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*Dramatic Publishing*



A PLAY IN THREE ACTS

# A Man Called Peter

DRAMATIZED BY

JOHN MCGREEVEY

FROM THE BOOK BY

CATHERINE MARSHALL



THE DRAMATIC PUBLISHING COMPANY



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*Directors write us about*  
**A MAN CALLED PETER**

"We received *many* compliments."—Mildred Rutledge, Alton, Ill.

"This was undoubtedly our best Senior play in twenty years. The theme was excellent. We felt we were doing something really worthwhile."—Wilbur Hall, Findlay, Ohio.

"The class loved the deep meaning of the words. . . . Quiet enough to hear a pin drop."—Gladys R. Vincent, Bristol, W. Va.

"Class plays have not been as popular as athletic events, but this year 'A Man Called Peter' had the largest audience ever in Sioux Center history."—Elizabeth Plummer, Sioux Center, Iowa.

"Loud and long cheering at the end."—Dorothy E. Knight, Upland, Ind.

"Complete sellouts each night."—Pearl B. Long, Arlington, Va.

"Our attendance was the largest to date. . . . The audience was extremely enthusiastic."—Jack L. Proctor, Toronto, Ont., Canada.

"Largest crowd and the most favorable comments."—Augusta Boatright, Van Buren, Ark.

"I feel that 'A Man Called Peter' has been the most gratifying production I have ever directed. Everyone associated with the play felt the significance of the play. Several cast members have asked for a sequel. It has been a most successful production—the play with that 'something extra.'" —Donald R. Pennington, Greenville, Ill.

*Directors write us about*  
**A MAN CALLED PETER**

"When the curtain closed on 'A Man Called Peter,' first-nighters expressed their feelings toward the première with a standing ovation. . . . It had the rare combination of humor with a sincere message—that of faith in God and unselfish Christian charity."—*The Spectator*, River Forest, Ill.

"Too many praises cannot be given to a play of this kind. The audience gave tremendous ovations."—Mrs. B. L. Bailey, Alcorn A. & M. College, Lorman, Miss.

"It would be impossible to tell you all the wonderful things that have come about because we did the play, 'A Man Called Peter.' Everyone who saw it was more than pleased; it seemed to give everyone a lift, and that included the cast and all who worked on the play. We have a small auditorium, but it was filled to capacity every night."—Mount Vernon Players, Washington, D. C.

"I feel the very title itself, 'A Man Called Peter,' sold the play. Ticket sales boomed from the time they began until they ended. Reserved seats for both nights were sold out almost as soon as word leaked out they were on sale."—Doris Schumann, Bethany, Okla.

"We enjoyed this as much as 'The Robe.' I feel these are two of the best plays we have ever produced. I have been doing two productions a year for twenty years."—Miss F. Barnard, Ft. Worth, Texas.

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# A Man Called Peter

*A Play in Three Acts*

FOR SEVEN MEN AND EIGHT WOMEN

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## CHARACTERS

PETER MARSHALL.....	<i>a dedicated young minister</i>
CATHERINE MARSHALL.....	<i>his wife</i>
PETER JOHN MARSHALL.....	<i>their small son</i>
ALLAN TALBOT.....	<i>a sensitive young man</i>
JUDITH BICKLE.....	<i>his maiden aunt</i>
JESSE BICKLE.....	<i>Judith's sister</i>
SUSAN GRANT.....	<i>a confused young woman</i>
MARIAN GRANT.....	<i>her mother</i>
STEVEN GRANT.....	<i>Susan's father</i>
GEORGE YOST.....	<i>engaged to Susan</i>
JOE KEATING.....	<i>an underprivileged boy</i>
SENATOR JAMES KNOX POLK.....	<i>of the U. S. Senate</i>
NANCY EVERETTS.....	<i>a high school senior</i>
BARBARA LOGAN.....	<i>another senior</i>
HULDA.....	<i>an inefficient housekeeper</i>

PLACE: *The living-room of The Manse, the Marshalls' pastoral residence in Washington, D.C.*

TIME: *The present.*

## SYNOPSIS

ACT ONE, *Scene One: A September evening.*

ACT ONE, *Scene Two: An afternoon, six weeks later.*

ACT TWO, *Scene One: A Sunday morning, a month later.*

ACT TWO, *Scene Two: An evening, a week later.*

ACT THREE: *The following Easter Sunday.*

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## NOTES ON CHARACTERS AND COSTUMES

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**PETER MARSHALL:** He is a vigorous, youthful man in his late thirties. His smile is infectious and he speaks with a trace of a Scottish burr. Throughout the play he wears conservative business suits. In Act Three he may wear a lounging robe over trousers and shirt, and bedroom slippers.

