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SF PERUSALS

The Day the Whores Came Out to Play Tennis & Other Plays

by Arthur Kopit

A Samuel French Acting Edition



SAMUEL FRENCH
FOUNDED 1830

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THE DAY THE WHORES CAME OUT TO
PLAY TENNIS AND OTHER PLAYS
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To my Parents

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INTRODUCTION

THE PLAYS included in this volume were written over a period of seven and a half years; therefore a few words regarding them and their chronology might be helpful.

"The Questioning of Nick" is the first play I ever wrote and is included, not because of that fact but because, on re-reading it for the first time in many years, I found myself not altogether displeased with its effect—a somewhat negative sounding comment I know, but since my usual reaction when re-reading things I have written is sadness at not having thrown them out it seemed a positive reaction indeed. I am especially pleased with its inclusion however because it is, up till now, the only realistic play I have written. So, for those people who say to me, "But when are you going to write a *real* play?"—here it is. (I assume, when they say real, that what they mean is realistic. I hope I am not wrong.) As for its background, I wrote it during spring vacation of my sophomore year at Harvard. Gaynor Bradish, who was a tutor in Dunster House at that time and in charge of its excellent Drama Workshop, had urged his students to write one-act plays for performance in the Workshop that spring. "The Questioning of Nick" was the result of that suggestion. The next fall it won a college-wide playwrighting contest and was performed on a more public scale. My career was determined. (At least, that is, in my mind.)

A year later "Sing to Me Through Open Windows" was written and produced. Unlike "The Questioning of Nick," which has never been rewritten, "Sing to Me" has been extensively and frequently rewritten ever since. It is hoped that by its publication I will at last be forced to leave the play alone. I should also say that in 1962 it was performed in previews in New York as a curtain raiser to *Oh Dad, Poor Dad, Mamma's Hung You in the Closet and I'm Feelin' So Sad.* Unfortunately (for the production as

staged by Jerome Robbins was wonderful), the play had to be cancelled before its opening night since the set change between plays, due to the limited backstage space of the Phoenix Theatre, could not be accomplished in less than thirty minutes and the audience, when it finally returned to its seats from this extraordinary intermission, was thoroughly worn out.

The next play in the present volume to be written was "Chamber Music." The idea for it came, I think, some time in 1959. It was not begun however until the late spring of 1962. It was finished that summer. In the winter of 1963 "Chamber Music" was performed in previews in New York with another one-act play of mine, the entire program being called *Asylum*. These plays also were cancelled before opening night, this time however because I wanted to do more work on them. This past summer "Chamber Music" was revised and rewritten. Its companion play will be expanded into a three-act play sometime in, I hope, the near future.

"The Day the Whores Came Out to Play Tennis" came next. It was written in the fall and winter of 1963-64 and rewritten in the early summer.

"The Conquest of Everest" and "The Hero" were both written in 1964 on a pleasant March weekend. "The Hero" has no dialogue because I was struck dumb by the prospect of writing two plays in a single day.

ARTHUR KOPIT

New York City
November 12, 1964

CHAMBER MUSIC

A Play in One Act



CHARACTERS

Woman Who Plays Records
Woman in Safari Outfit
Woman with Notebook
Girl in Gossamer Dress
Woman in aviatrix's Outfit
Woman in Queenly Spanish Garb
Woman in Armor
Woman with Gavel
Man in White
His Assistant

Scene—A meeting room.

CHAMBER MUSIC

The lights have not come up yet. If there is a curtain, it is still drawn. Heard vaguely in the distance: the Allegro moderato from Mozart's Quartet in F Major (K. 590). *Then the lights come up. We are in a room with a large horseshoe-shaped table in the center. Around the table are eight chairs. The only other thing in the room is an old portable phonograph resting on a small table or stool.*

At the start a chunky, carelessly dressed WOMAN *is seen by the phonograph. She turns it off. The Mozart ceases. She takes the record off, walks over to a window, opens it and stares far out. Looking up at the sky now, she cups her hand to her ear. But, alas, hearing nothing, she lowers her hand and walks sadly away. She hugs the record in her arms. The door opens and a* WOMAN IN A SAFARI OUTFIT *enters. She wears a pith helmet draped with mosquito netting. The netting is covering her face. She carries a toy rifle.*

WOMAN IN SAFARI OUTFIT. Was that you, just now?

Woman Who Plays Records. Vat?

Woman in Safari Outfit. I said, "*Was that you?*" Just now? *Making all that racket?*

Woman Who Plays Records. Racket? Vat means by a racket, hm? Vat means by a "*racket*"?

And, so saying, the WOMAN WHO PLAYS RECORDS *turns sharply away, hiding her record at the same time. The* WOMAN IN SAFARI OUTFIT *glares at her.*

Woman in Safari Outfit. Goddamn mosquitoes. [*She takes off her pith helmet and picks at the netting. Proudly she holds something up in display.*] Aha!

Woman Who Plays Records. Vat?

Woman in Safari Outfit. Anopheles quadrimaculatus. You can tell by the jaw structure. [*The* WOMAN WHO PLAYS RECORDS *peers closely. It is obvious that she can't see a thing.*] Well, close that window! You want 'em to eat us *alive?*

The WOMAN WHO PLAYS RECORDS *rushes over to the window and closes it.*

Woman Who Plays Records. Can't imagine vy it vas open in the first place. [*She giggles.*]

The WOMAN IN SAFARI OUTFIT *finds her place card at the table and sits. She mashes the supposed mosquito on the table. She examines its entrails. Through the open door now two women enter. The first is short and stout and carries a notebook. The second is frail, looks rather frightened, and wears a gossamer dress.*

Woman with Notebook. Ramon Navarro collected Renaissance p-paintings. Were you aware of that? [*The* GIRL IN GOSSAMER DRESS *smiles with innocence.*] And yet you say you were in the movies. [*The* GIRL IN GOSSAMER DRESS *takes the first seat she comes to. The* WOMAN WITH NOTEBOOK *stares at the* WOMAN IN SAFARI OUTFIT.] What's wrong? F-flaw in the fu-furniture?

Woman in Safari Outfit. No. Mosquito.

Woman Who Plays Records. Dey jus' don' make furniture de vay dey used to. No sirree.

Woman with Notebook [*to the* WOMAN WHO PLAYS RECORDS]. Your husband is not as good as B-B-B-Beethoven.

Woman Who Plays Records [*in terror*]. Vat?

The WOMAN WITH NOTEBOOK *roars with laughter. She finds her seat and sits, as the* WOMAN IN AVIATRIX'S OUTFIT *enters.*

Girl in Gossamer Dress. Hi!

The WOMAN IN AVIATRIX'S OUTFIT *goes over to the* GIRL IN GOSSAMER DRESS, *leans over her shoulder, and examines the place card.*

Woman in Aviatrix's Outfit. That card has *my* name on it.

The GIRL IN GOSSAMER DRESS *jumps up and takes another seat.*

Woman with Notebook. Actually, I don't think he's as good as H-Haydn, either.

Woman Who Plays Records [*to the* WOMAN IN AVATRIX'S OUTFIT]. Hidin'? *Who's* hidin'? Hidin' from vat?

