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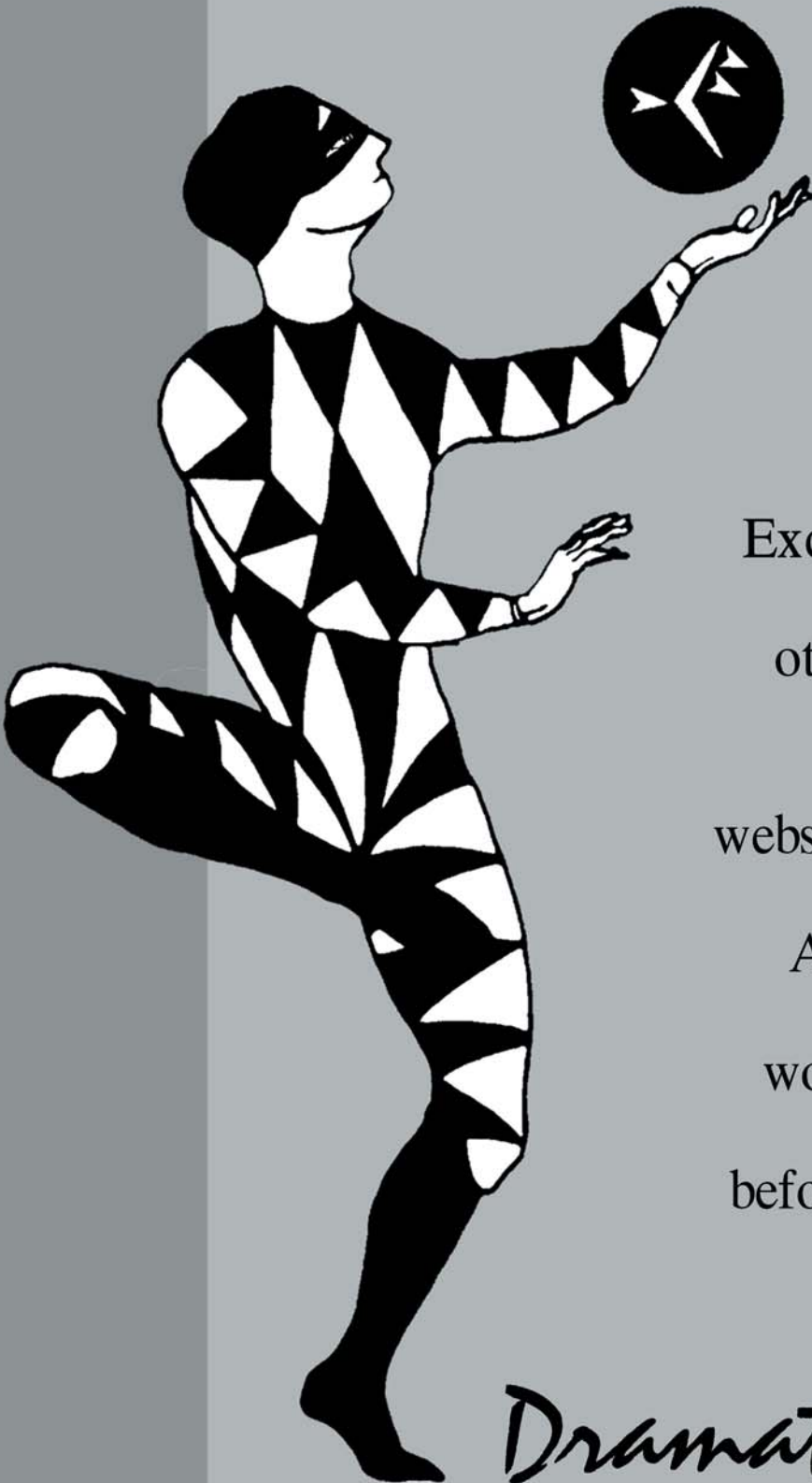
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*Dramatic Publishing*





A FULL-LENGTH PLAY

# 1776 —AND ALL THAT

by

LEONARD WIBBERLEY



THE DRAMATIC PUBLISHING COMPANY



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(1776—AND ALL THAT)

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1776 - AND ALL THAT  
*A Full Length Play*  
For Nine Men, Eight Women and Bits