**CATHERINE:** She is a darkly pretty woman in her late twenties. Whenever she chides Peter it is done in a spirit of affectionate humor, never sharp or caustic. She dresses simply but in good taste. She wears a robe and slippers in Scene Two of Act One.

**PETER JOHN:** He is a handsome little boy of five, alert and affectionate. In Act Two, Scene Two, he wears pajamas and a robe; otherwise, he wears clothes suitable to a boy his age.

**ALLAN:** He is a handsome, rather sensitive boy of nineteen. His manner, at first, is rather nervous and preoccupied. He wears an army uniform in Scene Two of Act Two, and sports clothes the rest of the time.

**JUDITH and JESSE:** The Bickle sisters are maiden ladies in their fifties. Judith is tight-lipped and grim. She sees herself as the arbiter of tradition for the New York Avenue church. Her sister Jesse is a milder, less decisive edition. She inclines to congeniality, but Judith keeps her in line. Both sisters dress very severely, in an old-fashioned manner.

**SUSAN:** She is twenty, a pretty girl but rather withdrawn. When she makes her entrance in Act One, Scene Two, she wears a coat over her dress or suit. She wears a starched apron over her dress in Scene One of Act Two. In the other scenes she wears simple but attractive dresses.

**MARIAN:** She is a very attractive woman in her late thirties. Her manner is crisp and authoritative. She has all the earmarks of the successful career woman. However, in Act Three, there is a decided change in her. Somehow, she seems prettier, softer.

The brusque, businesslike manner has been replaced by a becoming femininity. Her taste in clothes is excellent—and expensive. In her early appearances her clothes are smart and sophisticated. In Act Three, she wears a simpler, more feminine, outfit.

**STEVEN:** Steven is a mild-mannered man in his forties, who seems defeated by life. His manner is shy and apologetic toward Susan, as if he were ashamed of himself. In Act Three he is less reticent, more self-confident and happier. On his first appearance, his clothes are neat but old. He wears a new suit in Act Three.

**GEORGE:** He is a serious-minded young man in his early twenties. He is quiet but pleasant and likable. He wears nice-looking suits throughout the play.

**JOE:** Joe is a rather small boy of sixteen. His hair, at first, is long and shaggy. His face is thin and intense, and his clothing has a hand-me-down look. There is a decided change in Joe in Act Three. He wears a neat-looking suit, is well-groomed, and his manner is confident and relaxed.

**SENATOR:** He is a handsome man in his late fifties. He has a rolling, resonant voice and a shock of snow-white hair. He dresses in impeccable taste.

**NANCY:** Nancy is a very vivacious, attractive girl in her teens. She wears typical teen-age clothes throughout the play.

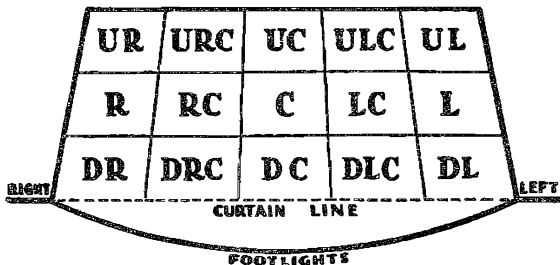
**BARBARA:** Barbara is a dreamy-eyed girl, also in her teens. She is Nancy's opposite in coloring, and she, too, wears typical teen-age clothes.

**HULDA:** Hulda is a large, untidy person. She wears a soiled maid's uniform, with sneakers on her feet. She usually has a kitchen match between her teeth, which she uses with gusto to clean her teeth. Later in the scene she comes in wearing a hat and a loose, baggy coat.