Woman in Aviatrix's Outfit. Joseph Haydn was a composer. Miss Stein is trying to say that *she* feels he's a better composer than Mozart.

Woman Who Plays Records. Vat?

The WOMAN WITH NOTEBOOK *roars with laughter again, as the* WOMAN IN QUEENLY SPANISH GARB *enters. The* GIRL IN GOSSAMER DRESS *jumps up and rushes over to a certain chair, checks the place card, pulls out the chair. The* SPANISH QUEEN *sits. The* GIRL IN GOSSAMER DRESS *returns to her own seat—or* supposedly *the right seat, for in checking the place card she discovers that an error has again been made. So again she jumps up and finds her proper place. She giggles.*

Woman in Aviatrix's Outfit. Why do you always hold the chair for her?

Girl in Gossamer Dress. Hm?

Woman in Aviatrix's Outfit. At our meetings you always hold the chair for her. Why? You're as good as she is.

Girl in Gossamer Dress. No, I'm not. *She* is a queen.

A beam of wood now enters through the door. At its far end, supporting it at its crossbar, is a WOMAN IN ARMOR. *There is a crucifix on her breastplate. Evidently what she is carrying is simply another crucifix. Only the one she is carrying is well over seven feet long. In attempting to enter the room the crossbar of the crucifix slams into the doorframe and catches fast.*

Woman in Armor. Oh, shit. Well, for chrissakes one of you *help* me with this thing!

The WOMAN WHO PLAYS RECORDS *rushes to the door and begins, with frantic and totally contradictory hand signals, to guide the crucifix into the room.*

Woman Who Plays Records. All right now, a little to the right. Oi-yoi-yoi, povolie! *Povolie!*

Woman in Safari Outfit. I'm gonna take that goddamn piece of wood someday and break it, I swear! What right

has she got dragging it like that into other people's rooms? What *right* has she got?

Girl in Gossamer Dress. This isn't your room.

Woman in Safari Outfit. What?

Girl in Gossamer Dress. Well, I was only——

Woman in Safari Outfit [*turning sharply to the* WOMAN WITH NOTEBOOK]. D'*you* think this is right?

Woman with Notebook. Well——

Woman Who Plays Records [*directing all the time*]. Now. A *biss'l der zeit.*

Woman with Notebook. It *does* tend to tend to tend to——

Woman Who Plays Records [*coaxing the crucifix in with "body English"*]. Oo-oo-oo-oo.

Woman with Notebook. Create a problem of s-s-s-space.

Woman in Safari Outfit. You bet your big cookies it does.

Girl in Gossamer Dress. What I *meant* to say was: it's as much her room as it is yours.

Woman in Safari Outfit. Aghhh!

Woman Who Plays Records [*as the crucifix slips through the door*]. Oi, *dienken Gott.* You made it.

Woman in Armor [*pushing back the visor of her helmet*]. In the name of King Charles the Seventh, and with special mention for Catherine, Margaret, and Michael, without whose assistance this could not be possible, I honor you for the nobility and selflessness of your act.

Woman Who Plays Records. T'ank you.

Woman in Armor [*brightly*]. Well, now. Where to put it!

Woman in Safari Outfit [*under her breath*]. *I'll* tell her where to——

Woman in Aviatrix's Outfit. Down! [*The* WOMAN IN ARMOR, *the crucifix balanced on her shoulder, has swung about. Just in time the ladies duck and thus avoid decapitation. Cautiously they sit back up.*] *Again!*

The WOMAN IN ARMOR, *having found no place suitable for her crucifix, has turned back. In doing so, the crucifix,*

like a deadly pendulum, has retraced its arc. Once again the ladies duck just in time.

Woman in Armor. Sorry. [*Whereupon she promptly lowers—or, more accurately, drops—the enormous object on the table. Again the ladies scatter in time.*] Uh . . . sorry.

And the ladies take their seats, a bit shaken by it all.

Woman in Aviatrix's Outfit. And yet she wonders why she's never invited anywhere.

Woman in Armor. I *said* I was sorry.

Woman in Safari Outfit. It's suicide with her around. Nothing less.

Girl in Gossamer Dress. Twice it's hit me on the head.

Woman in Armor. Look, I *said* I was sorry, didn't I?

Woman in Safari Outfit. Honey, I'll tell you something. If you haven't gotten rid of that overgrown machete of yours by tomorrow, I'm gonna personally take it and wrap it, like a scarf, around your goddamn neck!

Woman with Notebook. Well put.

Woman in Armor [*pouting*]. I said I was sorry.

Girl in Gossamer Dress [*to the* WOMAN IN SAFARI OUTFIT]. You know, *twice* it's hit me on the head.

Woman in Safari Outfit. Aghhh, she's out of her mind.

Woman Who Plays Records. Joan, you know I vouldn't tell a lie. So believe me, de t'ing is *enormous*. Better off you left it somevere else.

Woman in Armor. No.

Woman Who Plays Records [*to the others*]. Maybe if ve got her a smaller vun?

Woman in Armor. No! [*And she slams her visor shut.*]

Girl in Gossamer Dress [*to the* WOMAN IN SAFARI OUTFIT]. Twice already it's hit me on the head. And *hard*, too.

Woman in Safari Outfit [*getting annoyed with the* GIRL IN GOSSAMER DRESS]. Well, what d'you *expect?* She's out of her *cotton-pickin'* mind!

Woman Who Plays Records [*talking through the visor as if it were a telephone*]. Joanie, dear, listen to me. . . .

Joanie? [*When there's no response she peers in through the slats. To the others, in a whisper.*] You know vhat? I don't t'ink she's in dere.

Woman in Safari Outfit [*to the woman nearest her, motioning toward the* WOMAN WHO PLAYS RECORDS]. Now you know why they're friends. [*She gets up and goes over to the* WOMAN IN ARMOR. *She opens her visor.*] Honey, it's only a piece of *wood!*

Woman in Armor [*pouting*]. Don't care. [*And again she snaps her visor shut.*]

Woman in Safari Outfit. Agh! [*To the others.*] If it weren't for the fact that I'd bust my hand, I *swear* I'd hit her! Right in the goddamned face.

Woman in Aviatrix's Outfit. Joan, darling. Listen to me for a second.

The WOMAN WHO PLAYS RECORDS *opens the* WOMAN IN ARMOR*'s visor.*

Woman Who Plays Records. Joanie, dear, be a nice girl for a minute and listen to Amelia. She's got something *very important* to say. [*To the* WOMAN IN AVIATRIX'S OUTFIT.] All right. Go ahead.

Woman in Aviatrix's Outfit. Joan——

Woman in Armor. No! I'll *never* give it away!

Woman in Aviatrix's Outfit. Not give it away, honey. *Put* it away. In storage. No one's going to take the thing.

Girl in Gossamer Dress [*to the* WOMAN IN ARMOR]. *Twice* it's hit me on the head. Right here. And hard, too.

