off Up Left in the direction of the town. The BURGOMASTER makes a gesture. The TOWNS-PEOPLE burst into cheers. The church BELL rings. SOUND CUE # 6.*)

BURGOMASTER. (*As ALL follow the chair off but the POLICEMAN.*) [*SOUND CUE # 7. CROSS FADE # 6 UNDER.*] Ah, thank God—the bell at last!

(*The POLICEMAN is about to follow the others when the two BLIND MEN appear from First Bay Left. They carry guitar and mandolin case. They are not young, yet they seem childish, a strange effect. They are dressed exactly alike, though they are of different height and features, and so make the effect of being twins. They walk slowly, feeling their way. Their voices, when they speak, are curiously high and flute-like, and they have a curious trick of repetition.*)

FIRST BLIND MAN. We're in—

BOTH. Gullen.

FIRST BLIND MAN. We breathe—

SECOND BLIND MAN. We breathe—

BOTH BLIND MEN. We breathe the air, the air of Gullen.

POLICEMAN. (*Startled.*) Who are you?

FIRST BLIND MAN. We belong to the lady.

SECOND BLIND MAN. We belong to the lady. She calls us—

FIRST BLIND MAN. Kobby.

SECOND BLIND MAN. And Lobby.

POLICEMAN. (*A step toward them.*) Madame Zachanassian is staying at The Golden Apostle.

FIRST BLIND MAN. We're blind.

SECOND BLIND MAN. We're blind.

POLICEMAN. Blind? Come along with me, then. I'll take you there.

FIRST BLIND MAN. Thank you, Mr. Policeman.

SECOND BLIND MAN. Thanks very much. (*They cross toward Center.*)

(*SOUND CUE # 7.*)

POLICEMAN. Hey! (*The MEN stop abruptly and turn.*) How do you know I'm a policeman, if you're blind?

BOTH BLIND MEN. By your voice. By your voice.

FIRST BLIND MAN. All policemen sound the same.

POLICEMAN. (*Steps toward them.*) You've had a lot to do with police, have you, little men?

FIRST BLIND MAN. Men he calls us!

BOTH BLIND MEN. Men!

POLICEMAN. What are you then?

BOTH BLIND MEN. You'll see. You'll see. (*The POLICEMAN claps his hands suddenly. The MEN turn sharply toward the sound. The POLICEMAN is convinced they are blind.*)

POLICEMAN. What's your trade?

BOTH BLIND MEN. We have no trade.

SECOND BLIND MAN. We play music.

FIRST BLIND MAN. We sing.

SECOND BLIND MAN. We amuse the lady.

FIRST BLIND MAN. We look after the beast.

SECOND BLIND MAN. We feed it.

FIRST BLIND MAN. We stroke it.

SECOND BLIND MAN. We take it for walks.

POLICEMAN. What beast?

BOTH BLIND MEN. You'll see—you'll see.

SECOND BLIND MAN. We give it raw meat.

FIRST BLIND MAN. And she gives us chicken and wine.

SECOND BLIND MAN. Every day—

BOTH BLIND MEN. Every day.

POLICEMAN. (*Shrugs in wonder.*) Rich people have strange tastes!

BOTH BLIND MEN. Strange tastes—strange tastes.

POLICEMAN. (*Puts on his helmet.*) Come along, I'll take you to the lady.

BOTH BLIND MEN. We know the way—we know the way. (*They turn and walk off Center between the lamp-posts. [SOUND CUE # 8.]*)

(*The station and the little house vanish, Right and Left. The backdrop and the groundrows are flown out of sight. A sign descends from the flies. It reads DER GOLDENE APOSTEL. The scene dissolves into the interior of the inn. [See Scene Design # 2.] The Golden Apostle is seen to be in the last stages of decay. The walls are cracked and mouldering, and the plaster is falling from the ancient lath. A table*

represents the cafe of the inn. The BURGOMASTER and the TEACHER enter from Third Left and carry table Downstage to marks. A procession of TOWNSPEOPLE carrying many pieces of luggage passes. Then comes a coffin; lastly a panther cage covered with a canvas. They cross the stage from Left to Right. CUT SOUND.)

BURGOMASTER. Trunks. Suitcases. Boxes. (*He looks up apprehensively at the ceiling.*) The floor will never bear the weight. (*As the large covered box is carried in, he peers under the canvas, then draws back.*) Good God!

TEACHER. Why, what's in it?

BURGOMASTER. A live panther! (*They laugh. He lifts his glass solemnly.*) Your health, Professor. Let's hope she puts the Foundry back on its feet.

TEACHER. (*Lifts his glass.*) And the Wagonworks.

BURGOMASTER. And the Golden Eagle Pencil Factory. Once that starts moving, everything else will go. Prosit. (*They touch glasses and drink.*)

TEACHER. What does she need a panther for?

BURGOMASTER. Don't ask me. The whole thing is too much for me. The Pastor had to go home and lie down.

TEACHER. (*Sets down his glass.*) If you want to know the truth, she frightens me.

BURGOMASTER. (*Nods gravely.*) She's a strange one.

TEACHER. You understand, Burgomaster, a man who for twenty-two years has been correcting the Latin compositions of the students of Gullen is not unaccustomed to surprises. I have seen things to make one's hair stand on end. But when this woman suddenly appeared on the platform, a shudder tore through me. (*Crosses Center, then to table.*) It was as though out of the clear sky all at once a fury descended upon us, beating its black wings—

POLICEMAN. (*Comes in Up Center. He mops his face.*) Ah! Now the old place is livening up a bit! (*To Down Left of table.*)

BURGOMASTER. Ah, Schultz, come and join us.

POLICEMAN. Thank you. (*He calls.*) Beer!

BURGOMASTER. Well, what's the news from the front?

POLICEMAN. (*Crosses Center.*) I'm just back from Schiller's barn. My God! What a scene! She had us all tiptoeing around in the straw as if we were in church. Nobody dared to speak above a whisper. And the way she carried on! I was so embarrassed I let them go to the forest by themselves.