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## CHART OF STAGE POSITIONS

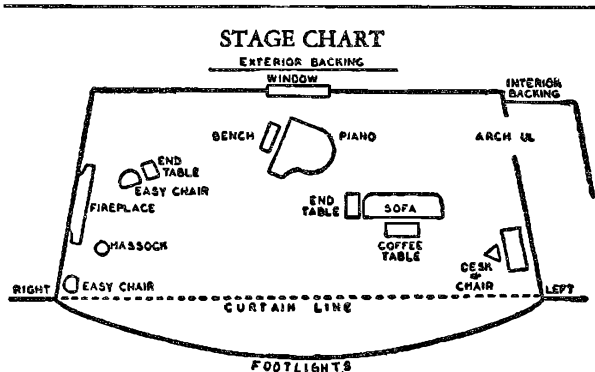


### STAGE POSITIONS

*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: U R for *up right*, R C for *right center*, D L C for *down left center*, etc. One will note that a position designated on the stage refers to a general territory, 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.



### PROPERTIES

**GENERAL:** Draw drapes on bay window; fireplace accessories; desk and chair; telephone, desk pad and other accessories on desk; sofa and sofa pillows; coffee table; end table and lamp right of sofa; baby grand piano and bench; sheet music on piano; wing chair with end table and lamp left of it; hassock near fireplace; easy chair D R; books in bookcases; framed seascape over fireplace; other smaller sea pictures on walls; clocks on mantel, piano, desk, end tables and walls; tea service on tray on coffee table and plate with one or two slices of cake; teacups and cake plates here and there about the room; tea cloth on tray (Act One, Scene One); pillows, quilt, writing materials, fountain pen, books, box of candy and dish of fruit on and near sofa group; crumpled newspapers and toys scattered about room (Act One, Scene Two); afghan; toy on sofa; book and small handbell on end table by wing chair (Act Three).

**JUDITH:** Cards in purse, small clock (wrapped), handkerchief.

**JESSE:** Bouquet, handkerchief.

**CATHERINE:** Vase for flowers brought by Jesse.

**HULDA:** Kitchen match, shopping bag.

**PETER:** Box of soda, glass of water and spoon.

**SUSAN:** Overnight bag.

**JOE:** Battered wallet.

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**NANCY:** Book.

**BARBARA:** Bouquet of flowers.

**SENATOR:** Bundle of newspapers.

### PRODUCTION NOTE

Nothing adds more to the polish of a production than the quick picking up of cues. Unless there is a definite reason for a pause, train your actors to come in with their speeches "on the heels," so to speak, of the preceding speeches. When a production lags, audience interest likewise will lag.

It is always advisable during the last week of rehearsals to hold one or more sessions during which the actors merely sit around in a circle and go through lines only with the express purpose of snapping up cues.

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# ACT ONE

## Scene One

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**SCENE:** *The pleasant living-room of The Manse, the Marshalls' pastoral residence in Washington, D.C. The room is large and airy, with the high ceiling that tells us this is an old house. In the L wall, upstage, is an arch leading to the front hall and the hall to the dining-room, kitchen and stairs to the second story. The exterior entrance is to the left as you go through this arch; the stairs and the rest of the house to the right. In the rear wall of the room, directly U C, is a large bay or picture window hung with drapes. In the R wall of the room is a fireplace. In color, the room is a blend of blues—Peter Marshall's favorite color. The furniture is comfortable-looking—a tasteful mixture of new and old. There is a small desk D L with a chair in front of it. On the desk, among other things, is a telephone. At L C stage, facing the audience, is a sofa. There is a coffee table in front of it and an end table with a lamp right of it. In front of the window is a baby grand piano, with a bench in front of it. Near the fireplace is a comfortable wing chair, with an end table and lamp left of it. A hassock is near the fireplace, by the downstage end of it. Another easy chair is D R. Bookcases flank the window. Over the fireplace is a huge, framed reproduction of a very turbulent seascape (Winslow Homer's "Nor'easter" is suggested). There are other, smaller sea pictures on the other walls. The room is also loaded with clocks—on the mantel, piano, desk, end tables—as well as hanging on the walls. There are at least a dozen of all shapes and sizes. Clock collecting is a hobby of Peter Marshall's. The room is bright, alive, happy in its feeling.]*

**AT RISE OF CURTAIN:** *Just before the curtain rises, we hear the piano and voices. They are singing "Roamin' in the Gloamin'." As the song nears its conclusion, the curtain rises.*