Woman Who Plays Records. Believe me, Joan, it's a very dangerous t'ing you've got dere ven you don't handle it right. It's a veapon. An absolute *veapon.*

Woman in Armor. Don't care. It came with the armor. So it stays with me. It's mine. And you *can't have it!*

Woman in Aviatrix's Outfit. Joan——

Woman in Armor. Nor can you tell me what to do. So. Hah! Hah! Hah!

Whereupon the WOMAN IN ARMOR *slams her visor shut and thus ends that. Short stunned pause.*

Woman Who Plays Records. I donno. I jus' donno. To

me it's vun t'ing dat she's out of her mind. But does she have to be such an idiot as vell?

At which point the WOMAN WITH NOTEBOOK *laughs wildly. Everyone turns to her in amazement. But as soon as they do, she is as quiet and unsmiling as before. It is almost as if she were not aware she had laughed at all in that brief and mad split second.*

Enter a tall, severely dressed WOMAN WITH A GAVEL *in her hand.*

Woman with Gavel. Afternoon, ladies. [*She closes the door behind her.*] *Sorry I'm late.* [*She walks over to the table and takes her seat at its head.*] I think perhaps we should draw the shades. [*A few of the women rush over to the windows and draw the shades.*] Also, check the door. [*One of the women checks the door.*] It is my pleasure then to announce that the Sixth Annual Meeting of the Duly-Elected Grievance and Someday-Governing Committee of Wing Five, Women's Section——

Woman Who Plays Records. He-ah he-ah for the Vomen's Section!

All [*except the* WOMAN WITH GAVEL, *the* WOMAN IN QUEENLY SPANISH GARB, *and the* WOMAN IN AVIATRIX'S OUTFIT]. Hip-hip——

Woman Who Plays Records. Hooray!

All. Hip——

The WOMAN WITH GAVEL *brings silence with a sharp rap.*

Woman with Gavel. . . . may now *hopefully* commence. The secretary will read the minutes of our last meeting. Trudy? *If you please.*

Woman with Notebook [*reading from her notebook*]. "The meeting was called to order at the usual time all being present for the meeting which was called to order at the usual time in order that those meeting at the usual time in order to meet at the usual time might meet at the usual time and thus be meeting then and be a meeting then and a usual one, too. And thus the meeting, having been called to order at the usual time, all being present for the meeting which——" [*A loud yawn is*

heard coming from the WOMAN IN ARMOR. *The secretary stops reading at once.*]

Joan of Arc
Died in the dark!

Woman in Armor.

Gertrude Stein
Can't write a line!

Giggles from some of the girls. The president raps her gavel. Order returns.

Woman with Notebook. "The meeting was called to order at the——" [*Again a yawn from the* WOMAN IN ARMOR. *More giggling from the girls.*] *Madame President . . .*

Woman with Gavel. Minutes approved.

Woman with Notebook [*as the women all cheer*]. What!

Girl in Gossamer Dress. Well, after all, there *are* more important things for us to discuss than your silly minutes.

Woman in Safari Outfit. You tell her, honey.

Woman with Notebook. Ob-ob-ob-*jection!*

Woman in Armor.

Gertrude Stein
Looks like a swine.

Woman with Notebook [*helplessly*]. Madame President . . .

The women roar with laughter.

Woman in Safari Outfit. Just wasting time. Just wasting our good ol' time.

Woman with Gavel. Ladies, *please!*

The laughter stops.

Woman in Safari Outfit. Imagine, *Anopheles quadrimaculatus.* You know they've given the Nobel for less than this. [*She snaps a picture of the table.*]

Woman with Notebook. "The meeting was——"

Woman with Gavel. They've been *approved.*

Woman in Armor [*sotto voce*].

Gertrude Stein
Is doing fine.

Girl in Gossamer Dress [*waving a slip of paper*]. I have here, in my possession, the record of——

Woman with Gavel. And as for *you,* Pearl White, we'll get to you in good time. [*In an aside to the* WOMAN WITH NOTEBOOK.] *Movie stars!*

Woman with Notebook. "The meeting was——"

Woman with Gavel. They've been *approved!* [*The* WOMAN WITH NOTEBOOK *raises her hand.*] Miss Stein.

Woman with Notebook. I move that the p-president be im-m-m-m-m-peached.

Giggling from the others.

Woman with Gavel. Any seconds? [*The giggling stops.*] Motion shelved.

Woman in Armor.

Gertrude Stein
Is doing fine.

Woman with Notebook.

Joan of Arc
Died in the dark!

Woman with Gavel. Miss Earhart? The floor is yours.

Woman with Notebook. Oh Susan B. Anthony, Susan B. Anthony, *who* is Susan B. Anthony that she can rap-raprap her gavel and have women be like men, that is quiet? . . . Rapraprap. Rap. Rap. Rap.

The WOMAN WITH NOTEBOOK *closes her notebook. Long pause. And then the* GIRL IN GOSSAMER DRESS *rises and walks to a window, throws open the shades, and stares out. A moment later she turns back and faces the others. She closes the curtains behind her.*

Girl in Gossamer Dress [*distantly*]. No. Not there. I guess they're still hiding. . . . The sun has fallen again.

The GIRL IN GOSSAMER DRESS *walks back to her chair and sits. Silence for a time. And then the* WOMAN IN AVIATRIX'S OUTFIT *rises.*

Woman in Aviatrix's Outfit. I . . . am Amelia Earhart. That is to say, I *am* Amelia Earhart. And I want to get out of here. One of the main reasons for this is the fact that

I'm not insane. In fact, I'm not even exceptionally neurotic. I'm simply Amelia Earhart and I want to get the hell out.

Woman in Safari Outfit. Where you wanna go, honey? The South Seas?

General laughter.

Woman in Aviatrix's Outfit. I am growing *old* in here!

Woman Who Plays Records. Darling, *none* of us are growing younger.

General laughter.

Woman in Aviatrix's Outfit. All right, check the records if you like. It's all down there; I'm not lying. July second, 1937. That's the day I crashed. Right out there in the yard. July second, 1937. Go on, check the records if you like. Why should I lie? [*Loud laughter from the others.*] Look, my plane is still there. Isn't *that* proof enough? [*General laughter.*] Well, true, they've turned it into a playground for lost children. True, it's not the plane it used to be. The valiant, gallant plane it used to be. But still, that shouldn't matter. The *shape* of it should be proof enough. Well, if you don't believe me ask Fred Noonan! Ask my trusted friend and pilot, Frederick the Great Noonan! Over there, behind those formidable walls, they've got *him* prisoner, too! Well, go on if you don't believe me. Send someone over and ask him. Ask him what my name is, and where I used to live so long ago. Ask him if what I say isn't true! [*Uproarious laughter.*] Stop laughing! Stop *laughing! Stop!* [*She holds her ears. They stop.*] I really *am* telling you the truth, you see. I really *am* Amelia Earhart. [*Short pause.*] And I'm growing old in here. . . . [*The laughter builds madly.*] Stop *laughing at me!* Stop laughing at me! *Stop laughing* . . .

Woman with Notebook. Are are we are we to to assume are we to assume that Miss that Miss Earhart would have us have us would have us believe that Miss Earhart would have us believe that we are not-not-not whom we *think* we are?