BURGOMASTER. Does the fiancé go with them?

POLICEMAN. (*Nods.*) With his fishing rod and his landing net. In full marching order. (*He calls again.*) Beer!

(*THIRD MAN enters with beer First Bay Left, gives beer to POLICEMAN, exits Second Bay Left.*)

BURGOMASTER. But what does she expect to find in the Konradsw Weil forest?

POLICEMAN. The same thing she expected to find in the old barn, I suppose. The—the—

TEACHER. (*Crosses Center.*) The ashes of her youthful love.

POLICEMAN. Exactly.

TEACHER. It's poetry.

POLICEMAN. Poetry.

TEACHER. Sheer poetry! It makes one think of Shakespeare, of Wagner. Of Romeo and Juliet.

BURGOMASTER. Yes, you're right. (*Solemnly rises as they lift their glasses.*) Gentlemen, I would like to propose a toast. To our great and good friend Anton Schill, who is even now working on our behalf.

POLICEMAN. Yes! He's really working.

BURGOMASTER. Gentlemen, to the best-loved citizen of this town. My successor, Anton Schill!

(*They raise their glasses and ALL repeat "Anton Schill"! At this point an unearthly SCREAM is heard. [SOUND CUE # 9.] It is the black panther howling Offstage Right.*)

(The sign of the Golden Apostle rises out of sight. The LIGHTS go down. The inn vanishes. Only the wooden bench of Scene 1 is left on the stage, Down Right. [See Scene Design # 3.] The procession comes on Upstage through Fifth Bay Left. The two BODYGUARDS carry in CLAIRE's sedan chair. Next to it walks SCHILL. PEDRO walks behind with his fishing rod. Last come the TWO BLIND MEN playing mandolin and guitar and, finally, the BUTLER. CLAIRE alights.)

CLAIRE. Stop! Take my chair off somewhere else. I'm tired of looking at you. *(The BODYGUARDS and the sedan chair go off Up Right Bay.)* Pedro darling, your brook is just a little further along down that path. Listen. You can hear it from here. Bobby, take him and show him where it is.

BLIND MEN. We'll show him the way—we'll show him the way.

(They go off Second Bay Left. PEDRO follows. BOBBY walks off Up Right.)

CLAIRE. *(Comes Downstage with SCHILL.)* Look, Anton. Our tree. There's the heart you carved in the bark long ago.

SCHILL. Yes. It's still there.

CLAIRE. How it has grown! The trunk is black and wrinkled. Why, its limbs are twice what they were! Some of them have died.

SCHILL. It's aged. But it's there.

CLAIRE. Like everything else. *(She crosses, examining other trees.)* Oh, how tall they are. How long it is since I walked here, barefoot over the pine needles and the damp leaves! Look, Anton. A fawn.

SCHILL. Yes, a fawn. It's the season.

CLAIRE. *(They sit together on bench.)* I thought everything would be changed. But it's all just as we left it. This is the seat we sat on years ago. Under these

branches you kissed me. And over there under the hawthorn, where the moss is soft and green, we would lie in each other's arms. It is all as it used to be. Only we have changed.

SCHILL. Not so much, little witch. I remember the first night we spent together, you ran away and I chased you till I was quite breathless—

CLAIRE. Yes.

SCHILL. Then I was angry and started to go home, when suddenly I heard you call and I looked up, and there you were sitting in a tree laughing down at me.

CLAIRE. No. It was in the great barn. I was in the hayloft.

SCHILL. Were you?

CLAIRE. Yes. What else do you remember?

SCHILL. I remember the morning we went swimming by the waterfall, and afterwards we were lying together on the big rock in the sun when suddenly we heard footsteps and we just had time to snatch up our clothes and run behind the bushes when the old pastor appeared and scolded you for not being in school.

CLAIRE. No. It was the schoolmaster who found us. It was Sunday and I was supposed to be in church.

SCHILL. Really?

CLAIRE. Yes. Tell me more.

SCHILL. (*Turns and looks away.*) I remember the time your father beat you, and you showed me the cuts on your back, and I swore I'd kill him. And the next day I dropped a tile from a rooftop and split his head open.

CLAIRE. You missed him.

SCHILL. No!

CLAIRE. You hit old Mr. Reiner.

SCHILL. Did I?

CLAIRE. Yes. I was seventeen, And you were not yet twenty. You were so handsome. You were the best-looking boy in town.

SCHILL. And you were the prettiest girl.

CLAIRE. We were made for each other.

SCHILL. So we were.

CLAIRE. But you married Mathilde Blumhard and her store and I married old Zachanassian and his oil wells. He found me in a whorehouse in Hamburg. It was my hair that entangled him, the old golden beetle.

SCHILL. Clara!

CLAIRE. (*She claps her hands.*) Bobby! A cigar.

(BOBBY *appears Third Bay Right, with a leather case. He selects a cigar, lights it, puts it in a holder, and presents it to CLAIRE.*)

SCHILL. My kitten smokes cigars!

CLAIRE. Yes, I adore them. Would you care for one?

SCHILL. Yes, please. I've never smoked one of those.

(BOBBY *gives him a cigar, then exits Third Right.*)

CLAIRE. It's a taste I acquired from old Zachanassian. Among other things. He was a real connoisseur.

SCHILL. We used to sit on this bench once, you and I, and smoke cigarettes. Do you remember?

CLAIRE. Yes. I remember.

SCHILL. The cigarettes I bought from Mathilde.

CLAIRE. No. She gave them to you for nothing.

SCHILL. Don't be angry with me for marrying Mathilde.

CLAIRE. She had money.

SCHILL. And what a lucky thing for you that I did!

CLAIRE. Oh?

SCHILL. You were so young, so beautiful. You deserved a better fate than to be stuck in this wretched town without any future.

CLAIRE. Yes?