PETER MARSHALL *stands beside the piano, singing lustily.* CATHERINE MARSHALL *sits on the sofa. She's singing, too, though with less gusto than her husband. Tea service is on a tray on the coffee table in front of her, and here and there about the room are teacups and cake plates used by the young people.* BARBARA LOGAN *plays the piano. Standing near her is NANCY EVERETTS. JOE KEATING and ALLAN TALBOT are standing near PETER. SUSAN GRANT is seated in the chair R, near the fireplace. Standing right of SUSAN is GEORGE YOST. As the song is finished, PETER and the young people applaud happily.*]

PETER [*rubbing his hands together in satisfaction*]. Grand! Pure Scottish pleasure! [*Moves down toward sofa.*] Wasn't it grand, Kate?

CATHERINE [*smiling up at him*]. It was wonderful, dear.

ALLAN. I hope we weren't too loud, Mrs. Marshall.

CATHERINE [*laughing, handing PETER a teacup*]. Not loud, Allan. Exuberant.

PETER [*accepting tea*]. What's the point in singing at all if you have to sing quietly? [*Turns to young people.*] I thought it had a grand lilt and I'm nominating all of you Honorary Highlanders! [*Young people laugh and exclaim.*]

BARBARA [*still at piano*]. What next, Dr. Marshall? "Hail, Caledonia" or, maybe, "The Road to the Isles"?

CATHERINE [*lightly*]. Or, "Sweet and Low"? Remember, I have a little boy upstairs who's trying to sleep!

NANCY [*cheerfully*]. Singers, let's rest on our laurels.

BARBARA. It is a little late. We should be leaving.

CATHERINE. Now, don't rush off like that. Who'll have some more tea?

JOE [*moving to left end of sofa*]. I'd like a little more, Mrs. Marshall. [*Holds out cup.*]

CATHERINE [*taking his cup*]. Fine, Joe. And what about another piece of cake?

JOE [*hesitating*]. Well—I've already had two.

PETER [*gaily*]. Three's the charm, Joe. Eat up. [*JOE takes his tea and cake and moves D L, sitting at desk. CATHERINE watches him with sympathy and concern.*]

NANCY [*moving from piano to sofa*]. I'll have some more tea, please. [*Sits right of CATHERINE, as she gives CATHERINE her cup.*]

PETER. You've earned a second cup, Nancy. You sang like a true lassie.

NANCY. It's easy to sing when you lead us, Dr. Marshall. [*Accepts tea from CATHERINE.*]

PETER [*moving toward SUSAN and GEORGE*]. And what about you two? Will you have more tea and cake, or are you living on a diet of love alone these days? [*SUSAN looks embarrassed and GEORGE grins.*]

CATHERINE. Peter!

PETER. Well, Kate—they *are* engaged, and engaged people have been known to live on love. Or is that an old-fashioned notion, George?

GEORGE [*looking down at SUSAN*]. I don't think so, sir.

PETER. And what about you, Susan? You've been as quiet as a mouse all evening. A *church* mouse, that is.

SUSAN. I—I just haven't anything to say.

PETER [*grinning and slapping GEORGE on shoulder*]. You're getting a rare woman for a wife, George! The speechless variety!

CATHERINE. Don't let them badger you, Susan. Come have more tea.

SUSAN. Thank you, Mrs. Marshall. [*SUSAN starts to rise. PETER has moved up toward ALLAN. GEORGE intercepts SUSAN.*]

GEORGE. I'll get the tea for you, Sue.

SUSAN [*shrugging off GEORGE's hand*]. Never mind. I'll go. [*Crosses quickly to sofa and sits left of CATHERINE. GEORGE looks after her and shakes his head in bewilderment as he turns toward fireplace.*]

PETER [*to ALLAN*]. Lost in meditation, Allan?

ALLAN [*laughing*]. No, sir! I was thinking how different these meetings are now. I mean—since you're the pastor at New York Avenue.

PETER [*mock-serious*]. You mean noisier?

ALLAN. Oh, no, sir! I mean . . . well . . .

NANCY. He means, now they're fun.

ALLAN. That's right, Nancy.

PETER. Had a hard time saying the word "fun," didn't you?