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CHARACTERS

CAMERAMAN\*  
MARY  
JUDY MEADOWS  
TOM CZEULEGER  
VOLTAIRE  
GEORGE III  
CECILE  
GEORGE WASHINGTON  
THOMAS JEFFERSON  
BENJAMIN FRANKLIN  
RUTH  
WOMAN  
CHIEF  
SIMMONS\*  
HAWKINS\*  
STORHILL\*  
MARTHA WASHINGTON  
QUEEN CHARLOTTE  
PRESIDENT OF UNITED STATES  
SUSAN  
JOE BLOW

Reporters, guards, two pretty girls, guests at  
the ball

PLACE: *Heaven and Washington, D. C.*

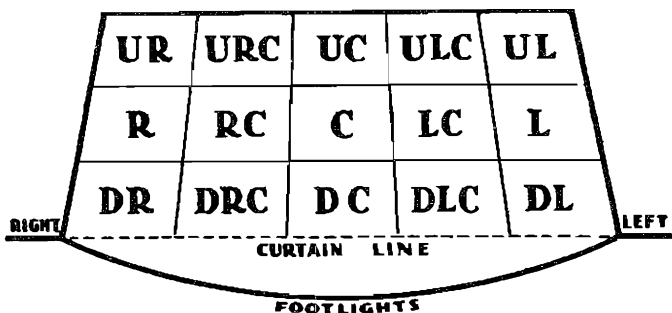
TIME: 1976.

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\*Bit parts

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## CHART OF STAGE POSITIONS



## STAGE POSITIONS

*Upstage* means away from the footlights, *downstage* means toward the footlights, and *right* and *left* are used with reference to the actor as he faces the audience. R means *right*, L means *left*, U means *up*, D means *down*, C means *center*, and these abbreviations are used in combination, as: UR for *up right*, RC for *right center*, DLC for *down left center*, etc. A territory designated on the stage refers to a general area, rather than to a given point.

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**NOTE:** Before starting rehearsals, chalk off your stage or rehearsal space as indicated above in the *Chart of Stage Positions*. Then teach your actors the meanings and positions of these fundamental terms of stage movement by having them walk from one position to another until they are familiar with them. The use of these abbreviated terms in directing the play saves time, speeds up rehearsals, and reduces the amount of explanation the director has to give to his actors.

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NOTES ON CHARACTERS, COSTUMES  
AND PROPERTIES

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**GENERAL PROPERTIES:**

Act One Scene Two: An office in the White House of the U. S. On desk are several telephones and a talk box. Bookcases, a couple of easy chairs, a chair behind the desk, a picture of the President of U. S. , a picture of George Washington, TV camera equipment, a little ladder, small address book on desk.

Act One Scenes Three, Four and Five: A gentlemen's clubroom in Heaven. Edwardian club style--two deep leather chairs RC and LC; two big tables with papers, magazines, some snuff, a box of candy; a fireplace, two easy chairs, a large grandfather clock that doesn't work but has a practical door in front and an open back, a bell pull.

Act One Scene Five: A street, a few houses--windows and doors--painted on a back drop (one of the doors opens), a bus stop sign or bus bench, a large sign saying: CIRCLE DRIVE.

Act One Scene Seven: A garden in Heaven. A bit of a trellis against a backdrop of shrubs and roses will do, with a pot of something blooming near the front of the stage; a rustic or ironwork table with several suitable outdoor chairs around it, a swing sofa with a canopy over the top.

Act Two Scenes One, Four and Five: The President's study in the White House. Doors R and L, carpeting on the floor, a fireplace, two easy chairs, several other chairs around the room, a desk with an executive

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chair behind it, drapes, a louvered window, pictures of several presidents including one of George Washington, another big chair, and beside it, coffee table covered with papers. Later the same grandfather clock is in position in the room. Along the left and right walls are bookcases. Calendar and lamp on desk.

Act Two Scene Two: A ballroom: No furnishings, just a few streamers. An orchestra. Waiters with trays of drinks, etc.

Act Two Scene Three: Played before the curtain. A table and two chairs, a large vase with a bunch of flowers on the table.

**PERSONAL PROPERTIES AND COSTUMES:**

VOLTAIRE: Act One Scene One: Middle-aged, a certain gallant air. He has fire, self-possession, polish and pride. A large staff, at least shoulder high, with an ornate knob. His dress should approximate that of the middle eighteenth century--a full wig, curled; an embroidered waistcoat and satin breeches are suggested.

Act One Scene Three: His large staff.