SCHILL. If you had stayed in Güllen and married me, your life would have been wasted like mine.

CLAIRE. Oh?

SCHILL. My God, Clara, look at me. A broken shop-keeper in a bankrupt town!

CLAIRE. But you have your family.

SCHILL. My family! Never for a moment do they let me forget my failure, my poverty.

CLAIRE. Mathilde has not made you happy?

SCHILL. (*Shrugs.*) What does it matter?

CLAIRE. And the children?

SCHILL. (*Shakes his head.*) They're so completely materialistic. You know, they have no interest whatever in higher things.

CLAIRE. How sad for you.

(*A moment's pause during which only the faint tinkling of the MUSIC is heard.*)

SCHILL. Yes. You know, since you went away my life has passed by like a stupid dream. I've hardly once been out of this town. Five days at a lake years ago. It rained all the time. A trip to Berlin, once. That's all.

CLAIRE. The world is much the same everywhere.

SCHILL. At least you've seen it.

CLAIRE. Yes. I've seen it.

SCHILL. You've lived in it.

CLAIRE. I've lived in it. The world and I have been on very intimate terms.

SCHILL. Now that you've come back, perhaps things will change.

CLAIRE. Naturally. I won't leave my native town in this condition.

SCHILL. It will take millions to put us on our feet again.

CLAIRE. I have millions.

SCHILL. One, two, three—

CLAIRE. Why not?

SCHILL. You mean—you will help us?

CLAIRE. Yes.

(*A WOODPECKER is heard in the distance.*)

SCHILL. I knew it—I knew it! I told them you were

generous, I told them you were good. Oh, my kitten! (*He takes her hand.*)

CLAIRE. (*She turns her head away and listens.*) Listen! A woodpecker.

SCHILL. It's all just the way it was in the days when we were young and full of courage. The sun high above the pines. Great white clouds, piling up on one another. [*SOUND CUE # 12.*] The cry of the cuckoo in the distance. The wind rustling the leaves like the sound of surf on a beach. Just as it was years ago. If only we could roll back time and be together always.

CLAIRE. Is that your wish?

SCHILL. You left me, but you never left my heart. (*He raises her hand to his lips.*) The same soft little hand.

CLAIRE. No, not quite the same. It was crushed to a pulp in the plane accident. But they mended it. They mended everything nowadays.

SCHILL. Crushed? You wouldn't know it. (*Points.*) Another fawn.

CLAIRE. The old wood is alive with memories—

(*PEDRO appears, Second Bay Left, followed by BLIND MEN. PEDRO has a fish in his hand, which is dripping water.*)

PEDRO. See what I've caught, darling. See? A pike. Over two kilos.

THE TWO BLIND MEN. (*Clap their hands.*) A pike! A pike! Hurrah! Hurrah!

(*CLAIRE, SCHILL and PEDRO exit Right 4, followed by BLIND MEN. The applause is taken up on all sides. The walls of the cafe are wheeled in by TOWNSPEOPLE. A BRASS BAND strikes up a march tune. [SOUND CUE # 13.] The door of the Golden Apostle descends. TOWNSPEOPLE bring in tables and lay them with ragged tablecloths, cracked china and glassware. Three tables are placed Center, Down*

Right and Down Left, the one in Center on a platform. [See Scene Design # 4.] The PASTOR enters Up Center. Other TOWNSPEOPLE filter in Left and Right. THREE ATHLETES in gymnastic costume form a human pyramid Down Center. The applause continues.)

BURGOMASTER. (*Runs in Up Center.*) Sing out! She's coming! (*CLAIRE enters Up Center, followed by BOBBY. THE TEACHER conducts them in same song sung earlier by CHOIR. When the song ends, ALL applaud.*) The applause is meant for you, gracious lady.

CLAIRE. (*At table Center.*) The band deserves it more than I. They blow from the heart. And the human pyramid was beautiful. You—show me your muscles. (*An ATHLETE kneels before her.*) Superb. Wonderful arms, powerful hands. Have you ever strangled a man with them?

ATHLETE. Strangled?

CLAIRE. Yes. It's perfectly simple. A little pressure in the proper place, and the rest goes by itself. As in politics.

(*The BURGOMASTER'S WIFE crosses to her, simpering.*)

BURGOMASTER. Permit me to present my wife, Madame Zachanassian.

CLAIRE. Annette Dummermuth. The head of our class.

BURGOMASTER. (*He presents another sour-looking WOMAN.*) Frau Schill.

CLAIRE. Mathilde Blumhard. I remember the way you used to follow Anton with your eyes, from behind the shop door. You've grown a little thin and dry, my poor Mathilde.

SCHILL. (*Crosses to her with a GIRL and BOY.*) My daughter Otilie.

CLAIRE. Your daughter—

SCHILL. My son, Karl.

CLAIRE. Your son! Two of them!

(*The TOWN DOCTOR comes in, Up Left to Center. He is a man of fifty, strong and stocky, with bristly black hair, a mustache and a sabre cut on his cheek. He is wearing an old cutaway.*)

DOCTOR. Well, well, my old Mercedes got me here in time after all!

BURGOMASTER. (*Catches DOCTOR at Center.*) Doctor Nüssler, the town physician. Madame Zachanassian.

DOCTOR. Deeply honored, Madame. (*He kisses her hand. CLAIRE studies him.*)

CLAIRE. It is you who signs the death certificates?

DOCTOR. Death certificates?

CLAIRE. When someone dies.

DOCTOR. Why certainly. That is one of my duties.

CLAIRE. And when the heart dies, what do you put down? Heart failure?

SCHILL. (*Laughing.*) What a golden sense of humor!

DOCTOR. Bit grim, wouldn't you say?

SCHILL. Not at all, not at all. (*Behind BURGOMASTER, whispers.*) She's promised us a million.

BURGOMASTER. (*Turns his head.*) What?

SCHILL. A million!

ALL. (*Whisper.*) A million!