Woman in Aviatrix's Outfit. But I *am* Amelia Earhart.

That's the terrible thing, you see . . . I truly am. [*And she sits sadly in her chair.*]

Woman in Armor. Then who am I? Charles the Seventh?

Woman with Notebook. And and who am I? F. Scott Fitzg-g-gerald?

Girl in Gossamer Dress. D. W. Griffith?

Woman in Safari Outfit. Stanley and Livingston?

Woman with Gavel. Abraham Lincoln?

Woman Who Plays Records. Mrs. Johann Sebastian Bach?

Girl in Gossamer Dress. And if all that's so, who is she if not beautiful Isabella of ancient Spain?

Woman in Safari Outfit. Christopher Columbus, maybe?

Girl in Gossamer Dress. Yes, who is she? *Who is she?*

Short pause.

Woman in Aviatrix's Outfit. I don't know.

Pause.

Woman with Notebook.

Amelia Earhart
Is a dear-heart.

The WOMAN IN SAFARI OUTFIT *has raised her hand.*

Woman with Gavel. The chair recognizes that noted hunter Osa Johnson.

Woman in Safari Outfit. Explorer, honey.

Woman with Gavel. I . . . *meant* explorer.

Woman in Safari Outfit. Yeah. Um, I've got a letter here from Mrs. Neoceballrus in Room Eighty-two. She says——

Woman in Armor. We know what she says. She says it every year!

Woman in Safari Outfit. But——

Woman with Notebook.

Mrs. Neoceballrus
Looks like a walrus.

Woman with Gavel. I really don't think, Mrs. Johnson, that it's necessary for us to go into this matter again. And I say that only because to discuss her problem would be,

in effect, to do nothing but waste our time. To quote, if I may from memory, Mrs. Neoceballrus: "The dilemma of my life is that I'm convinced I've never been born." Well. As we all know, not two months ago there was obtained, through the efforts of this committee and a certain handsome young doctor, a bona fide birth certificate proving, beyond the shadow of a doubt that Mrs. Neoceballrus had, in fact, *already* been born. Now, of course, it's possible that she may want more proof. But that, I think, is a little pushy. One birth should be enough for anyone. And since she's already had it, *I* say: the lady has no more problems.

Woman in Aviatrix's Outfit. Except, of course, that she's stark, raving mad.

Whereupon everyone turns slowly and stares at the aviatrix.

Long, cold pause.

Woman in Armor. Madame President.

Woman with Gavel [*turning her gaze from the* WOMAN IN AVIATRIX'S OUTFIT]. The chair recognizes Joan of Arc.

Woman with Notebook [*sotto voce*].

Joan of Arc
Died in the dark.

She laughs hysterically.

Woman in Armor. Gertrude Stein is *fat! That's* why she looks like a swine!

The WOMAN WITH NOTEBOOK *stops laughing.*

Woman with Gavel. The chair recognizes Joan of Arc!

Woman in Armor. Well, here is the problem. What's to be done about my voices? They are . . . *bothering me.*

Girl in Gossamer Dress [*hesitantly*]. Oh . . . objection. [*And then she rises nervously.*] Um, *I* think—well, I don't actually know much about these things, you understand. [*She giggles.*] So I suppose I shouldn't talk.

Woman in Safari Outfit. On with it, honey!

Girl in Gossamer Dress. Well. I think . . . um, that this is just the sort of thing the committee can't help with. That is, to me it's the sort of thing you must, well, somehow . . . work out for yourself. That's all.

The GIRL IN GOSSAMER DRESS *sits bashfully. The* WOMAN IN ARMOR *takes off her helmet for the first time.*

Woman in Armor. But, you see, I didn't *expect* help. I . . . don't think I really even wanted it. I, well, just would have appreciated some . . . you know, *guidance* in the matter. . . .

Woman with Notebook [*sotto voce*].

Joan of Arc
Died in the dark.
Joan of Arc
Died in the dark. . . .
Joan of Arc,
Died in the dark.

The WOMAN IN ARMOR *turns and stares at the* WOMAN WITH NOTEBOOK. *Then, after a moment—and almost without expression—she puts her helmet back on. She sits. The* WOMAN WITH NOTEBOOK *continues to laugh, softly. The laughter grows more distant. No one moves. . . . And then slowly, unnoticed by anyone, the* WOMAN WHO PLAYS RECORDS *rises, crosses to the phonograph, switches it on, takes a record out of hiding, puts it on, and rushes to the window as the last part of Donna Anna's last aria from* Don Giovanni *begins. She pulls open the drapes and throws open the window. Still no one seems to notice.*

Donna Anna (on the record). . . . non vuoi ch'io mora. [*The* WOMAN WHO PLAYS RECORDS *moves her lips to match the words as if she were singing them.*]

Non mi dir, bell' idol mio,
Che son io crudel con te.
Calma, calma il tuo tormento,
Se di duol non vuoi ch'io mora.
Non vuoi ch'io mora.

It is the orchestra's turn now and the WOMAN WHO PLAYS RECORDS *rubs her hands in nervous anticipation of the aria's end. But meanwhile the other women have become aware of the event happening and, having become aware, have risen en masse and gone to the phonograph.*

The WOMAN WITH GAVEL *reaches down into the machine.*

Forse un giorno——

[*And the* WOMAN WITH GAVEL *lifts the record off the machine, a cold smile on her face.*]

WOMAN WHO PLAYS RECORDS. No-o-o-o-o-o-o! [*The* WOMAN WITH GAVEL *cracks the record. The women start toward the* WOMAN WHO PLAYS RECORDS. *She backs away. They continue to pursue her. She starts now to sing as she runs. It is obviously the first time she has ever had the nerve to sing alone. Her voice, to say the least, is dreadful.*]

Forse un giorno il cielo ancora
Sentirà pietà di me.

[*Pursued, no place left to go, she climbs up on the table.*]

Sentirà . . .

And then, bravely, the WOMAN WHO PLAYS RECORDS *begins to croak the coloratura cadenza as the women reach up and drag her down—though it is to her credit that she fights to the end, struggling always to have her voice heard, to finish the aria somehow. Suddenly all the others rush to their seats and sit in mock innocence. The* WOMAN WHO PLAYS RECORDS *weeps silently, her face buried in her hands. The door opens. The* MAN *enters, a white coat on. Behind him is his* ASSISTANT.

Man in White [*brightly*]. Well! How are all my lovely ladies on this fine day? Getting along well, I trust? [*He goes to the window and closes it.*] Must keep the windows closed, girls. I've told you that. And many times. Yes, many times.

Meanwhile the ASSISTANT *has gone over to the phonograph. He notices the broken record all over the floor.*

Assistant. Sir.