Act One Scene Eight: Snuff.

JUDY MEADOWS: Act One Scene Two: A very attractive young lady, very smartly dressed. A piece of paper, a handbag containing a plastic ID card.

Act Two Scene Two: In some kind of a 1776 costume.

TOM CZEULEGER: Act One Scene Two: A good-looking man a little older than Judy, athletic and brisk. A wallet with a badge and an ID card.

Act One Scene Six: Telephone

Act Two Scene Two: Dressed as a Pennsylvania militiaman.

MARY: Act One Scene Two: Notebook, pen.  
Act One Scene Five: Notebook.

CHIEF: Act One Scene Six: Telephone.

GEORGE III: Act One Scene Three: Rotund and beefy. His pipe (a clay churchwarden); a spill for his pipe; carries a staff.

CECILE: Act One Scene Three: Quite a simple but pretty angel; tiny wings on her shoulders, and dressed in a mini-dress (not vulgar). Carries a tray with a glass of wine.

GEORGE WASHINGTON: Act One Scene Four: Soaking wet--wet cape.

THOMAS JEFFERSON: Act One Scene Four: Soaking wet--wet cape.  
Act Two Scene Four: Sheaf of papers (national budget).

BENJAMIN FRANKLIN: Act One Scene Four: White wig, spectacles.

RUTH: Act One Scene Four: A pretty angel dressed as Cecile.

WOMAN: Act One Scene Five: An apron; wet hands.

SIMMONS: Act One Scene Six: Telephone.  
Act Two Scene Three: May wear business suit or 1776 costume.

HAWKINS: Act One Scene Six: Telephone.  
Act Two Scene Three: May wear business suit or 1776 costume.



STORHILL: Act One Scene Six: Telephone.  
Act Two Scene Three: May wear business suit or  
1776 costume.

MARTHA WASHINGTON: Act One Scene Seven:  
Middle-aged, stout, and a bit overdressed--neck-  
lace just too long and beady and hair too recently  
curled, shawl or stole a bit loud.

QUEEN: Act One Scene Seven: Middle-aged, stout,  
and a bit overdressed--necklace just too long and  
beady and hair too recently curled, shawl or stole a  
bit loud.

PRESIDENT OF U.S.: Act Two Scene One:  
Dressed like George Washington.

SUSAN: Act Two Scene One: Modern evening dress.  
Act Two Scene Four: Swatches of fabric.

WAITERS: Act Two Scene Two: Walking around  
with trays of glasses of wine.

TWO PRETTY GIRLS: Act Two Scene Two.  
May wear 1776 costume.

JOE: Act Two Scene Four: Dressed in brown  
homespun.

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## PRODUCTION NOTES

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### THE CLOCK

#### CONSTRUCTION:

The clock should actually be larger than a full-sized grandfather clock, since at least one person has to be able to get inside. It can be constructed of a framework of lathes with canvas siding. Plywood siding would perhaps do as well, though plywood tends to get heavy and the clock has of course to be moved around. The clock should have only three sides, the back being open. It should have on the inside a cross piece so that a person inside can lift it an inch or so off the floor and, taking very tiny steps, move it about the stage.

The hands of the clock have to be movable from inside and there should be an inside mark so whoever moves the hands can see that they are correctly positioned. The hands don't really have to move with the precision of a clock's hands--the hour hand moving through one twelfth of the circumference of the dial while the minute hand makes the whole sweep of the circumference. The minute hand can be moved first and then the hour hand can creep to the appointed time. The chiming should be done in the wings using a xylophone or some suitable instrument.

The whole front of the clock, below the dial, must open and be big enough for someone to squeeze inside.

#### MOVEMENT:

The clock moves in two scenes:

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In Act II Scene 1 it comes through a door R, which opens for it and closes again, and the clock settles against the backdrop. The door opens inward onto the stage and may be flung open by someone in the wings. Once the clock has floated through, the door may be closed with a swiveled lathe attached to the bottom of the door. If the lathe is about the same color as the floor covering, it is not likely to be seen. If there is difficulty, the door may be opened outward into the wings by somebody there.