CLAIRE. (*Turns toward them.*) Burgomaster.

BURGOMASTER. Yes?

CLAIRE. (*Sits at table Center.*) I'm hungry. (*GIRLS and WAITER fill glasses, bring food. General stir. ALL take their places at the table. BURGOMASTER, seated next to CLAIRE, opens champagne. ALL applaud.*) Are you going to make a speech?

BURGOMASTER. (*He bows and rises, tapping his knife on his glass. He is radiant with good will. ALL applaud.*) Gracious lady and friends. Gracious lady, it is now many years since you first left your native town of Güllen, which was founded by the Elector Hasso and which nestles in the green slope between the forest of Konradsweil and the beautiful valley of Pückenried. Much **has** taken place in this time, much that is evil.

TEACHER. That's true.

BURGOMASTER. The world is not what it was; it has become harsh and bitter, and we too have had our share of harshness and bitterness. But in all this time, dear lady, we have never forgotten our little Clara. (*Applause.*) Many years ago you brightened the town with your pretty face as a child, and now once again you brighten it with your presence. (*Polite applause.*) We haven't forgotten you, and we haven't forgotten your family. Your mother, beautiful and robust even in her old age— (*He looks for his notes on the table.*) although unfortunately taken from us in the bloom of her youth by an infirmity of the lungs. Your respected father, Siegfried Wäscher, the builder, an example of whose work next to our railway station is often visited by our townspeople— (*SCHILL covers his face.*) that is to say, admired—a lasting monument to local design and local workmanship. And you, gracious lady, whom we remember as a golden-haired— (*He looks at her.*)—little red-headed sprite romping about our peaceful streets—on your way to school—which of us does not treasure your memory? (*He pokes nervously at his notebook.*) We well remember your scholarly attainments—

TEACHER. Yes.

BURGOMASTER. Natural history— Extraordinary sense of justice. And, above all, your supreme generosity. (*Great applause.*) We shall never forget how you once spent the whole of your little savings to buy a sack of potatoes for a poor starving widow who was in need of food. (*The CHILDREN serve wine.*) Gracious lady, ladies and gentlemen, today our little Clara has become the world-famous Claire Zachanassian who has founded hospitals, soup-kitchens, charitable institutes, art-projects, libraries, nurseries, and schools, and now that she has at last once more returned to the town of her birth, sadly fallen as it is, I say in the name of all her loving friends who have sorely missed her: Long live our Clara!

ALL. Long live our Clara!

(Cheers and applause. [SOUND CUE # 14.])

CLAIRE. *(Rises.)* Mr. Burgomaster. Fellow townsmen. I am greatly moved by the nature of your welcome and the disinterested joy which you have manifested on the occasion of my visit to my native town. I was not quite the lovely child the Burgomaster described in his gracious address.

BURGOMASTER. Too modest, Madame.

CLAIRE. In school I was beaten—

TEACHER. Not by me.

CLAIRE. And the sack of potatoes which I presented to Widow Boll, I stole with the help of Anton Schill, not to save the old trull from starvation but so that for once I might sleep with Anton in a real bed instead of under the trees of the forest. *(The TOWNSPEOPLE look grave, embarrassed.)* Nevertheless I shall try to deserve your good opinion. In memory of the seventeen years I spent among you, I am prepared to hand over as a gift to the town of Gullen the sum of one billion marks. Five hundred million to the town and five hundred million to be divided per capita among the citizens.

(There is a moment of dead silence.)

BURGOMASTER. A billion marks?

CLAIRE. On one condition. *(Sits.)*

(Suddenly a movement of uncontrollable joy breaks out.

PEOPLE jump on chairs, dance about, yell excitedly.

The ATHLETES turn handsprings in front of the speaker's table.)

SCHILL. Oh Clara, you astonishing, incredible, magnificent woman! What a heart! What a gesture! Oh—my little witch! *(He kisses her hand.)*

BURGOMASTER. *(Comes Down Center and holds up his hand for order.)* Quiet! Quiet, please! On one condition,

the gracious lady said. Now, Madame, may we know what that condition is?

CLAIRE. I will tell you. In exchange for my billion marks, I want justice. (*Silence.*)

BURGOMASTER. Justice, Madame?

CLAIRE. I wish to buy justice.

BURGOMASTER. But justice cannot be bought, Madame.

CLAIRE. Everything can be bought.

BURGOMASTER. I don't understand at all.

CLAIRE. Bobby, step forward.

BOBBY. (*Crosses Center. He takes off his dark glasses and turns his face with a solemn air.*) Does anyone here present recognize me?

FRAU SCHILL. Hofer! Hofer!

ALL. Who? What's that?

TEACHER. (*Rises and takes a step toward him.*) Not Chief Magistrate Hofer, who was on the Governing Board?

BOBBY. Exactly. (*TEACHER returns to his place.*) Chief Magistrate Hofer. When Madame Zachanassian was a girl, I was presiding judge at the criminal court of Güllen. I served there until twenty-five years ago when Madame Zachanassian offered me the opportunity of entering her service as butler. I accepted. You may consider it a strange employment for a member of the magistracy, but the salary—

CLAIRE. (*Bangs mallet on table.*) Come to the point.

BOBBY. You have heard Madame Zachanassian's offer. She will give you a billion marks—when you have undone the injustice that she suffered at your hands here in Güllen as a girl. (*ALL murmur.*)

BURGOMASTER. Injustice at our hands? Impossible!

BOBBY. Anton Schill—

SCHILL. Yes?

BOBBY. Kindly stand.

SCHILL. (*Rises. He smiles, as if puzzled. He shrugs.*) Yes?

BOBBY. In those days, a bastardy case was tried before me. Madame Claire Zachanassian, at that time called

Clara Wäscher, charged you with being the father of her illegitimate child. (*Silence.*) You denied the charge. And produced two witnesses in your support.

SCHILL. That's ancient history. An absurd business. We were children. Who remembers?