The MAN IN WHITE *walks over and stares at the record bits. Then he reaches down and shuts off the phonograph. He stares at it. The ladies giggle. He walks over to the* WOMAN WHO PLAYS RECORDS *and gives her the broken pieces.*

Man in White Come on now, chins up, all three of

them. Tha-a-at's the way. Now. Where's that lovely, girlish smile? O-o-o-oh, not the itty-bitty smile. I mean the big, *big* smile. Ahhhh, there. Now. You see? *All-l-l better.* [*When he chucks her under her chin, however, her smile disappears, though he does not see this. He walks now over to the* WOMAN WITH GAVEL *and, standing behind her, his hands on her shoulders, addresses the other ladies.*] Well now, just what do you suppose I'm going to say? Well, *this* is what I'm going to say: if you nice ladies don't behave yourselves, you'll never have another meeting. And do you know what that means? Well, for one, it means you'll never again be allowed to make suggestions to us about things you think should be done, or improved, or looked after. And it also means that all the lovely ladies who elected you to this nice committee and placed in you all their hope and trust, yes, it means all those lovely ladies will then hate you. Forever. [*He smiles broadly.*] Well now! Having said my little piece, I think it time you got back to your little meeting. I bet there must be just all *sorts* of fine things you've set your hearts on accomplishing today. [*He opens the* WOMAN IN ARMOR'S *visor and peers in.*] Hello. Not too stuffy in there for you, is it? [*She snaps her visor shut. He gets his finger out of the way just in time. He chuckles. To all, in leaving.*] Ah, well. Carry on. And remember: "decorum" is the word. Spell it as it sounds. [*And, nodding to his companion, they leave the room.*]

Silence at the table. Everyone stares blankly ahead. After a while the WOMAN IN SAFARI OUTFIT *takes out a pack of cigarettes.*

Woman in Safari Outfit [*to the lady on her left*]. Cigarette?

Lady on Her Left. Thanks. [*To the lady on* her *left.*] Cigarette?

Lady on Her *Left* [*taking one and then offering one to the lady on* her *left*]. Cigarette?

Lady on Her *Left.* Thanks. [*And then she offers one to the lady on* her *left.*] Cigarette?

Lady on Her *Left.* Thanks. [*She offers one to the lady on* her *left.*]

Lady on Her *Left.* Thanks. [*To the lady on* her *left—the Spanish lady.*] Cigarette?

The Woman in Queenly Spanish Garb *takes one without comment and offers one to the lady on* her *left.*

The Lady on Her *Left.* Thanks. [*And she returns the pack to the* Woman in Safari Outfit.]

They all puff away nervously. Since, however, they do not have matches they do not light the cigarettes. They keep puffing. Pause.

Woman in Safari Outfit. In Borneo they'd never heard of Barrymore or Calvin Coolidge. Martin showed 'em movies. One day the projector broke. That was when they ate our cameraman. I don't think that was very nice.

Girl in Gossamer Dress. I was browsing through *Mechanics Illustrated* the other day.

Woman in Armor. My pants are getting rusty.

Girl in Gossamer Dress. It said the French——

Woman in Armor. The who?

Girl in Gossamer Dress. The French.

Woman in Armor. Oh. Don't like the French.

Girl in Gossamer Dress. It said the French——

Woman in Armor. They let me down, they did.

Girl in Gossamer Dress. It said the French——

Woman in Armor. No. Don't like the French.

Girl in Gossamer Dress. Well, it said the French have built this train that travels ninety miles an hour. Now steam locomotives—or "Puffing Billies," as we used to call them—they only went twenty. Ninety's much faster. Doesn't leave a person nearly enough time. Why there I'd be, flat on the tracks and just beginning to slip out of the ropes when clickety-clack—— No. Things are just too dangerous nowadays. I'll stay right here, if you don't mind.

Woman in Armor. My pants are getting rusty.

Woman with Notebook. A riddle: if Pablo still ate

Pablum and Ernest were more honest, would Alice still feel malice? That's the riddle. That is my riddle.

Woman Who Plays Records. Oi, to be married to Mozart. Oi-yoi-yoi, vat a life dat is to live. A man like dat. Imagine. A genius. A god. And *my* husband. *All* at de same time! Vell, I'll tell you, de're not *many* vomen in de neighborhood as lucky as dat!

Woman in Safari Outfit. Sometimes, during festivals, the natives would eat their friends. We were told this was an honor. But Martin and I, we just never made friends easily. That's the way it was with us.

Woman in Armor. And while we're at it, what's to be done about my voices? Yes. Tell me that.

Woman with Gavel.

Oh, I loved Elizabeth Cady,
And Elizabeth Cady loved me.
And when she was nearly eighty,
Sweet Cady, she still loved me.

Woman in Armor. The hell with my voices! What's to be done about my pants?

Woman with Notebook. Susan B. Anthony. *Who* is Susan B. Anthony? Who *is* Susan B. Anthony? *Who-is-Susan-B.-Anthony?*

Woman with Gavel. "The right to sleep is given to no woman." You gave me those lines, Trudy. In *The Mother of Us All.* A marvelous play, I think. "The right to sleep is given to no woman." Yes. Yes, Trudy. How pertinent those lines are, even today.

Pause.

Woman in Aviatrix's Outfit. Yes, ask Fred if you don't believe me. Ask Fred Noonan. Captured during the course of a crash. His Amelia was a really good pilot. Not much of a navigator. But a really good pilot. You just ask Fred.

Pause.

Woman in Safari Outfit. I *hate*—— Agh! [*She snubs out her cigarette violently.*] What I hate is, I hate cigarettes without *matches!* That's what I hate! It's so . . . so . . .

Woman Who Plays Records. You're absolutely right, darling. Smoking's just not de same ven you can't have smoke.

The GIRL IN GOSSAMER DRESS *moans.*

Woman in Armor [*with a nervous laugh*]. One of the main troubles with a suit of armor which one rarely thinks of is: it's very hard to tiptoe around in. Just . . . thought I'd mention it. Don't . . . know why.

Nervous laughter from the others.

Woman in Safari Outfit [*with fury toward* WOMAN IN ARMOR]. *I'm gonna break that goddamn piece of——*

The WOMAN IN SAFARI OUTFIT *goes for the crucifix. The* WOMAN IN ARMOR *leaps up and blocks her way. The two women square off. Pause. At last, having thought better of picking a fight with the* WOMAN IN ARMOR, *the* WOMAN IN SAFARI OUTFIT *goes back and sits down. As for the* WOMAN IN ARMOR, *she sits too, but clutching the crucifix like a child to her breast. She sobs softly, stroking the wood.*

Girl in Gossamer Dress. Yes, I think I'll stay right here, if you don't mind. Yes. Right here is home enough for me.

Woman with Notebook. Who is Susan B. Anthony? Who is she, Susan B. Anthony? Who is she . . . ?

Silence. The WOMAN WITH GAVEL *looks down at the table. She stares at her gavel. She picks it up. She looks at it. Long pause. Then she looks up at all the women.*

Woman with Gavel. Well. Out with the old business. In with the new.

The GIRL IN GOSSAMER DRESS *rises.*

Girl in Gossamer Dress. I have here the record of hostile occurrences kept, as requested by our president, Miss Anthony. January fourth, eight fifteen A.M., Miss Marianne Sweeturnback of Room Seven Twenty-one reports definite sensations of be-lli-ger-*ency?*

Woman with Gavel. Belligerency.

Girl in Gossamer Dress. Belligerency directed toward

her while sitting at the breakfast table eating her thirty-second bowl of porridge. As a result re-gur- . . .