ALLAN. Yes, sir.

PETER. Because it's still not easy for you to associate fun with a church meeting.

ALLAN. I guess that's it, sir. You know my aunts—

PETER. Indeed, I do! Miss Judith and Miss Jesse! [*Moves past ALLAN and down to left end of sofa.*] Well, I'm glad you're having fun, because I am, too.

BARBARA [*rising*]. It's been so wonderful, Dr. Marshall. [*Comes to PETER'S side and looks up at him in rapt hero-worship.*] The change you've made!

PETER [*a little uncomfortable, aware of CATHERINE'S mischievous grin*]. It's no special change I've made, Barbara.

BARBARA. Oh, it is! Why, do you know how many there were in our young people's group before you came? Twelve!

ALLAN. Now we have over two hundred.

PETER. Still, it's not been all my doing. You've all worked hard.

NANCY. Sure—because you made us want to work. Why, till you came, I wouldn't have thought of belonging to this bunch.

ALLAN. We never did anything but sit and look solemn. I belonged just because my aunts had belonged when *they* were young.

BARBARA. Oh, it was dreadful! And then you came, Dr. Marshall!

GEORGE. Now, New York Avenue's known as a young people's church.

PETER [*clearing his throat*]. So I've been told. But I can't take credit for—

JOE [*rising, bursting in with great intensity*]. You should, Dr. Marshall! [*Everyone looks toward him.*] The reason we come

is because you treat us as if we had some sense. You're not always telling us what we do *wrong*, what's *bad* about us. You tell us what's *right*, what's *good*. [*Suddenly aware of the others' stares.*] Maybe if there were more people like you, kids wouldn't feel so desperate. Maybe we could sit down and talk things out. [*His voice trails away and he sits abruptly.*] I—I just wanted to say I thought you *should* take credit. [*Pause, and then others agree enthusiastically.*]

PETER [*touched by JOE's words, taking step toward him.*] Thank you, Joe. It's good to know your feelings. [*Pauses a moment. BARBARA perches on left arm of sofa.*] Not everyone's as exuberant—[*Grins at CATHERINE.*]—about my work as you are. But if you enjoy worshipping God, I'm glad. That's the way I feel it must be. Why can't we serve Him with a smile and a song as well as with a sigh? [*Offers CATHERINE his tea cup.*] And I've talked myself dry, Kate. [*SUSAN takes PETER's cup and holds it while CATHERINE pours.*]

CATHERINE. I think that evenings like this are good for all of us. ALLAN [*coming c.*]. We still haven't decided what to do about the Youth Room.

NANCY. Before we go back to that, Dr. Marshall, I'd like to ask a favor.

PETER. Ask, Nancy.

NANCY [*clearing her throat*]. Well, my high school has quite a reputation in Washington for being tough.

BARBARA. Tough! Goodness, I'd be scared to go there.

NANCY. Lots of kids feel that way. In fact, it's gotten so bad that this year we can't get speakers for our assemblies.

PETER [*accepting his fresh cup of tea*]. You mean the speakers are afraid of the students?

NANCY. That's right, Dr. Marshall. The kids are terrible. I've seen them drive a speaker off the stage—booing, stamping, throwing things.

CATHERINE. It sounds awful.

PETER. What's the favor you wanted to ask, Nancy?



NANCY. Well, I'm on the Senior Assembly Committee and we thought that maybe if, just once, the students could hear someone like you . . .

PETER [*moving R C, sipping his tea*]. I see. [*Stops and faces sofa with a grin.*] You want to play Nero.

NANCY. Nero?

PETER. Throwing a Christian to the lions.

CATHERINE [*making valiant try*]. We've got such a full schedule.

NANCY. I know.

CATHERINE [*watching PETER*]. Dr. Marshall would like to say "yes," Nancy, but he has so many engagements, and there's been criticism of his speaking so often outside the church.

NANCY [*fighting her disappointment*]. I understand. But I had to ask.

CATHERINE [*looking toward PETER, expecting an argument, not trusting her easy victory*]. We hate to disappoint you, but we must draw the line somewhere. Isn't that true, dear?

PETER. Oh, yes, Kate! Yes, indeed. [*Moves toward right end of sofa.*] Mrs. Marshall is one hundred per cent 'right. That's a failing of hers. [*Young people smile.*] I am over-booked. I have been criticized for outside speaking. I should draw the line.