CLAIRE. Where are the blind men?

THE TWO BLIND MEN. (*Enter from First Bay Right.*) Here we are. Here we are. (*MIKE and MAX push them forward to below Right table.*)

BOBBY. You recognize these men, Anton Schill?

SCHILL. (*Steps toward them.*) I never saw them before in my life. What are they?

THE TWO BLIND MEN. We've changed. We've changed.

BOBBY. What were your names in your former life?

FIRST BLIND MAN. I was Jacob Hueblein. Jacob Hueblein.

SECOND BLIND MAN. I was Ludwig Sparr. Ludwig Sparr.

BOBBY. (*To SCHILL.*) Well?

SCHILL. These names mean nothing to me.

BOBBY. Jacob Hueblein and Ludwig Sparr, do you recognize the defendant?

FIRST BLIND MAN. We're blind.

SECOND BLIND MAN. We're blind.

SCHILL. Ha-ha-ha!

BOBBY. By his voice?

TWO BLIND MEN. By his voice. By his voice.

BOBBY. At that trial, I was the judge. And you?

TWO BLIND MEN. We were the witnesses.

BOBBY. And what did you testify on that occasion?

FIRST BLIND MAN. That we had slept with Clara Wäscher.

SECOND BLIND MAN. Both of us. Many times.

BOBBY. And was it true?

FIRST BLIND MAN. No.

SECOND BLIND MAN. We swore falsely.

BOBBY. And why did you swear falsely?

FIRST BLIND MAN. Anton Schill bribed us.

SECOND BLIND MAN. He bribed us.

BOBBY. With what?

BOTH. With a bottle of schnapps.

BOBBY. And now tell the people what happened to you.
(*They hesitate and whimper.*) Speak!

FIRST BLIND MAN. (*In a low voice.*) She tracked us down.

BOBBY. Madame Zachanassian tracked them down. Jacob Hueblein was found in Canada. Ludwig Sparr in Australia. And when she found you, what did she do to you?

SECOND BLIND MAN. She handed us over to Mike and Max.

BOBBY. And what did Mike and Max do to you?

FIRST BLIND MAN. (*Covering his face.*) They made us what you see. (*They cover their faces.* MIKE and MAX *push them off First Bay Right.*)

BOBBY. And there you have it. We are all present in Gullen once again. The plaintiff. The defendant. The two false witnesses. The judge. Many years have passed. Does the plaintiff have anything further to add?

CLAIRE. There is nothing to add.

BOBBY. And the defendant?

SCHILL. (*Crosses and kneels to CLAIRE.*) Why are you doing this? It was all dead and buried.

BOBBY. What happened to the child that was born?

CLAIRE. (*In low voice.*) It lived a year.

BOBBY. And what happened to you?

CLAIRE. I became a whore.

BOBBY. Why?

CLAIRE. The judgment of the court left me no alternative. No one would trust me—no one would give me work.

BOBBY. So. And now, what is the nature of the reparation you demand?

CLAIRE. I want the life of Anton Schill.

(SCHILL rises. His wife and children rush to him. He

pushes them away and moves around Left table to Down Left.)

FRAU SCHILL. Anton! No! No!

SCHILL. No— No— She's joking. That happened long ago. That's all forgotten.

CLAIRE. Nothing is forgotten. Neither the mornings in the forest, nor the nights in the great barn, nor the bedroom in the cottage, nor your treachery at the end. You said this morning you wished that time might be rolled back. Very well—I have rolled it back. And now it is I who will buy justice. You bought it with a bottle of schnapps. I am willing to pay one billion marks.

BURGOMASTER. (*Stands up, very solemn and dignified.*) Madame Zachanassian, we are not in the jungle. We are in Europe. We may be poor but we are not heathens. In the name of the town of Gullen, I decline your offer. In the name of humanity. We shall never accept.

(All applaud wildly. The applause turns into a sinister rhythmic beat. As CLAIRE rises, it dies away. She looks at the crowd, then at the BURGOMASTER.)

CLAIRE. Thank you, Burgomaster. (*She stares at him a long moment.*) I can wait. (*Turns and exits Up Center.*)

CURTAIN

ACT TWO

SCENE: *Bring front lights Up as curtain reaches head high. The façade of the Golden Apostle with a balcony on which chairs and a table are set out. To the Right of the inn is a sign which reads ANTON SCHILL, HANDLUNG. Under the sign the shop is represented by a broken counter. Behind the counter, some shelves with tobacco, cigarettes and liquor bottles. Two milk cans. The shop door is imaginary, but each entrance is indicated by a door bell with a tinny sound. [See Scene Design # 5.]*

AT RISE: *It is early morning. SCHILL is sweeping the shop. The SON has a pan and brush and also sweeps. The DAUGHTER is dusting. ALL are singing "The Happy Wanderer," as the CURTAIN rises. [Words to this will be found in back of book.]*

SCHILL. Karl—

(KARL crosses with a dustpan. SCHILL sweeps dust into the pan. The door bell rings. The THIRD MAN enters Third Bay Right, carrying a crate of eggs.)

THIRD MAN. (Crosses to SCHILL, Center.) Morning.

SCHILL. Ah, good morning, Wechsler. You're early.

THIRD MAN. Twelve dozen eggs, medium brown. Right?

SCHILL. Take them, Karl. (KARL puts the crate in a corner, Fourth Bay Left.) Did they deliver the milk yet? (Moving to counter.)

SON. Before you came down.

THIRD MAN. (Crossing to counter.) Eggs are going up again, Herr Schill. First of the month. (He gives SCHILL a slip to sign.)

SCHILL. What? Again? And who's going to buy them?

THIRD MAN. Fifty pfennig a dozen.

SCHILL. I'll have to cancel my order, that's all.

THIRD MAN. That's up to you, Herr Schill.

SCHILL. (*Signs the slip.*) There's nothing else to do. (*He hands back the slip.*) And how's the family?