Woman with Gavel. Vomits.

Girl in Gossamer Dress. Vomits into it. When asked who was sitting with her at the time, she replies only the cook. Conclusion. Source of—— Oh, God.

Woman with Gavel. Belliger——

Girl in Gossamer Dress. Belligerency unknown. February twelfth, three twenty-one P.M. While singing something called a madrigal. *Madrigal?*

Woman with Gavel. Madrigal.

Girl in Gossamer Dress. Madrigal. . . . What's a madrigal?

Woman with Gavel. Go on with your report.

Girl in Gossamer Dress. Madrigal for the Music Appreciation Society of Ward Six, Mrs. McGraw and Mrs. McBurner report definite feelings of homicide—— That's murder!

Woman with Gavel. That's right.

Girl in Gossamer Dress. Directed toward them. As a result, cease singing at once. Ho-mi-cidal feeling later verified—— *Verified?*

Woman with Gavel. Validated. [*No help to Pearl.*] *Go on with your report.*

Girl in Gossamer Dress. By their accompanist . . .

Woman in Safari Outfit. Piano player, honey!

Girl in Gossamer Dress. Miss McFactin. Though strangely enough, denied by those ladies of the Music Appreciation Society who happened, at that moment, to be sitting in the room. *What's a madrigal?* [*The* WOMAN WITH GAVEL *glares at her.*] April third, sometime around noon. Miss Amanda d'Workenwick Alston-Cartwright of Suite Eight Twenty-three, Eight Twenty-four, Eight Twenty-five, and Eight Twenty-six reports definite sensations of hostility—— I know what *that* is!

Woman in Safari Outfit. You bet your sweet ass you do.

The WOMAN WITH GAVEL *raps her gavel.*

Girl in Gossamer Dress. Definite sensations of hostility

directed toward her while collecting money for her annual Whitsuntide pageant. Miss Alston-Cartwright rightly concludes that since Whitsuntide is a religious event, this hostility could not have emanated from any of the women she'd solicited money from. Which was, as usual, everyone in the ward.

Woman Who Plays Records. Yeah. And it left me vithout a penny.

Woman in Safari Outfit. Not as bad, honey, as whatever it was that left you without a *brain.*

Giggling from the girls, WOMAN WHO PLAYS RECORDS *included. The* WOMAN WITH GAVEL *raps for silence.*

Girl in Gossamer Dress. In short, then, these reports all prove that no source can be found for the various feelings of hatred, hostility, jealousy, be-lli-gerency [*giggles*] and revenge known to exist. The conclusion then. The source must come from *outside* our ward. Or, in other words, the *Men's* Ward! Which none of us have ever seen. And is therefore, most likely.

Woman with Gavel. Pearl, a good report.

Woman with Notebook. I h-h-helped her with it.

Girl in Gossamer Dress. You did *not!*

Woman with Gavel [*rapping her gavel*]. Ladies!

Woman in Armor [*sotto voce*].

Gertrude Stein
Drank too much wine.

Rap of gavel. The WOMAN IN ARMOR *quiet.*

Woman Who Plays Records. Vat I vanna know is, why didn't ve get to de report sooner? After all, you know, it's vat ve're really here for. I mean, to save our lives.

Girl in Gossamer Dress. Before they attack!

Woman with Notebook. Which could be any m-m-minute.

Woman in Safari Outfit. But most likely will occur at night.

Woman in Armor. The dead of night.

Woman in Aviatrix's Outfit. Yes, just incredible.

Woman with Gavel [*sharply*]. I beg your pardon?

Woman in Aviatrix's Outfit. I said it's *just incredible*.

Woman with Gavel. *What's* incredible?

Woman in Aviatrix's Outfit. All this nonsense . . .

Everyone turns and stares at her with cold hatred. Pause.

Woman with Gavel [*having regained her briefly lost composure*]. The floor is now open for . . . dis—— [*The* WOMAN IN AVIATRIX'S OUTFIT *has raised her hand.*] Miss . . . Earhart?

Woman in Aviatrix's Outfit. How do you know they're going to attack?

Woman with Gavel. This is a matter of survival, Miss Earhart! Not a matter for *jest!*

Woman in Aviatrix's Outfit. Then tell me how you know the Men's Ward is going to attack.

Woman with Gavel. Miss White's report just *explained* it to you!

Woman in Aviatrix's Outfit. I couldn't follow its logic.

Girl in Gossamer Dress. What!

Woman with Gavel. Are you trying to imply, Miss Earhart, that our lives are *not* in danger?

Commotion! The WOMAN WITH GAVEL *raps her gavel for silence.*

Woman in Aviatrix's Outfit. I am only implying, Miss Anthony, that if they *are* in danger, then perhaps it's due to someone, or someplace, else.

Woman with Gavel. Such as *what?*

Woman in Aviatrix's Outfit [*calmly*]. Such as——

Woman in Safari Outfit. She's just wasting time! *Don't listen to her!*

Woman with Notebook. R-r-r-right!

Silence.

Woman with Gavel. The meeting . . . will now continue. If there are any *oth*—— Miss Earhart, would you mind very much not grinning at me like that?

Woman in Aviatrix's Outfit. So no one's going to answer my question, hm?

Woman with Gavel. Will someone please answer Miss Earhart's idiotic question: "How do we know the Men's Ward is going to attack?"

Woman in Safari Outfit. We simply know, *that's* how!

Girl in Gossamer Dress. Right. We simply *know!*

Woman Who Plays Records. Ve simply *know.*

Woman with Notebook. We s-s-simmmmply know. . . .

Woman with Gavel [*smiling in triumph*]. Well. I trust *that* answers your question.

Woman in Aviatrix's Outfit [*smiling back*]. Oh, yes. Yes, thank you. Indeed it does.

The WOMAN IN ARMOR *rises as if in some mesmeric state.*

Woman in Armor [*distantly*]. Besides. My voices have been telling me for quite some time now, they've been telling me: Joan, fix your pants; they're getting too rusty. And they've been telling me: Joan. Any day now it will all be over. *The attack will come.* [*And then she sits, slowly.*]

Pause.

Woman with Gavel. All right, ladies. What are we going to do?

Woman in Safari Outfit. Attack *first,* I say! [*Stunned reaction from all.*] Strike while the kettle's boiling, as the cannibals used to put it! Get 'em while the going's good!

Woman Who Plays Records. But—but vould dat *look* right?

Woman in Safari Outfit. It'll look a damn sight better, honey, than waiting on our asses till *they* attack *us!*

Woman Who Plays Records [*flustered*]. Vell—vell I mean, I mean——

Woman with Gavel. She means—forgive me, dear—she means, I think, that if we attacked the Men's Ward first —unprovoked, so to speak—wouldn't we lose a lot of privileges as a result?

Woman Who Plays Records. Exactly! Like bowling, for instance, vich is something dat means a great deal to me. Laugh if you like.

Woman in Armor. And our annual Christmas party!

We'd lose *that,* I bet. And I *love* that party. I love Christmas.