In Act II, Scene 5 the clock disappears through the wall, the hands having moved to midnight, and after twelve clear strokes. To achieve this the stage lighting should start to dim at the first of the twelve strokes. Behind the clock there must be a panel of the backdrop, on a frame of lathes, which is removable. It must be bigger than the clock by a couple of inches all around. When the lights start dimming, that is at the first stroke of twelve, the removable portion is taken out and the clock starts to slowly fade into the wall in the dimming light. When it is through the backdrop, the removable panel is replaced. Loud, slow strokes should cover up any scuffling and give the stage hands time to effect this change. When the clock has gone, the lights come up again.

To avoid having the line of the edge of the removable panel show against the backdrop, the backdrop should have a patterning of vertical lines--wood boards, for instance--with the outline of the removable panel corresponding to the edge of the boards. But wall paper with a vertical stripe through it would serve. The panel of course is out of place in the last scene of Act I when Washington and the others enter the clock to make their journey from eternity to time.

If the clock is stood a little away from the backdrop, the fact that there is an empty space behind it, will hardly be noticeable.

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# ACT ONE

## Scene One

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Let the curtain be down and from the wings let VOLTAIRE appear. Not an old Voltaire but a middle-aged Voltaire, and let him have a certain air of the gallant about him. He should have a large staff, at least shoulder high, with an ornate knob. His dress should approximate that of the middle 18th century--a full wig, curled; an embroidered waistcoat, satin breeches are suggested. Voltaire is a Frenchman. He has fire, self-possession, polish and pride. In short, he grew up in an age before the social scientists had reduced all men to worm meal, the better to process humanity in large blocks, which I think is their next step.

VOLTAIRE, in a spotlight, walks to the middle of the stage before the curtain and gives an elaborate court bow, with a suggestion of mockery in it. He looks about at the audience and says:)

VOLTAIRE. *Mesdames, Messieurs.* A small play for your entertainment. A mere nothing--concerned with kings and presidents, time and eternity, love and pain, good and evil. In short, a trifle. If it amuses you, I have my reward. If it causes you to think--I crave your pardon. *Alors*, let us commence. (He moves to the wings and thumps his staff hard twice upon the stage. The curtain is raised. VOLTAIRE exits.)

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# ACT ONE

## Scene Two

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AT RISE OF CURTAIN: An office in the White House of the United States. On a desk LC are several telephones and a talk box. There are bookcases along the walls, a couple of semi-easy chairs and a chair behind the desk. In the back wall there is a door UC, with a picture of the President of the United States to the left and a picture of George Washington to the right of it. In the office is a TV CAMERAMAN standing on a little ladder arranging his equipment, and a number of REPORTERS--all girls, for they are writers for the social pages of their newspapers and magazines. There can be as many as desired but four is a minimum. Some are seated in chairs, and if a great number are used, others could stand. The more crowded the stage, of course, the greater the sense of excitement. The desk is clearly in view of the audience, and nobody is seated here at the rise of the curtain. Instead, there is a hum of talk above which we can hear the following.)

CAMERAMAN, Lady, would you watch your feet, please? You must have unplugged the Central

States.

REPORTER #1. She's from the *New Yorker*.

They do that all the time.

REPORTER #2. I wonder how long this will last.

I have a luncheon appointment.

REPORTER #3. Reception at the Carpathian Embassy. The ambassador's twin daughters-- they're just heavenly . . .

REPORTER #4. Why do they never have twin sons?

REPORTER #2 (vehemently). This town is a sort of collecting place for the middle-aged, married and barren. There's more excitement and verve at the Twin Oaks Union High School sophomore dance--the band is better, too.

CAMERAMAN. Lady, would you watch your feet, please. . . .

REPORTER #5. Twin Oaks. Are you really from Twin Oaks? What year?

CAMERAMAN. Lady . . . the camera. . . .

(There is a "hushing" from the various others; the door UC opens and in comes JUDY MEADOWS, Social Secretary at the White House. She is a very smartly dressed, very attractive young lady. She carries a piece of paper. She goes to the desk, stands at it and says in a friendly and yet slightly formal manner:)

JUDY. Good morning, ladies.

OTHERS. Good morning, Miss Meadows.

JUDY (glancing expertly at the cameraman and the interviewers). Everything all right, Joe?

CAMERAMAN (looking through the camera at her).

Yeah. Fine. Just lean forward a little. Good. Thank you.