THIRD MAN. (*Starts to exit.*) Oh, scraping along. Maybe now things will get better.

SCHILL. Maybe.

THIRD MAN. (*Going, Fourth Bay Right.*) Morning.

SCHILL. Karl, close the door. Don't let the flies in. (*The CHILDREN resume their singing. SCHILL crosses and sits front of counter.*) Now, listen to me, children. I have a little piece of good news for you. I didn't mean to speak of it yet a while but well, why not? Who do you suppose is going to be the next burgomaster? Eh? (*They look up at him.*) Yes, in spite of everything. It's settled. It's official. What an honor for the family, eh? Especially at a time like this. To say nothing of the salary and the rest of it.

SON. (*With slow realization, runs to SCHILL.*) Burgomaster!

SCHILL. Burgomaster. (*The SON shakes him warmly by the hand. The DAUGHTER kisses him.*) You see, you don't have to be entirely ashamed of your father. (*Silence.*) Is your mother coming down soon?

DAUGHTER. Mother's tired. She's going to stay upstairs.

SCHILL. You have a good mother, at least. There you are lucky. Oh, well, if she wants to rest, let her rest. We'll have breakfast together, the three of us. I'll fry some eggs and open a tin of the American ham. This morning we're going to breakfast like kings. (*Crosses to ladder, First Bay Left.*)

SON. (*Goes to him.*) I'd like to, only—I can't.

SCHILL. You've got to eat, you know.

SON. I've got to run down to the station. One of the laborers is sick. They said they could use me.

SCHILL. You want to work on the rails in all this heat? That's no work for a son of mine.

SON. Look, Father, we can use the money.

SCHILL. Well, if you feel you have to. (*The SON crosses to First Bay Right with dustpan and brush.*)

DAUGHTER. (*Crosses to SCHILL.*) I'm sorry, Father, I have to go too.

SCHILL. You too? And where is the young lady going, if I may be so bold?

DAUGHTER. There may be something for me at the employment agency.

SCHILL. Employment agency?

DAUGHTER. It's important to get there early.

(*SOUND CUE # 15.*)

SCHILL. All right. I'll have something nice for you when you get home.

SON and DAUGHTER. (*Salute.*) Good day, Burgomaster. (*SON and DAUGHTER go out Fourth Bay Right.*)

(*The FIRST MAN comes into SCHILL's shop. Mandolin and guitar MUSIC sounds Offstage.*)

SCHILL. Good morning, Hofbauer.

FIRST MAN. (*Crossing to counter.*) Cigarettes. (*SCHILL takes a pack from the shelf.*) Not those. I'll have the green today.

SCHILL. They cost more. (*He serves him.*)

FIRST MAN. Put it in the book.

SCHILL. What?

FIRST MAN. Charge it.

SCHILL. Well, all right, I'll make an exception this time—seeing it's you, Hofbauer. (*Writes in his cash book.*)

FIRST MAN. (*Opening the pack of cigarettes as he crosses to bench and sits.*) Who's that playing out there?

SCHILL. The two blind men.

FIRST MAN. They play well.

SCHILL. To hell with them.

FIRST MAN. They make you nervous? (*SCHILL shrugs.*)

The FIRST MAN lights a cigarette.) She's getting ready for the wedding, I hear.

SCHILL. Yes. So they say.

(Enter FIRST and SECOND WOMAN from Fourth Bay Right. They cross to the counter.)

FIRST WOMAN. Good morning, good morning.

SECOND WOMAN. Good morning.

FIRST MAN. Good morning.

SCHILL. Good morning, ladies.

FIRST WOMAN. Good morning, Herr Schill!

SECOND WOMAN. Good morning.

FIRST WOMAN. Milk please, Herr Schill!

SCHILL. Milk.

SECOND WOMAN. And milk for me too.

SCHILL. A litre of milk each. Right away.

FIRST WOMAN. Whole milk, please, Herr Schill!

SCHILL. Whole milk?

SECOND WOMAN. Yes. Whole milk, please.

SCHILL. Whole milk, I can only give you half a litre each of whole milk.

FIRST WOMAN. All right.

SCHILL. Half a litre of whole milk here, and half a litre of whole milk here. There you are. *(Puts milk cans in Second Bay Left.)*

FIRST WOMAN. And butter please, a quarter kilo.

SCHILL. Butter, I haven't any butter. *(Returning.)* I can give you some very nice lard?

FIRST WOMAN. No. Butter.

SCHILL. Goose fat? *(FIRST WOMAN shakes her head.)* Chicken fat?

FIRST WOMAN. Butter.

SCHILL. Butter. *(Climbs ladder Down Left.)* Now, wait a minute, though. I have a tin of imported butter here somewhere. Ah. There you are. *(Comes back behind counter with butter.)* No, sorry, she asked first, but I can order some for you from Kalberstadt tomorrow.

SECOND WOMAN. And white bread.

SCHILL. White bread. (*He takes a loaf and a knife.*)

SECOND WOMAN. The whole loaf.

SCHILL. But a whole loaf would cost—

SECOND WOMAN. Charge it. (*Holds bag open. SCHILL drops bread into bag.*)

SCHILL. Charge it?

FIRST WOMAN. And a package of milk chocolate.

SCHILL. Package of milk chocolate—right away.

SECOND WOMAN. One for me too, Herr Schill!

SCHILL. And a package of milk chocolate for you, too.

FIRST WOMAN. (*Moves toward chairs Up Left.*) We'll eat it here if you don't mind.

SCHILL. Yes, please do.

SECOND WOMAN. (*Follows FIRST WOMAN Up.*) It's so cool at the back of the shop.

SCHILL. Charge it?

WOMEN. (*They sit.*) Of course.

SCHILL. All for one, one for all.

(*Enter SECOND MAN, hitting shop bell.*)

SECOND MAN. (*Crossing to counter.*) Good morning.

THE TWO WOMEN. Good morning.

SCHILL. Good morning, Helmsberger.