NANCY. It's all right, Dr. Marshall.

PETER [*raising a warning finger*]. But—I must be very, very careful where I draw that line. [*Grins.*] I might want to step across it one day.

CATHERINE. Peter!

PETER [*to NANCY*]. When was it you wanted me to speak?

NANCY. Oh, Dr. Marshall! Are you sure?

PETER. I'm sure. It's only my poor wife who has her doubts.

NANCY. Well, to give you plenty of time, we have an assembly scheduled for November tenth—that's a Friday afternoon—at two.

PETER. Six weeks off! I'll be there.

NANCY. Be prepared for the worst. They shoot paper-wads, use pea-shooters, throw pennies.

PETER [*banding NANCY his cup, grinning*]. All contributions will be gratefully accepted. As for the pea-shooters, I may come armed, myself. [*To CATHERINE, teasing*]. You draw a grand line, Mrs. Marshall, but you'll forgive me for pretending it wasn't there this once.

CATHERINE [*resignedly beginning to stack dishes*]. This once.

PETER [*moving C, clapping his hands together*]. Now—on with the business of this meeting.

ALLAN [*on PETER'S right*]. We come back to the same problem, sir. The Youth Room.

GEORGE [*still at fireplace*]. When there were only a dozen kids, that old room was all right.

BARBARA. But now it's impossible.

NANCY. We wouldn't need much money to fix it up if we did all the work ourselves. Surely the trustees—

PETER. The trustees are enthusiastically in favor of improving the room—as long as it doesn't cost any money.

JOE. How much would we need?

GEORGE. We could do a lot with a hundred dollars.

CATHERINE. Why doesn't the group sponsor some fund-raising activities?

SUSAN. Like a bake-sale, Mrs. Marshall?

CATHERINE. That's a possibility.

BARBARA. We might give a concert. Dr. Marshall could sing Scotch songs.

PETER [*laughing*]. A bonnie notion, but I've got a better idea.

JOE. What is it?

PETER. Let the young people put on a play.

NANCY. A play!

CATHERINE. That's a very good idea, dear. [*Everyone exclaims excitedly. PETER'S enthusiasm for project grows. He paces U C and back excitedly.*]

PETER. It's a great deal of work, but it can be very satisfying.

BARBARA. Have you ever acted, Dr. Marshall?

CATHERINE [*smiling*]. Oh, indeed he has! He was a sensation in Atlanta.

ALLAN. Would you help us, sir?

PETER. As much as I can. You'd have to choose a play.

NANCY. What play were *you* in, Dr. Marshall?

PETER. I forgot the name, but it was a grand success. I played an Arab sheik.

BARBARA. An Arab sheik! Oh, you must have been wonderful!

CATHERINE [*smiling*]. The first Arab in the history of the theater with a Scotch burr.

PETER [*recalling experience with zest*]. I was persuaded to take the role.

CATHERINE. You can imagine how difficult that was.

PETER. This was before my marriage, and there were no lines drawn for me.

CATHERINE. Oh, yes! He was much, much freer!

BARBARA. I can just picture you in an Arab costume, Dr. Marshall.

PETER. It was dashing. We worked very hard to be authentic.

[*Moves to coffee table and picks up a small tea cloth there as doorbell rings. CATHERINE rises and moves toward arch.*

PETER moves R C with cloth. ALLAN laughs, moves U C and sits on piano bench.]

CATHERINE. Excuse me.

SUSAN. That may be my mother, Mrs. Marshall.

GEORGE [*surprised*]. Your mother? [CATHERINE nods and goes out U L.]

BARBARA [*rising, moving to PETER*]. Do you remember any of your lines, Dr. Marshall?

PETER [*putting tea cloth over his head and holding it tightly like an Arab headdress*]. Let me see. Maybe if I got into the spirit . . .

NANCY. Golly! You really *look* like an Arab!

PETER [*to BARBARA*]. You be Mignon. She was the heroine.

BARBARA [*breathlessly*]. Mignon! What a romantic name!

[*From offstage U L there is a murmur of voices.*]

PETER [*moving past BARBARA, toward sofa, so that he is between her and arch*]. Now—Mignon is alone. Suddenly, I appear, and you say: "Are you a genie?"