JUDY. I'm going to read a short statement, which

can be attributed as a direct quote to the President, and then I will answer any questions. The statement is this: (She reads from her paper.) "To encourage the fitting celebration of the Independence of our Great Nation, the President and his family will attend divine service at the Episcopal Church in Georgetown on the morning of July 4, 1776, and will give a garden party, open to the public, on the White House lawn in the afternoon, where the President hopes to meet as many as he can of his fellow citizens. In the evening, a fancy dress ball will be given at the White House to which heads of states and members of the diplomatic corps will be invited. It is the President's wish that guests will dress in the style of 1776, and the banquet preceding the ball will include dishes and wines from those times. The President thinks it would be fitting if similar balls were arranged elsewhere throughout the nation. At midnight, the President himself will read the Declaration of our Independence on nationwide television, that we may all rededicate ourselves to the ideals of our nation." (Pause.) That's the end of the prepared statement. Are there any questions?

REPORTER #1. What about the British? Will they be asked?

JUDY. The statement says, "all heads of states"--without exception. So I suppose an invitation would be sent to the British.

REPORTER #1. To the Queen?

JUDY. The Queen is a head of state.

REPORTER #2. Supposing she says no--after all it isn't something for them to celebrate.

JUDY. Well, I don't suppose that would start Lexington, Concord, and Bunker Hill all over



again. (Pause.) Historic dress will not be obligatory--just desirable. Those who do not wish to dress in the costume of the period will not be obliged to do so.

REPORTER #3. What about the police and Secret Service?

JUDY. Well, of course they'll be in costume. There will also be an honor guard dressed in Continental uniforms and armed with muskets. If there are no more questions, I think we can close the conference.

REPORTER #4. Whose idea was this really--the President's?

JUDY. That I can't say. It just is an idea that several people seem to have thought of, and it was discussed in committee and agreed by the President.

REPORTER #1. Will the President be dressed as George Washington?

JUDY. That's possible.

REPORTER #2. Has he definitely decided to appear as George Washington?

JUDY. I can't say. I can only say that it is possible that he might. Well, I think that's everything . . . (They all exit UC--the cameraman pleading for people to watch their feet. One woman reporter remains when the rest have left, and JUDY, busy at her desk, discovers her and looks up, not unkindly. They are old friends.) Something else, Mary? I can't talk officially unless the others are here.

MARY. Yes. That clock. The wonderful old grandfather clock that used to stand in the corner there. Where has it gone?

JUDY. Oh. It hasn't worked for years, you know. It is supposed to have belonged to Washington, and it was sent to a clockmaker to see whether

he could get it to work. For the bi-centenary. It was thought it would be nice if they could get it to chime midnight of July 4, 1976.

MARY. That's interesting. What was the name of the clockmaker?

JUDY. Well, since you've been astute enough to notice it was gone, I suppose I can tell you. (Opens a small book on her desk, riffles the pages and says:) Here it is. S. Seculorum, 3333 Circle Street--seems to be an Italian.

MARY (writing the address down). Thanks. Might make a little feature. We're always on the lookout for stuff about restoring antiques.

JUDY. Well, if Mr. S. Seculorum can repair that clock, it will be close to a miracle, for it hasn't worked in years. Still, it seemed worth trying.

(MARY exits UC. There is a knock and TOM CZEULEGER enters UC. He is a good-looking man a little older than Judy, athletic and brisk. He's in the Treasury Department, Secret Service, and is one of the officers on duty at the White House.)

TOM. Morning, miss. Secret Service. We're making a survey. Security, you know. (He produces a wallet with his badge and then says:) May I see your ID, miss.

JUDY. Tom, don't be ridiculous.

TOM (severely). Your identity. (A little huffily JUDY opens her handbag and produces a plastic ID card. TOM examines it and reads aloud:) "Judy Meadows: Height, 5 ft. 4." (Looks her over.) "Blue eyes." (Looks at them.) "I'd say there was a touch of violet myself. "Hair, fair. Weight, one hundred and four pounds.

No. 100/Rdf/007." Double o seven? If you were in Britain and in the Secret Service that would mean that you could use a gun. (Hands the card back to her.)

JUDY (taking card and putting it away). I can. And if you don't get out of here I may be tempted to. What are you doing here anyway?

TOM. You're the White House Social Secretary?

JUDY. You know perfectly well I am.

TOM. I'm in need of a little social help.

JUDY. Try writing to Dear Abby. . . .

TOM. They probably screen my mail. I'm desperate.

JUDY. What is the matter with you?

TOM. What about a date? One tiny little date? Two drinks . . . uh . . . and a dinner at a little place I know in Georgetown. I'll get you home by midnight, on my Boy Scout's oath.

