SIDE 1: Fairy, Florence, Jeff, Hannibal

FAIRY. I'm sorry, Florence. l was watching the fireflies. What did you say?

FLORENCE. I said, can you see if they've left yet?

FAIRY. I wish I'd been born a cat so I could see in the dark.

JEFF. I don't think I'll wait for her. I'm going to get a book and go to my room.

FLORENCE. Does your jaw hurt tonight, Jeff?

JEFF. Not bad.

FLORENCE. Then stay a little longer. We'd like to have you.

HANNIBAL. Jeff, you've already invested two hundred and sixty-seven minutes in waiting-surely you can afford an additional ten cents' worth.

JEFF. All right, my statistical friend. My curiosity is good for ten minutes more.

FAIRY. I wonder what she is like? Miss Willie says they are one of the wealthiest families in America.

HANNIBAL. Oh, that's bad. She'll have an expensive camera she can't work. Or rave about an artist I never heard of.

FAIRY. Oh-cynic! Has money spoiled me?

HANNIBAL. Do you have money, Fairy?

FAIRY. Bags.

FLORENCE. Let's not be prejudiced about money. Some of my best friends are wealthy. Hannibal-play something while we're waiting. Help distract Jeff.

HANNIBAL. Well, you catch me tuned. What shall it be?

FLORENCE. Surprise us.

HANNIBAL. How about a GYPSY czardas?

FAIRY. Please don't play gypsy music, Hannibal. It frightens me.

HANNIBAL. Frightens you?

FAIRY. Terrifies me. I was stolen by gypsies when I was a child and rescued just as they were about to dye my skin with walnut juice. ... Well, I was.

FLORENCE. Go ahead, Hannibal.

FAIRY. I hope she likes music. Maybe she plays some instrument herself. The harp! Oh-I hope she plays a harp. All my life ... I'm sorry, Hanni-bal. Go ahead. (aside to FLORENCE.) I was raised on a harp. My father... Like an angel

FLORENCE. Jeff-what are you doing?

JEFF. Ob. There's a book I want on the shelf. I'm sorry, Hannibal.

FLORENCE. Fairy, get the book for Jeff so we can listen to Hannibal.

FAIRY. Wait, I'll get a chair.

JEFF. Never mind, Fairy, I can get it.

FAIRY. No, Jeffrey, climbing on chairs is women's work Men have mountains. Which book did you want?

JEFF. "The Life Span of the Ape."

FLORENCE. People give the strangest books to this library. I couldn't get into "Forbidden Tibet."

FAIRY. It's amazing what standing above people does. Do you know, I feel smarter than anybody in the whole world.

JEFF. It's the yellow one.

FAIRY. Books are in my blood. My mother invented the filing system at the New York Library. She was" Queen of Cross-Index.''

HANNIBAL. I'll get Jeff's book, Fairy.

FAIRY. No, no, no, no. Musicians shouldn't work.

FLORENCE. Be careful, Fairy-don't get dust in your eyes.

FAIRY. Wouldn't you like "Animal Husbandry"? I can reach that.

JEFF. This time it's got to be "The Life Span of the Ape."

SIDE2: Jeff, Fairy, Miss Willie, Mrs. Paddy, Florence

JEFF. I certainly didn't mean to cause all this commotion. Forget it.

FAIRY. No-no-no. I'll get it for you. Everyone watch his own head. Timber! There you are, Jeffrey. You may take the bow, Miss Willie. You may take my hand, Hannibal.

MISS WILLIE. The next time anyone wants a book from the top, Fairy, call me. Why, the whole shelf might have fallen on you.

FAIRY. Oh, whoever heard of anyone being hurt by good books?

MISS WILLIE. Enough of them might, darling. And I'd hate that to happen.

MRS. PADDY. I hate everything in the world, but most of all I hate cold cream, hot dogs, codfish, crawfish, catfish, catnip, sheep-dip, sawdust, subways, sewers, skewers, buttermilk, caterpillars, frictions, fractions, pins, puns, pens, policemen and electricity.

FAIRY. Miss Willie, how much longer do we have to wait?

FLORENCE. What is she like, Miss Willie?

MISS WILLIE. I haven't seen her. Let's tidy the room a bit. Fairy, will you put the parchesi board away, please?

FLORENCE. They're taking an awfully long time in the front office.

FAIRY. Is she young or old, Miss Willie?

MISS WILLIE. All I know is that her name is Savage--and she gets the Blue Room.

FAIRY. I hope she isn't beautiful. Competition exhausts me.

MISS WILLIE. Well, Bingo, you tied that one in a hurry.

JEFF. Miss Willie, don't call me that-please. It's a pet name my wife uses.

MISS WILLIE. I forgot. (Leans over and kisses him on the forehead.)

JEFF. And I wish you wouldn't single me out to kiss.

MISS WILLIE. You're the handsomest.

JEFF. What would my wife think if she came to call and saw a strange woman kissing me? She'd explode.

MISS WILLIE. She would if I know her.

JEFF. Will you please try to remember?

MISS WILLIE. I'll try. Forgive me.

(phone rings)

FAIRY. Ting-a-ling-a-ling-a-ling.

MISS WILLIE. Hello. Yes, Dr. Emmett. Right away. (hangs up) Put the dart board up, Hannibal. Please don't clutter the place, darlings. Let's make a good first impression.

FAIRY. Will we meet her now?