Girl in Gossamer Dress. And what about our movies twice a month? I bet we wouldn't see *any.*

Woman in Aviatrix's Outfit. Just incredible.

Woman with Notebook. We'd lose a *lot* of th-th-things that w-way, I'm af-f-f-fraid.

Woman with Gavel [*turning to the* WOMAN IN SAFARI OUTFIT]. Yes, Mrs. Johnson. I'm afraid we would.

Woman in Safari Outfit [*rising*]. And *I'm* afraid you do me an injustice. I've got no intention of attacking uprovoked.

Woman with Gavel. You *don't?*

Girl in Gossamer Dress. But——

Woman Who Plays Records. Vell how——

Woman in Safari Outfit. You see, I've spent my whole life among wild animals, and when you do that, honey, after a while you get to love 'em. And when you do *that,* honey, you don't like to kill 'em unprovoked. You don't like to kill 'em, shall we say, "just for the fun of it." You don't like to kill 'em for the *trophy.* . . . No. Mother Necessity *alone* pulls the trigger on your gold-plated elephant gun. When you kill, you kill for either of two reasons. You kill 'cause you're being attacked (by tigers, let us say). Or you kill 'cause you're very hungry. Well. You get the point. *Now.* I say we ain't strong enough to wait till the Men's Ward attacks us. Unless, of course, you feel like dying in the process. Which means *we're* the ones who've gotta do the attacking. *But!* I *also* say: it's no good to attack without sufficient provocation.

Girl in Gossamer Dress. Which could mean we'd lose a lot of privileges, right?

Woman in Safari Outfit. Right. Therefore . . . what we need . . . is sufficient *provocation.* [*Applause from the ladies. The* WOMAN WITH GAVEL *raps for silence.*] And here's how we get it. We get it through hunger and thirst, the second of the two justifiable reasons for killing which I've found. And this is the gist of the plan. For the next three days we will refuse all food and drink

offered. Then, on the fourth, we will, with God on our side, invade the Men's Ward. And eat them. Then, afterwards, drink their blood.

Woman with Gavel. The proposal is now open for discussion.

Woman in Aviatrix's Outfit. Um, a question. Do I assume correctly when I interpret Mrs. Johnson's proposal as implying, or better yet, presupposing that we——oh, how shall I say it?—*kill* the men first?

Woman in Safari Outfit. Madame President!

Woman with Gavel. The chair, in an effort to maintain parliamentary order, will assume that Miss Earhart's question was raised in good faith. In which case it interprets Mrs. Johnson's proposal—and stop me, please, Mrs. Johnson, if for some reason, I'm wrong—it interprets Mrs. Johnson's proposal as suggesting that we, yes, kill them first.

Woman with Notebook [*sotto voce*]. It would be it would be very difficult, wouldn't it, it would be very difficult, wouldn't it, to . . . to to to . . . to . . . to . . . to do it . . . well, the *other* way?

Woman in Safari Outfit. What's your interest in this, honey? Having some "fun"?

Woman with Notebook. Oh, no, no. No question of f-fun involved. J-j-just . . . curiosity. Just a . . . writer's curiosity. That's all.

Woman with Gavel [*rapping with her gavel*]. The proposal is open for discussion! Ladies? Ah. Mrs. Mozart. Yes?

Woman Who Plays Records. Vell. First of all let me say dat I t'ink de most important t'ing about dis plan is dat at least it's a *vorking* plan. It's a place to begin. And God knows, dat's jus' vat ve need. *Nevertheless.* I t'ink dere are some problems inherent. First: it's not, by a long shot, vat I'd call kosher meat. But den, I'm more Reform dan Ort'odox so it's not really all dat bad. Second! . . . Vit so many big men over dere how do you expect little vomen like us to finish dem all? Vat I mean is, vat vould ve do vit de extras?

Woman in Aviatrix's Outfit. Why wrap them up, of course, and eat them later.

Woman in Safari Outfit. Madame President!

Woman with Gavel [*rapping furiously*]. May I remind you, Miss Earhart, that there's not much time left! And that we can't afford to waste that time on your little jokes.

Woman in Safari Outfit [*sadly, almost to herself*]. She does have a point though, I'm afraid.

Woman in Aviatrix's Outfit. Ah!

Woman in Safari Outfit. Not *you,* you fool!

Woman with Notebook.

Amelia Earhart
Is a dear-heart.

Woman in Safari Outfit. Mrs. Mozart, believe it or not, is the one who has the point.

Woman Who Plays Records. Hah! I *t'ought* I did. [*The other women pat her on the back and flash smiles of congratulations.*] Vell? Don' keep us in de dark, for heaven's sake. Vat is it?

Woman in Safari Outfit [*finding it hard to speak, defeated*]. The point . . . is this. As it's quite true that we'd never be able to eat them all, yet . . . would obviously have to kill them all, those dead but left uneaten would appear, I'm afraid, to have been killed for the *fun* of it, not the necessity. In other words . . . the uneaten would become our trophies. We'd . . . lose our privileges after all. Madame President . . . ladies . . . my plan is no good.

Everyone stares glumly at the WOMAN IN SAFARI OUTFIT.

Woman in Aviatrix's Outfit [*brightly*]. Well, I say if you can't have a moosehead on the wall, a good man'll do just fine.

But no one pays attention. So, with a shrug, she rests her chin in her hands, bored with it all.

Woman with Gavel. Well . . . any other ideas? [*Silence.*] Girls? . . . I don't think I need remind you that

the matter is urgent. [*Silence. Very weakly.*] Girls? . . . Our *lives* are at stake.

Woman in Aviatrix's Outfit [*to herself*]. Yes. Just incredible. The whole thing . . .

But silence has filled the room. The women are lost somewhere in their own private thoughts. It is now that the WOMAN IN QUEENLY SPANISH GARB *rises. She removes her veil. For some reason no one seems to notice. During her entire speech it will be as if, to the others, she is not speaking at all. And when she sits, as if no time has passed.*

Woman in Queenly Spanish Garb. What to do about Columbus—that is what concerns us most. Ferdinand is a bitch, we don't need Aragon. Columbus is the thing. What to do about Columbus. *That* is the thing. . . . Oh, not that he'll reach India, for India lies east not west, as every schoolchild knows. But a new world may well lie west and if it does you can bet that fat idiot will find it! Never sailed before in his life, you know. No knowledge at all of navigation. In fact, terrified of the sea. Well. That's the sort that's dangerous. "Land, ho!" we can hear him cry, his boat run aground in the night (and most likely on some lovely, palm-sheltered beach). "*Land, ho . . .*" "Um, Captain," says his first mate softly, "I think we'd best repair our ship." In the morning, Columbus descends to see just what it is he's run into, finds four hundred bare-breasted maidens drinking coconut milk, and cries, "Curse my luck! *This* isn't India!" . . . Yes. Curse his luck. A new world found. A new world for us to deal with. And, oh, my God, here we are, Queen of Spain, and not yet figured out what to do with this one. [*And then, slowly, she sits.*]

Short pause.

Woman with Gavel. Well. I knew we'd find a way.

Girl in Gossamer Dress. You mean——

Woman with Gavel. I have a plan. Yes.