BARBARA. "Are you a genie?" All right.

PETER [*stepping a little away, getting into mood and abruptly whirling on BARBARA, who is so taken aback that she gasps, speechless.*] Your line. Give your line!

BARBARA [*recovering*]. "Are—are you a genie?"

PETER [*with a grand flourish*]. "No, Madame! I am an Ar-r-r-ab!"

[CATHERINE has appeared U L with JESSE and JUDITH BICKLE. The two ladies stand in shocked disapproval at the sight of PETER with a tea cloth over his head. CATHERINE is frantic.]

CATHERINE. Peter, dear—a very pleasant surprise.

PETER [*his back to her, oblivious*]. Not now, Kate. Can't you see I'm an Ar-r-r-ab! [BARBARA is aware of audience and tries to signal, but PETER is immersed in his role.] "I am Ali, Prince of the House of Hashin, descendant of Ali, the son of Fatima, the daughter of Kadijah, the first and beloved wife of the Prophet Mohammed!"

BARBARA [*petrified*]. P-please, D-Dr. M-Marshall!

PETER [*sternly*]. Stay in character! You're Mignon. I'm Ali. There's no one else here. That's very important.

CATHERINE. Peter . . .

PETER [*to BARBARA*]. "I have come to take you away!" [*Turns dramatically, arm raised in an eloquent gesture.*] "Away . . ." [*Finds himself pointing into set faces of JUDITH and JESSE. He's frozen for a second. Then he swallows hard.*] ". . . far, far away!" [*Takes tea cloth off his head.*] Miss Bickle, and Miss Bickle.

JUDITH. Doctor Marshall. [JOE, NANCY and SUSAN rise.]

CATHERINE. Won't you come in?

JUDITH. We seem to be interrupting.

ALLAN [*who has risen*]. Dr. Marshall was showing us a scene from a play, Aunt Judith.

PETER. The young people thought they might try to put on a play to raise funds for redecorating the Youth Room.

JUDITH. I believe it was made clear at the last meeting of the trustees that the church has more immediate problems than redecorating the Youth Room.

ALLAN [*coming c*]. But if we raise the money ourselves——

JUDITH. Allan! I came here to speak with Dr. Marshall.

ALLAN. Yes, Aunt Judith.

JESSE [*fluttering*]. Of course, if we're intruding . . . [PETER moves U L and brings JUDITH and JESSE to c stage. BARBARA moves R, to GEORGE. CATHERINE comes to sofa.]

PETER. Oh, no, Miss Bickle! We are delighted to see you.

JUDITH. That was obvious!

CATHERINE [*picking up plates and cups from coffee table*]. The meeting was just breaking up.

JESSE. We really shouldn't have dropped in at this hour.

JUDITH [*pointedly*]. But it's so difficult to catch Dr. Marshall in, these days—with all his *outside* interests. [*There is a dead pause. Then NANCY starts toward arch.*]

NANCY. Well, I think the idea of putting on a play is just perfect.

GEORGE. We'll present it to the whole group at our next meeting.

BARBARA [*joining NANCY in arch*]. Good night, Dr. Marshall—Mrs. Marshall.

PETER. Good night.

NANCY [*as BARBARA goes out U L*]. I'll tell the kids at school we can count on you, Dr. Marshall.

PETER. I'll be on hand, Nancy. Meanwhile, I'll practice dodging paper-wads. [*Laughs, until he realizes JUDITH is staring coldly at him. NANCY goes quickly out U L.*]

JOE [*moving toward arch*]. Good night. Thanks for the cake and tea.

CATHERINE [*moving up to JOE*]. There's plenty of cake left in the kitchen, Joe, if you'd like.

JOE. No, thanks, Mrs. Marshall. [*Clears his throat.*] Dr. Marshall—some time when you've got a minute, there's something I'd like to talk over with you.

PETER. Of course, Joe. Any time. Good night. [JOE nods and goes quickly out U L. SUSAN has picked up remaining plates and cups and moves toward CATHERINE.]

SUSAN. I'll help you with the dishes, Mrs. Marshall.

CATHERINE. That's very thoughtful, Susan, but you needn't stay.