SECOND MAN. It's going to be a hot day.

SCHILL. Phew!

SECOND MAN. How's business?

SCHILL. Fabulous. For a while no one came and now all of a sudden I'm running a luxury trade. (*Moves to Down Center.*)

SECOND MAN. Good!

SCHILL. Oh, I'll never forget the way you all stood by me at The Golden Apostle in spite of your need, in spite of everything. (*Goes to Fourth Bay Right, shakes duster and returns Center.*) That was the finest hour of my life.

FIRST MAN. We're not heathens, you know.

SECOND MAN. We're behind you, my boy; the whole town's behind you.

FIRST MAN. As firm as a rock.

FIRST WOMAN. (*Munching her chocolate.*) As firm as a rock, Herr Schill.

BOTH WOMEN. As firm as a rock.

SECOND MAN. There's no denying it—you're the most popular man in town.

FIRST MAN. (*Crosses back to Center.*) The most important.

(*SOUND CUE # 16.*)

SECOND MAN. And in the spring, God willing, you will be our Burgomaster. (*Crosses Upstage of FIRST MAN.*)

FIRST MAN. Sure as a gun.

ALL. Sure as a gun.

(*Enter PEDRO, Right 4, with fishing equipment and a fish in his landing net. WOMEN rise.*)

PEDRO. Would you please weigh my fish for me?

(*While SCHILL weighs fish, PEDRO walks around inspecting shop. He is closely followed by FIRST and SECOND MEN, who inspect him curiously.*)

SCHILL. (*Weighs it.*) Two kilos.

PEDRO. Is that all?

SCHILL. Two kilos exactly.

PEDRO. Two kilos! (*Gives SCHILL a tip and exits Right 4, hitting shop bell.*)

SECOND WOMAN. (*As they step down.*) The fiancé.

FIRST WOMAN. They're to be married this week. It will be a tremendous wedding.

SECOND WOMAN. I saw his picture in the paper.

FIRST WOMAN. (*Sighs.*) Ah, what a man!

SECOND MAN. (*Moves to counter.*) Give me a schnapps.

SCHILL. The usual?

SECOND MAN. No, cognac.

SCHILL. Cognac? But cognac costs twenty-two marks fifty.

SECOND MAN. We all have to splurge a little now and again—

SCHILL. Here you are. Three Star.

SECOND MAN. And a package of pipe tobacco.

SCHILL. Black or blond?

SECOND MAN. English.

SCHILL. English! But that makes twenty-three marks eighty.

SECOND MAN. Chalk it up.

SCHILL. Now look. I'll make an exception this week. Only you will have to pay me the moment your unemployment check comes in. I don't want to be kept waiting. (*Suddenly.*) Helmsberger, are those new shoes you're wearing?

SECOND MAN. (*Crosses Left of bench.* SCHILL follows.) Yes, what about it?

SCHILL. You too, Hofbauer. Yellow shoes! Brand new!

FIRST MAN. (*Swings legs over bench.*) So?

SCHILL. (*To the WOMEN, who move down.*) And you. You all have new shoes! New shoes!

FIRST WOMAN. A person can't walk around forever in the same old shoes.

SECOND WOMAN. Shoes wear out.

SCHILL. (*At Center.*) And the money. Where does the money come from?

FIRST WOMAN. We got them on credit, Herr Schill.

SECOND WOMAN. On credit.

SCHILL. On credit? And where all of a sudden do you get credit?

SECOND MAN. Everybody gives credit now.

FIRST WOMAN. You gave us credit yourself.

SCHILL. And what are you going to pay with? Eh? (*They are all silent.* SCHILL advances upon them threateningly.) With what? Eh? With what? With what? (*Suddenly he understands. He takes his apron off quickly, flings it on the counter, gets his jacket, and walks off with an air of determination.*)

(Now the shop sign vanishes. The shelves are pushed off. The LIGHTS go up on the balcony of The Golden Apostle, and the balcony unit itself moves forward into the optical center. [See Scene Design # 6.] CLAIRE and BOBBY step out on the balcony. CLAIRE sits down. BOBBY serves coffee. [SOUND CUE # 17.]

CLAIRE. A lovely autumn morning. A silver haze on the streets and a violet sky above. Count Holk would have liked this. Remember him, Bobby? My third husband?

BOBBY. Yes, Madame.

CLAIRE. Horrible man!

BOBBY. Yes, Madame.

CLAIRE. Where is Monsieur Pedro? Is he up yet?

BOBBY. Yes, Madame. He's fishing.

CLAIRE. Already? What a singular passion!

PEDRO. *(Comes in with the fish.)* Good morning, my love.

CLAIRE. Pedro! There you are.

PEDRO. Look, my darling. Four kilos!

CLAIRE. A jewel! I'll have it grilled for your lunch. Give it to Bobby.

(PEDRO gives fish to BOBBY, who exits.)

PEDRO. *(Sits Right.)* Ah—it is so wonderful here! I like your little town.

CLAIRE. Oh, do you?

PEDRO. Yes. These people, they are all so—what is the word?

CLAIRE. Simple, honest, hardworking, decent.

PEDRO. But, my angel, you are a mind reader. That's just what I was going to say—however did you guess?

CLAIRE. I know them.

PEDRO. Yet when we arrived it was all so dirty, so—what is the word?

CLAIRE. Shabby.

PEDRO. Exactly. But now everywhere you go, you see them busy as bees, cleaning their streets—

CLAIRE. Repairing their houses, sweeping—dusting—hanging new curtains in the windows—singing as they work.

PEDRO. But you astonishing, wonderful woman! You can't see all that from here.

CLAIRE. I know them. And in their gardens— I am sure that in their gardens they are manuring the soil for the spring.

PEDRO. My angel, you know everything. This morning on my way fishing I said to myself, look at them all manuring their gardens. It is extraordinary—and it's all because of you. Your return has given them a new—what is the word?

CLAIRE. Lease on life?