Woman Who Plays Records. We're gonna *live!* [*She starts to cry.*]

Woman with Gavel. If we are, however, then mark *this.*

Our living will depend on swiftness of action and commitment to the cause. It will depend on strength. On silence. And on sacrifice . . . Our living—will depend on *you!*

Woman Who Plays Records. Uh-oh.

Woman with Gavel. Ah, ladies, ladies. I know. I know. How sad it is that times such as these do not lend themselves to lesser problems. And the problems—to easier solutions. [*She smiles sadly.*] It is a difficult era, this one in which we live.

The WOMAN WHO PLAYS RECORDS *starts to cry again.*

Woman in Aviatrix's Outfit. I trust the secretary got that down.

The WOMAN WITH NOTEBOOK *jumps up from her seat and runs over to the aviatrix. She shows her the minutes.*

Woman with Notebook. "The meeting was called to order at the——"

The WOMAN WITH GAVEL *raps her gavel.*

Woman in Aviatrix's Outfit [*to the secretary, sotto voce*]. Ssh. Time for the plan. Better go back and get it down, too. Mustn't have the minutes incomplete. [*The secretary nods and rushes back to her seat. To the* WOMAN WITH GAVEL.] All set, honey. Fire away!

Woman in Armor [*distantly*]. No, don't like the French. They let me down, they did. . . .

Pause. The WOMAN WITH GAVEL *glares at the aviatrix, a cold smile spreading over her face.*

Woman with Gavel. Well. Here is the plan.

Woman Who Plays Records [*to the aviatrix, sotto voce*]. And you be a nice girl, Amelia. Dis is a matter of life and death.

Woman with Gavel. Since, as you all know, we cannot afford to attack the Men's Ward first—yet, at the same time (and for obvious reasons) cannot afford to wait till they attack us—the only thing to do, clearly, is make sure there is *no* attack. By *anyone!* In other words, to insure our safety, ladies, we must make the men believe that we are stronger than we really are.

Short, confused pause.

Woman in Safari Outfit. You mean . . . *bluff* 'em.

Woman with Gavel. Well, I prefer to think of it more as *frighten* them. If you see what I mean.

Woman in Aviatrix's Outfit. Oh, clear as day.

Woman with Gavel. Ah, Miss Earhart. If only you could know how thrilling it is to me, as president of this committee, to know that there is, amongst us, one as perceptive as *you*. For the benefit of those others, however, not quite as fortunate—and I must, in all honesty, say I number myself among *these*—I will now take the time to explain more—try to make my plan a little clearer. Amelia, my dear, *please try and bear with us.* [*She smiles at the* WOMAN IN AVIATRIX'S OUTFIT. *The others glare at her angrily.*] Ladies, what we must do is kill someone.

Woman in Aviatrix's Outfit. Huh?

Stunned silence.

Woman Who Plays Records. Vat?

Woman with Notebook. K-k-kill-l-l someone?

Woman with Gavel. Yes. Kill someone. Anyone at all.

Woman in Safari Outfit. But . . . I thought we decided——

Woman Who Plays Records. Right! I t'ought ve decided——

Woman in Safari Outfit. Oh, shut up!

Girl in Gossamer Dress. Yes. Didn't we——

Woman with Gavel. Ladies! [*They quiet down. With a laugh.*] I don't mean kill one of *them.* I mean——

Woman Who Plays Records. Oi *gevalt!*

Woman in Aviatrix's Outfit. What the——

Woman in Safari Outfit. Look, I don't——

Girl in Gossamer Dress. Bu——

Woman with Gavel. Ladies!

Woman in Armor. My pants are getting rusty!

Woman with Gavel. Ladies!

Woman with Notebook [*her head buried in her notebook*]. "The m-meeting was c-called to——"

Woman with Gavel. Ladies, *please! !* [*She raps them*

quiet.] Be patient for a minute, *please.* Now. Just think of this: a body—for argument's sake, *mine,* let us say sent in the dead of night, arriving at the Men's Ward first thing in the morning, our signatures attached. Well! I ask you, would *that* be a warning or wouldn't it? Would *that* frighten the Men's Ward or wouldn't it? Would *that* be a show of strength, a show of power, of intention? Or wouldn't it!

Stunned reaction from all except the aviatrix.

Woman in Aviatrix's Outfit. Actually, with all those signatures, it *might* be rather impressive at that.

Girl in Gossamer Dress. Amelia, for God's sakes, this is no time to joke around.

Woman with Gavel. Furthermore! If that didn't work, we could send another one in the afternoon, then perhaps another the following morning. Oh, yes, they'd soon get the point. They'd soon realize that *they could be next.* . . . Well. Who shall it be?

Woman in Aviatrix's Outfit. I thought I heard you suggest *yourself.*

Woman with Gavel. That was just an example. *Ladies?*

Short pause before the furor breaks loose.

Woman in Safari Outfit. Joan of Arc's the one!

The WOMAN IN ARMOR *leaps up.*

Woman with Notebook. Yes! I s-s-second the——

Woman in Armor [*advancing on the secretary, her crucifix raised like a tomahawk*].

Gertrude Stein
Will now be mine.

Woman with Notebook. I ch-change my vote to-to *Pearl White!*

Girl in Gossamer Dress. What!

Woman in Armor. That's better.

Girl in Gossamer Dress. Mrs. Mozart! Look at *her! She'd* be better yet!

Woman Who Plays Records. Vat?

Woman in Safari Outfit. Yeah. Teach her to make that goddamn racket!

Woman Who Plays Records. Racket? Vat means by a——

Woman with Notebook [*advancing, pencil poised like a knife*]. Ha-hahhh.

Woman Who Plays Records. Look! Now look! I t'ink maybe you should consider, um . . .

Woman in Armor. Osa Johnson! Let's kill Osa Johnson! Let's all kill Osa Johnson!

Woman Who Plays Records. My choice exactly!

Woman in Safari Outfit [*wielding her toy gun like a club*]. You come near me and I'll——

Girl in Gossamer Dress. Kill Osa Johnson! Let's all kill Osa Johnson!

Woman in Safari Outfit [*advancing on the* GIRL IN GOSSAMER DRESS]. I'm gonna wring your little blonde neck once and for all!

Girl in Gossamer Dress. Gertrude Stein! I've changed my vote to Gertrude Stein!

Woman in Armor. Yes! Gertrude Stein!

Girl in Gossamer Dress. Not Osa Johnson! Gertrude——

Woman with Notebook. Mrs.——

Woman with Notebook *Girl in Gossamer Dress*	*To-gether*	Mozart! Pearl——
Woman Who Plays Records	*To-gether*	White! Pearl White!
Girl in Gossamer Dress		Gertrude Stein!
Woman with Notebook		Joan of Arc!
Woman Who Plays Records	*To-gether*	Pearl White! Pearl White!
Girl in Gossamer Dress		Gertrude Stein! Gertrude Stein!
Woman with Notebook		J-Joan of Arc! J-Joan of Arc!
Woman in Safari Outfit		Mrs. Mozart! Mrs. Mozart!
Woman in Armor		Osa Johnson! Osa Johnson!

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