MISS WILLIE. I don't know. (exits)

SIDE 3: Lily Belle, Titus, Samuel, Dr. Emmett

LILY BELLE. *(Crosses down* to *sofa.)* Well, what do you think of it now, Titus? Are you reassured?

TITUS. Somewhat. It certainly doesn't look like an institution.

SAMUEL. Not at all.

LILY BELLE. Mother will be contented and happy here-I'm sure. It's a charming place.

TITUS. I just hope we haven't made a mistake.

LILY BELLE. Darling, the only mistake we made was in not taking steps sooner.

TITUS. I don't like to be thought insensitive. It might have been wiser to have kept her at home with an attendant.

LILY BELLE. That would have been disastrous.

SAMUEL. You're hard.

LILY BELLE. Someone has to be practical.

SAMUEL. No, you're calloused, you've married too many foreigners.

LILY BELLE. Samuel, darling, we've done what had to be done, let's not quarrel about it, please.

TITUS. Lily Belle is right. This is civilized behavior.

(DR. EMMETT enters)

DR. EMMETT. I'm sorry to have delayed you. I was anxious to have Doctor Johnson question your mother.

TITUS. This is quite a place you have here, Doctor. It's been a great relief to us to have found it so cheerful.

LILY BELLE. But then, we were assured that your place offered the best that money could buy.

DR. EMMETT. We hope we offer the best that experience can provide.

TITUS. One thing I meant to ask you, Doctor, will Mother be exposed to any danger here?

DR. EMMETT. Not at all, the guests in this wing are in their final stage of treatment. They are extremely kind and cooperative. On the surface, most of them would seem quite as normal as, say, yourself, Senator.

TITUS. You don't say.

DR. EMMETT. While we're waiting, Senator, I'd like to ask a few more questions about this Memorial Fund of your mother's.

TITUS. There's little more to tell. She planned on using it to give away the entire Savage estate.

SAMUEL. The newspapers called it her Happiness Fund.

DR. EMMETT. Was this indifference to money something recent?

TITUS. I wouldn't say so.

LILY BELLE. She's always given money to foolish causes.

DR. EMMETT. Would you mind being more specific?

TITUS. Well, there was an Italian farmer who wanted a box of soil from Italy.

SAMUEL. Just dirt!

LILY BELLE. Mother spent two hundred dollars to get it for him.

TITUS. And there was a flower peddler who asked for a tombstone for his horse.

SAMUEL. He got it.

LILY BELLE. After Father died, this obsession got progressively worse. Last summer she chartered a ship to send a thousand school children around the world.

SIDE 4: Miss Willie, Mrs. Savage

MISS WILLIE. We've a lovely garden out there-you'll be able to see it in the morning. When I was a child-we always said-thirty needles and thirty pins. You've added twenty more dirty Republicans.

MRS. SAVAGE. It's a fault of mine-exaggeration. It's stupid of me to try to irritate them like this-I just irritate myself. Well, I suppose it has to be exasperating now to be funny later.

MISS WILLIE. I notice one of its eyes is gone. It must have dropped out in the office. I'll look as soon as they go.

MRS. SAVAGE. Don't bother. It fell out last fall at the opera. I'd have found it but the usher was so nasty about my lighting matches during the Magic Fire music. You know what this is, don't you?

MISS WILLIE. Suppose you tell me.

MRS. SAVAGE. It's a teddy bear. Surely you've seen one before?

MISS WILLIE. Not that big.

MRS. SAVAGE. Do you know what I do with it?

MISS WILLIE. I couldn't possibly guess.

MRS. SAVAGE. I sleep with it.

MISS WILLIE. Do you?

MRS. SAVAGE. Yes, I do. Are you going to talk to me as if I were an imbecile, too?

MISS WILLIE. Here-here, we mustn't be hostile.

MRS. SAVAGE. Of course not-you haven't banned me. Would you care to know why I sleep with it?

MISS WILLIE. If you'd care to tell me.

MRS. SAVAGE. I don't care. And I'll tell you. I get lonely.

I'm too old to have a lover and too fastidious to sleep with a cat.

MISS WILLIE. Then, by all means, you must take it to bed with you here. Would you care to take off your hat?

MRS. SAVAGE. If I'm going to spend the rest of my life here-I might as well.

MISS WILLIE. It's a mighty saucy hat.

MRS. SAVAGE. A ten-cent piece of felt and three chicken feathers. Eighty-five dollars. Why economy should be expensive-I don't know.

MISS WILLIE. It takes imagination.

MRS. SAVAGE. And the blood of pirates. But I wanted it. I wanted a hat like this since I was sixteen. For all the good it does me now. Well-I won't need a hat here. Maybe you can use it for some-thing-I'm not at all sure what.

MISS WILLIE. Oh, you'd better keep it. You might need it.

MRS. SAVAGE. Dear, dear! My hair looks like the matted end of a coconut.

MISS WILLIE. Oh, I don't think so. It's a heavenly color.

MRS. SAVAGE. You should have seen it last year. It was bright red. Then just to be different, I dyed it black with a white streak in the middle. I looked like nothing so much as a skunk. Finally, I just gave up and tinted it blue. It goes with everything.

MISS WILLIE. It'll certainly go with your room. Wouldn't you like to go up and get settled?

MRS. SAVAGE. Is it time to lock me up?

MISS WILLIE. I wouldn't dream of locking you up. Did you bring a suitcase?

MRS. SAVAGE. My daughter did. I wasn't consulted.