PEDRO. Precisely.

CLAIRE. The town was dying, it's true. But a town doesn't have to die. I think they realize that now. People die, not towns. Bobby! (BOBBY *appears with cigar already lit.*) [SOUND CUE # 18.] A cigar.

(The LIGHTS fade on the balcony which moves back Upstage, somewhat to the Right. A sign descends from the flies. It reads POLIZEI. The POLICEMAN pushes a desk under it. This, with the bench, becomes the police station. [See Scene Design # 7.] He places a bottle of beer and a glass on the desk and goes to hang up his coat Offstage. The TELEPHONE rings.)

POLICEMAN. (*On phone.*) Schultz speaking. Yes, we have a couple of rooms for the night. No, not for rent. This is not the hotel. This is the Gullen police station. (*He laughs and hangs up.* SCHILL *comes in Up Center. He is evidently nervous.*)

SCHILL. (*Crosses to desk.*) Schultz.

POLICEMAN. Hello, Schill. Come in. Sit down. Beer? (*Offers bottle from desk.*)

SCHILL. (*Sits Right end of bench.*) Thanks. (*He drinks thirstily.*)

POLICEMAN. What can I do for you?

SCHILL. I want you to arrest Madame Zachanassian.

POLICEMAN. Eh?

SCHILL. I said I want you to arrest Madame Zachanassian.

POLICEMAN. What the hell are you talking about?

SCHILL. I ask you to arrest this woman at once.

POLICEMAN. What offense has the lady committed?

SCHILL. You know perfectly well. She offered the town a billion marks—

POLICEMAN. And you want her arrested for that? (*He pours beer into his glass.*)

SCHILL. Schultz! It's your duty.

SCHULTZ. Extraordinary! Extraordinary idea! (*He drinks his beer.*)

SCHILL. I'm speaking to you as your next burgomaster.

POLICEMAN. Schill, that's true. The lady offered us a billion marks. But that doesn't entitle us to take police action against her.

SCHILL. Why not?

POLICEMAN. In order to be arrested, a person must first commit a crime.

SCHILL. Incitement to murder.

POLICEMAN. Incitement to murder is a crime. I agree.

SCHILL. Well?

POLICEMAN. And such a proposal—if serious—constitutes an assault.

SCHILL. That's what I mean.

POLICEMAN. But her offer can't be serious.

SCHILL. Why?

POLICEMAN. The price is much too high. In a case like yours, one offers a thousand marks, at the most two thousand. But not a billion! That's ridiculous. And even if she meant it, that would only prove she was out of her mind. And that's not a matter for the police.

SCHILL. Whether she's out of her mind or not, the danger to me is the same. That's obvious.

POLICEMAN. Look Schill, you show us where anyone threatens your life in any way—say, for instance, a man points a gun at you—and we'll be there in a flash.

SCHILL. (*Gets up, crosses Center.*) So I'm to wait till someone points a gun at me?

POLICEMAN. Pull yourself together, Schill. We're all for you in this town.

SCHILL. I wish I could believe it.

POLICEMAN. You don't believe it?

SCHILL. No. No, I don't. (*Turns to look at POLICEMAN.*) All of a sudden my customers are buying white bread, whole milk, butter, imported tobacco. What does it mean?

POLICEMAN. It means business is picking up.

(*SOUND CUE # 19.*)

SCHILL. (*Crosses back to desk.*) Helmsberger lives on the dole; he hasn't earned anything in five years. Today he bought French cognac.

POLICEMAN. I'll have to try your cognac one of these days.

SCHILL. (*Crosses Center.*) And shoes. They all have new shoes.

POLICEMAN. And what have you got against new shoes? I'm wearing a new pair myself. (*He holds out his legs, placing them on bench.*)

SCHILL. You too?

POLICEMAN. Why not? (*He pours out the rest of his beer.*)

SCHILL. Is that Pilsener you're drinking now?

POLICEMAN. It's the only thing.

SCHILL. You used to drink the local brew.

POLICEMAN. Hogwash.

SCHILL. Listen. You hear?

POLICEMAN. "The Merry Widow." Yes.

SCHILL. No. It's a radio.

POLICEMAN. That's Bergholzer's radio.

SCHILL. Bergholzer!

POLICEMAN. You're right. He should close his window when he plays it. I'll make a note to speak to him. (*He makes a note in his notebook.*)

SCHILL. And how can Bergholzer pay for a radio?

POLICEMAN. That's his business.

SCHILL. And you, Schultz, with your new shoes and your imported beer—how are you going to pay for them?

POLICEMAN. That's my business. (*His TELEPHONE rings. He picks it up. Moves around desk during phone conversation.*) Police Station, Gullen. What? What? Where? *Where?* How? Right, we'll deal with it. (*Hangs up.*)

SCHILL. (*He speaks during this telephone conversation. Paces up and down.*) Schultz, listen. No. Schultz, please—listen to me. Don't you see they're all—Listen, please. Look, Schultz. They're all running up debts. And out of these debts comes this sudden prosperity. (*Grabs POLICEMAN.*) And out of this prosperity comes the absolute need to kill me.

POLICEMAN. (*Putting on his jacket.*) You're imagining things.

SCHILL. (*Crosses Center.*) All she has to do is to sit on her balcony and wait.

POLICEMAN. Don't be a child.

SCHILL. You're all waiting.

POLICEMAN. Look, Schill, you can relax. (*Crosses SCHILL to Center.*) The police are here for your protection. They know their job. Let anyone, any time, make the slightest threat to your life, and all you have to do is let us know. We'll do the rest. . . . Now don't worry. (*Gets rifle Fourth Bay Left.*)

SCHILL. (*Sits bench.*) No, I won't.

POLICEMAN. (*Standing over SCHILL.*) And don't upset yourself. All right?

SCHILL. No. I won't. (*Then suddenly, in a low tone.*) You have a new gold tooth in your mouth!

POLICEMAN. What are you talking about?