JUDY. For the tenth time this month--no.

TOM. Why? If you don't tell me why, I'll kill myself. Right here in your office. Only call an ambulance first.

JUDY (a little amused). Because, Mr. Tom Czeuleger, I make it an inviolable rule not to have any dates with members of the White House staff.

TOM. You mean if the President called you--well, of course he's married . . . if the Vice President . . . he's married too. How about the Press Secretary . . . he's married, as well. Baby, don't you see what I'm leading up to? You're trapped. I'm the only eligible bachelor in this whole place. And don't tell me that you're going to be disloyal to the White House and pick up a boy friend in some crummy joint like the State Department?

JUDY. You've had your answer.

TOM. I've always made it a rule to take no notice of snap decisions. (Turns to leave UC but hesitates at the door.) Hey. What happened to that old coffin with the clock face on it you used to have in the corner?

JUDY. I suppose you mean Mr. Washington's clock. It's being repaired.

TOM (seriously). That's something you should have told us about. We're supposed to know who repairs anything in the White House and examine it before it is returned. Particularly a clock.

JUDY. Well, it slipped my mind.

TOM. I ought to put that on your dossier. . . .  
How about that date?

JUDY. That's blackmail.

TOM. No. Extortion. For blackmail you have to write a letter.

JUDY. Very well. You can be my escort on the night of the President's ball.

TOM. Great date. I'll be on duty that night, dressed as a Pennsylvania rifleman, snooping about here and there and listening for bombs ticking.

JUDY. Good. I'll wear an alarm clock so as to give you something to do. Good-bye.

TOM. You'll have to tell me who you sent the clock to. I'll have to check on him. It's important.

JUDY. Oh, all right. It went to S. Seculorum, 3333 Circle Drive. Good-bye. And don't hurry back.

CURTAIN

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# ACT ONE

## Scene Three

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SCENE: A gentlemen's clubroom in Heaven. It is comfortably furnished in what might suggest Edwardian club style--good deep leather chairs RC and LC. Next to the chairs, big tables for papers, a cup of tea, a glass of brandy, some snuff, or whatever a gentleman might wish; a fireplace UC; an easy chair URC; an easy chair and a large grandfather clock that doesn't work, ULC. The fireplace should give the impression of being lighted. The room should convey an air of comfort and substance. There are doors R and L.)

AT RISE OF CURTAIN: VOLTAIRE walks to one of the big tables, lays his staff down on a chair, picks up a magazine--and starts leafing through it. There is a box of candy on the table also. By the fireplace GEORGE III, rotund and beefy, is bending down to light a spill for his pipe--a clay churchwarden.)

VOLTAIRE (singing softly).

Au clair de la lune,  
Mon ami Pierrot, Pierrot . . .  
Prétez moi ta plume  
Pour écrire un mot.

Ma chandelle est morte  
Je nai pas de feu

Ouvrez moi ta porte

Pour l'amour de Dieu . . .

GEORGE III. Never could understand what that thing means. French nonsense. "My candle is dead. I have no fire. Open the door, for the love of God!" What kind of raving is that?

(VOLTAIRE puts down the magazine, takes a pinch of snuff with great elegance, and is about to reply when a very pretty angel [CECILE] enters R, carrying a tray with a glass of wine. She is a simple angel, with tiny wings on her shoulders, and she is dressed in quite a mini dress [not vulgar, however--there is nothing vulgar in heaven]. VOLTAIRE, with a pinch of snuff held delicately to his nostrils, eyes her with admiration, and even GEORGE III gives her an appreciative look.)

VOLTAIRE (speaking like Maurice Chevalier).

Charming. What is your name, *cherie*?

CECILE (putting the tray down on a table). Cecile, dear brother.

VOLTAIRE. Cecile. It's entrancing. I could not think of anything more perfect. It suits you like a flower.

CECILE. I am glad that you like it, dear brother.

VOLTAIRE. "Dear brother." What a depressing relationship. Couldn't it be . . . er . . . something else?

CECILE (shocked). Oh, no, dear brother. We are all brothers and sisters in Heaven.

VOLTAIRE. It's a pity, you know--a pity. Oh, not that I would go against the will of the Lord. But just the tiniest bit of temptation--just a *souçon*--the merest trifle--it adds such a spice to sanctity. . . .